LONERGAN WORKSHOP

In Tune with the Divine Ground: Cultural & Social Conditions for Political Order

volume 12

edited by
Fred Lawrence

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DEDICATION

This volume of essays on the theme, *In Tune with the Divine Ground*, is dedicated in honor of the life and work of our esteemed colleague and dear friend, Ben F. Meyer, who has died after a long and heroic struggle with cancer.

The rhythms of Ben's life to and fro between Canada and Switzerland meant that he could not come to the summer Workshop, and the ebbs and flows of his illness kept him from being featured at the Fall and Spring weekend Workshops. It seems like yesterday that on a visit to his room in St Mary's Hall at Boston College, Bernard Lonergan handed me Ben's *The Aims of Jesus* and enthusiastically explained how Ben had used Collingwood's insights to carry out the intent of the title in his fine book. Amazingly, during his providential remissions, Ben was able to publish a veritable stream of books and essays for which we will always be in his debt. Ben Meyer was one of the few Lonergan students whose field was biblical studies, and whose critical realism made a discernible difference to his scholarly work in the functional specialties of interpretation, history, and dialectic. He was a presiding presence for most of us.

Soon after hearing of Ben's death, we came across the following letter, and it occurred to us that it gives such a glimpse of him that we should share it.

August 5, 1991

Dear Fred,

It has taken me till now to face the fact that I don't and in all probability shan't have the energy to accept what I regard as a most attractive invitation. For the past months I have actually felt quite well, and did finish the book I have been working on. Do you remember Voegelin's image of authority "seeping out" of the old theses that he thought had previously blocked him and his ambitions? Well, there has been a seeping out in my case, too. Only, it's energy. Though I would like to think that this is temporary, I have recently started to settle into the condition of a deflated balloon.

So, while I thank you heartily for your kind invitation, I decline with regret.

Under separate cover I'll send you the hermeneutical offprints I referred to on the phone. One is on "ascription," or the ascribing of new meaning to old texts; the other attempts to say what works well and what not so well in reader-reception work, theoretical and practical.

Let me recommend a book I have been reading while in the state of minimal energy described above. It is Jane Kramer, Europeans, Penguin, 1988, pieces taken from the New Yorker. Most rewarding entertainment. Maybe the wittiest & wisest is "Zurich: Zwingli's Gold," which I also clipped ten or eleven years ago from the New Yorker.

All the best wishes to you and to Sue. As for your translation work as penance for impinging on your kids, hurrah for the translation, forget the penance. They're damn lucky to have you two for parents. Philip Larkin has a funny poem on how parents screw up kids; it seems to me, though, that that's like howling against being, a most wonderful divine gift. It's worth being screwed up to have any hold on it at all.

Ben

In a living Festschrift for Ben at Canada's MacMaster University, this erudite and literate man quoted a favorite line from Rilke's *Sonnette an Orpheus* (Erster Teil, n.12):

Ohne unsern wahren Platz zu kennen
handeln wir aus wirklichen Bezug.
(Without knowing our true place
we act out of genuine relatedness.)

EDITORIAL NOTE

It may seem odd that a Workshop with the theme *In Tune with the Divine Ground: Cultural and Social Conditions for Political Order* should have a paper entitled "Metaphysics of Form, Matter, and Gender." As we know, all gender issues are controversial these days, and usually they are treated in a politicized way. When Prudence Allen, who already has done a good deal of distinguished philosophical work on woman and gender, selected this paper topic, it was a boon for the Workshop. It is rare to see light cast on such a topic by the pure, detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know. Framing the issues of sex and gender in terms of the mind's integral heuristic structure—metaphysics—is the ambitious task Sr. Prudence has given herself. Her paper is clear, economical in its expression, and illuminating.

More obviously in keeping with the Workshop theme is the paper meditating on Lonergan's social and political thought during the 1930's, which R. Michael Clark also used extensively in his doctoral dissertation on pacifism directed by Matthew Lamb. This is a fascinating adumbration of the young Lonergan's sense of the connection between social and cultural crisis and what in Thesis XVII of *De Verbo Incarnato* thirty years later he called 'the Law of the Cross.'

Longtime collaborator, Professor Mary Ann Glendon, established a link between the Workshop and two lawyers using Lonergan's thought to elaborate an idea of descriptive equality ('descriptive' meaning factual versus normative as in current parlance, rather than descriptive in Lonergan's technical usage). John Coons is the nation's leading legal expert on school vouchers, and his collaborator, Patrick Brennan, was exposed to Lonergan in Louis Dupre's course at Georgetown. This paper summarily rehearses main lines of an argument set forth in a roughly 500-page typescript to appear in the future. As an intellectual sounding it is most intriguing in its statement and implications.

J. Leon Hooper can always be counted upon to give an adventuresome reading of the thought of his mentor, John Courtney Murray, SJ. In this provocative presentation of the development of Murray's thinking on pluralism, with special attention to the experience

of plurality within the Roman Catholic community, Hooper meditates on our need to listen to all quarters for what our gracious God may be teaching us.

In her discussion of contemporary debates concerning justice in the family, Paulette Kidder uses the contrasting reflections of Susan Moeller Okin and Michael Sandel to clarify the central issues in the debate. Paulette shows how the genuine strengths of each side of the argument can be integrated in a possible higher viewpoint suggested, yet never before quite worked out and applied in this way, by Lewis Hyde and Lonergan.

Those familiar with the important work, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, will be happy to know that Michael McCarthy has been working on another volume devoted to the thought of the German emigrè political philosopher, Hannah Arendt. How can the tradition of civic republicanism salvage the normative notion of the common good within liberal democracy? This is perhaps the question bedeviling political philosophy today. In aid of a solution to this question Michael enlists the thought of such disparate figures as Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, Michael Walzer, and Charles Taylor, along with that of Lonergan and Arendt. Like Paulette Kidder and Prudence Allen, Michael shows his talent for presenting the salients of complicated matters in a lucid way.

In a recent interview, Anglican bishop and theologian Rowan Williams includes Sebastian Moore, OSB, among thinkers he esteems highly because they drill wells rather than build systems (the others mentioned are Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Balthasar). In no contribution to the Workshop journals is this quality more evident than in this one. Sebastian uses Lonergan's breakthrough to critical realism in exploring an illuminating possible breakthrough to symbolic realism made by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge himself is a notoriously turgid well-driller, but Sebastian's exegesis is packed with *aperçus*, and the application of his Coleridge-inpired insights into symbolic realism to the case of the Eucharist is breathtaking.

In a conference devoted partially to Voegelin and Lonergan, participants would ideally be invited to place their respective encounters with the works of those two thinkers within their own struggle for direction in the flow of existence, their own processes of experience and symbolization, their own asking and answering of questions in search of

self-appropriation and conversion. Such a task would require long years of meditative exegesis and self-correction, and then it would be nearly impossible to express compendiously and in a manner that was not merely extrinsic to the fruits of such demanding labors. But Mark Morelli's paper upset such expectations by expressing in a rigorous and engaging way his own dialectical enactment of an encounter between the thought of these two great philosophers, a proximate model for all of us.

Voegelin's thought is only retrievable as reenactment, which is not surprising, since, as he himself insisted repeatedly, this is true of any serious philosophic or revelational work. Again, his thought is so comprehensive that it is well-nigh impossible to suggest its breadth in the space of a normal-length paper. Yet by focusing upon religious experience and the key theme of immortality, Michael Morrissey has indeed managed to convey in a remarkably clear and concise way the profoundest tendencies and virtualities of Voegelin's enterprise, both as to what it is not, and as to what it is.

Because of his astonishingly wide-ranging knowledge and deep sympathies for persons suffering in the "modern cultural grotesque," Dublin philosopher Brendan Purcell has been pursuing a hermeneutics of universal humanity. Schooled early on in Lonergan's philosophy and theology, and later versed in Voegelin's massive philosophy of order, Brendan shows the remarkable complementarity in the concerns and orientations of both these seminal thinkers when it comes to confronting the crisis of our time.

Thanks to Kerry Cronin for all her work on every aspect of producing and managing this journal, and for her cheerful spirit.

Fred Lawrence
Boston College

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METAPHYSICS OF FORM, MATTER, AND GENDER

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INTRODUCTION[1]

FROM THE TIME of Aristotle, how to explain the difference between male and female human beings, by using the categories of form and matter, has been a challenging task of metaphysics. In this paper we will consider some difficulties in the way in which this metaphysical problem was originally posed by Aristotle, some of its developments in the history of western philosophy, and some contemporary suggestions for its solution made by Blessed Edith Stein and Bernard Lonergan.

In Appendix 1 at the end of this paper, an historical development of the philosophy of sex and gender is diagrammed. In four historical phases, philosophers have distinguished male and female, masculine and feminine, man and woman as individuals and man and woman as persons.[2] During the first phase (750BC-1400AD) man was identified

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[1] I am grateful to Mark Doughty, Professor Emeritus, Department of Chemistry, Concordia University, Joella Campbell, MD, Patrick Byrne, Department of Philosophy, Boston College, Fr. Terry Tekippe, Notre Dame Seminary, Father Matthew Lamb, Department of Theology, Boston College, and Sr. Barbara Gooding, RSM, School of Nursing, McGill University for suggestions with respect to revisions of ideas put forth in this paper. In addition, issues raised at the presentation at the Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, June 1995 have led to further revisions of the paper.

[2] A more detailed account of this developmental aspect of the history of western philosophy can be found in "Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion," *Communio: International Catholic Review*, **17** Winter, 1990: 523-544; and for a discussion of the use of the geometrical model of a tetrahedron to explain this development, see "Fuller's *Synergetics* and Sex Complementarity," *International*

with what was male, and woman was identified with what was female. This was a one-dimensional phase of sex and gender identity. In the second phase (1400-1800), the categories of masculine and feminine characteristics were discovered (e.g. a man could be described as effeminate and a woman as manly, while man had a natural privileged association with masculine characteristics and women with feminine characteristics). This was a two-dimensional phase of sex and gender identity. In the third phase (1800-1920) the categories of man and woman as self-defining individuals were articulated (e.g. an existentialist approach to being a certain kind of man or woman which has an analogous, but not an androgynous structure). This is the three-dimensional phase of sex and gender identity. Finally, from the beginnings of the personalist movement in the early twentieth century, the categories of man as a person and woman as a person were elaborated with reference to the practice of self-gift to build communities of persons. This is a four-dimensional phrase of sex and gender identity.

Before we begin this analysis, I would like to clarify the meaning of the terms "sex" and "gender" in this paper. In much contemporary usage, when only biological differences between male and female are stressed, the term 'sex' differentiation is used;[3] when the differentiation of masculine and feminine characteristics including psychic, social, intellectual characteristics as well as the biological or excluding the biological, or of individual men and women occurs, then the term 'gender' differentiation is usually employed.[4] My own use of the word 'gender' goes somewhat counter to the contemporary theorists who reserve the term "gender" for non-biological, or socially constructed references only and

Philosophical Quarterly, **32**, no.1 issue 125, March, 1992: 3-16.

[3] Lonergan uses only the word 'sex', but his use while having a primary reference to "the level of nature" also extends its range to include the other levels. See, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), "For all its complexity sex remains on the level of spontaneous nature, and there clearly, one may easily recognize that in all its aspects it definitively, if not exclusively, has a role in the process from fecundity to adult offspring." 42.

[4] This is the usage by Mary Frohlich in "From mystification to Mystery: Lonergan and the Theological Significance of Sexuality," in the text, *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia S. W. Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994): 175-198. "Herein I will use the term 'sex' to refer to physical maleness or femaleness; the term 'gender' to refer to the physical component of an individual's psychological and social identity...", 181.

thereby set up a kind of fissure, or Cartesian dualism between sex and gender. My use harkens to the root etymological meaning of gender which includes reference to generation as well as to the contemporary meaning which includes reference to non-biological characteristics.[5] So 'gender' in the title of this paper includes all the distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine, and men and women.

THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

In Book X, chapter 9 of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle posed the original metaphysical question about differentiation of woman and man:

> The question might be raised as to why woman does not differ in species from man, seeing that female is contrary to male, and difference is contrariety; and why a female and a male animal are not other in species, although this difference belongs to "animal" *per se*, and not as whiteness or blackness does; "male" and "female" belong to it *qua* animal.[6]

The problem can be restated using the metaphysical categories of form and matter, as follows: if form is what differentiates one species from another species, and matter is what differentiates one individual from another individual within the same species, how can metaphysics explain the fact that the human species is divided in the two categories of male human beings and female human beings?[7]

Aristotle argued that differences could belong to things in three ways: 1) in form, 2) in matter as contraries in virtue of its own nature,

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[5] See the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989). "Gender....1. Of parents (male or female or both). To beget, engender, produce (offspring)..." Words with similar roots include gendering, gene, genealogy, generate, gens.

[6] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Loeb edition, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), X, ix, 1 (1058a29-34).

[7] I leave aside the question of exceptions. Mary Frohlich suggests that if the characteristics are not universal, then they are simply contingent. See for example, "An accurate assessment of physical facts requires the judgment that division into two sexes is not absolute, but rather is a differentiation that admits of degrees." 182. She wrongly, I would argue, invokes the quotation from Lonergan which is contained at the end of this paper, footnote #51 to support her position. Frohlich is using a model of argument pertinent to universals in logic rather than one pertinent to nature, which is concerned with what is usually or for the most part the case.

and 3) in matter as contraries not belonging to its nature. The difference between women and men fell into the second category, and the difference of color fell into the third category. Aristotle reasoned: "...contrarieties in the formula produce difference in species, but contrarieties in the concrete whole do not."[8] Aristotle thought that male and female were "contraries" within the same species because they had the same human form. He argued further that in a pair of contraries, one is the privation of the other, cold is the privation of hot, and female is the privation of male.[9]

An individual male human being and a female human being are each composites of form and matter, or else they would not be concrete individual substances or entities. The soul is the form of the body, its life principle, and what gives it the central dynamic structure of organization. If the human soul is the same kind in a man and a woman, who share the same human species, then how do their bodies receive their sexually differentiated identity within an Aristotelian metaphysics?

Aristotle's solution to this metaphysical problem of gender differentiation of males and females incorporated a distinction from the early Greek 'science' of generation.[10] He stated:

> "Male" and "female" are attributes peculiar to the animal, but not in virtue of its substance; they are material or physical. Hence the same semen may, as the result of some modification, become either female or male.[11]

Thinking that the contraries of male and female were derived from the more elemental contraries of hot and cold, Aristotle argued that the

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[8] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, X, ix, 2 (1058b2-3).

[9] Aristotle uses the concept of 'contraries' differently from Lonergan. For Aristotle the notion of contrary involves a concept of one thing being a privation of the other, while for Lonergan contraries are two things which imply a higher synthesis. See, Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 68ff and for a discussion of the application of Lonergan's principle of contraries to questions of gender see, Sister Prudence Allen, RSM "Nietzsche's Tension About Women," *Lonergan Review*, Vol.2 (1993): 42-67.

[10] It is important to note, that even though Aristotle followed the Hippocratean approach to generation, another 'scientific' theory by the physician Empedocles was more correct from the contemporary point of view. Empedocles argued that both male and female provided 1/2 of the formative seed needed for conception, whereas Aristotle argued that only the male provided formative seed.

[11] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X, xi, 6 (1058b21-26).

father, who had greater heat, was able, by heating up his blood, to generate seed containing the human form of a child. The female, because she was colder, was not able to heat up her blood to produce form, but only supplied the matter of the child in generation. Aristotle thought that the 'de-formation' of the female was evident in her lack of contribution of form to generation; he also claimed that it is present in her own conception as a female human being. More particularly, if the material supplied by the mother perfectly receives the form supplied by the father, then the child will be a male that looks like the father. If the material resists somewhat, the child will be a female that resembles the father or a male that resembles the mother. If the resistance increases, the child will be a female that resembles the mother, or no conception will take place. Aristotle concludes: "we should look upon the female state as being as it were a deformity, though one which occurs in the ordinary course of nature."[12] To be female was to have a defect in the form/matter conjunction at conception which had ramifications of deformation throughout the different states of her life.[13] In *Parts of Animals* Aristotle concluded also that "the female is as it were a deformed male."[14] The characterization of the generation of a particular woman as deformed, defective, manqué, imperfect, or a *mas occasionatus* implies that the individual female is not directly intended, lacking a perfection, or missing the mark.[15]

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[12] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, Loeb edition, trans. A.L. Peck (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1937), 775a12-15.

[13] It is also important to note in passing that Aristotle realized that science is generally flexible, and concerned "that which is always or for the most part." See, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1065a2-6. This means that Aristotle's understanding of science allowed for variations in nature which may not fit universal judgments. However, his theory of syllogism demanded universality, not statistical probability. Premises were expressed in the form of "All" or "Some," not "Most." As science developed on the back of Aristotle's syllogistic structures, and particularly as it was influenced later by mathematics and physics, it edged ever closer to the classical model of universality.

[14] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, 737a26-30.

[15] St. Albert the Great developed this theme by making an important distinction. See, *Quaestiones Super de Animalibus*, in *Opera Omnia*, (Paris: Apud Ludovicum Vives, 1890-99). All passages from this work are translated by Sister M. Terese Dougherty. Albert argued that "...universal nature intends the female, as that without which the species cannot be saved...[while] particular nature moreover intends to produce like itself...[and therefore] intends to produce the male." Albert,

In medieval philosophy this view of a natural or metaphysical limitation was overcome by a belief that in the order of grace woman was potentially as perfect as man.[16] Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) in the *Summa Theologiae* argued that grace acts on the soul in the manner of a formal cause; he called it an accidental form of the soul.[17] The fact that grace is not a virtue of a power of the soul is important for the concept of woman, because the virtue of a power perfects the nature, and if the nature were deformed from the start, it would never be as perfect as a nature which was not deformed. Mary, a woman whom we believe was "full of grace," the most perfect human being to have ever existed, would not be limited in her perfection. St. Thomas argues that grace is in the essence (not the powers) of the soul through which a human being may participate in the Divine Nature, "after the manner of a likeness, through a certain regeneration or re-creation."[18]

St. Thomas adopted the distinction of his teacher, St. Albert the Great, between a universal and a particular intention of nature, and he applied it to the issue of women's identity "Only as regards nature in the individual is female something defective and 'manque'...But with reference to nature in the species as a whole, the female is not something 'manque,' but is according to the work of creation."[19] Thomas was clear that ultimately woman was in no way inferior to man. In this theological solution to Aristotle's metaphysical problem, the natural

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de Animalibus, Book XV, Quest. 2.

Giles of Rome (1243-1316) also argued that, in the particular case, a woman is a deformed man. He states: "In the case of a man, the male agent is disposed to generate a male, the generation of a female in any particular case being beyond the intention of the agent." For this reason woman is called "an imperfect man," a *mas occasionatus*. M. Anthony Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception (A Study of the De Formatione Corporis Humani in Utero)* (London: The Athlone Press, 1975), p. 183.

[16] For an overview of several different examples of this see my text *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution (750BC-1250AD)* (Montreal and London: Eden Press, 1985).

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (rpt. New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1948), trans. English Dominican Province, I-II, Q. 110, rpl. Obj. 1 and 2.

[18] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, Q 110, art. 4.

[19] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, 1a, 75, 4. Thomas was also following Augustine's lead that "...a woman's sex is her nature and no blemish...", and so she would not be turned into a man at the resurrection. See St. Augustine, *The City of God*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966), XII, 17.

imbalance of the contraries, male and female, was overturned by the power of grace, so that women saints and men saints were equally well formed in their terminus as willed by the Creator. A male and female, who began as contraries were actually complements in the plan of God.

These two aspects of St. Thomas are found together in a discussion of whether the matter of Christ's Body should have been taken from a woman? In an answer in which he refers to man as being of the "nobler sex" from the perspective of nature, it was more perfect that generation should occur in "every variety of manner:"

> For the first man was made from the *slime of the earth*, without the concurrence of man or woman: Eve was made of man but not of woman: and other men are made from both man and woman. So that this fourth manner remained as it were proper to Christ, that He should be made of a woman without the concurrence of a man.[20]

Basically the medieval Christian philosophers were struggling to explain how the human species can be divided according to the two main categories of male and female within a metaphysics that positioned form as the explanatory principle for a universal human species and positioned matter as the explanatory principle for a particular human individual. Without a metaphysical basis for a complementarity in development of gender differentiation, a woman usually was described as a devalued contrary of man.[21]

While in Aristotle's model of human generation the female was associated with deformity, in Plato's model of cosmic generation the female is associated with formlessness. In the *Timaeus* Plato describes "the mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things...[which is] an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible and is

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[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, III, q. 31, art. 4. See also rpl. obj. 1. "The male sex is more noble than the female, for this reason He took human nature in the male sex. But lest the female sex should be despised, it was fitting that He should take flesh of a woman."

[21] The exception to this rule is found in the work of two Christian humanists, Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1490-1536) and Lucrezia Marinelli (1571-1653), who argued that man was naturally inferior to woman. Another exception was found in the work of John Scotus Erigena (810-877), who viewed gender differentiation as the effect of the fall, and therefore an imperfection in a more fundamental unisex identity of the human being.

most incomprehensible."[22] This Platonic cosmic female principle was **devoid of all form**, whereas Aristotle's female contribution of matter to male form in the semen **had a specific form** of female menstruum.

In both Plato and Aristotle form was completely a non-material principle and matter was unintelligible without form. In other words, for both philosophers the material principle needed form. A link between matter and form and gender is made by Maimonides (1135-1204) when he stated that a figurative use of the word 'woman' stands for any object that needs to be in conjunction with some other object.[23] St. Albert the Great (1193-1280) also explicitly stated that because woman is imperfect, she seeks to be in union with man and joined to his 'ratio', as matter seeks to put on form.[24]

The conflation of female principle and woman with respect to matter, and of male principle and man with respect to form, caused confusion in the history of metaphysics. For the male principle is not the same thing as a man, and the female principle is not the same thing as a woman. The principle is a characteristic of a substance while a man or a woman are themselves substances. While it would be possible to provide numerous other historical examples of this conflation, for our purposes it is better to return to the original metaphysical problem posed at the beginning of the paper, i.e., how can a metaphysics of form and matter explain the principle of division of the human species into male and female?

By introducing evidence from the science of their times,

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[22] Plato, *Timaeus, The Collected Works of Plato,* eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 51b.

[23] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) I, 6, p. 31. In a reflection on *Genesis* the full quotation is as follows: "*Man ('ish)* and *woman ('ishshah)* are terms that at first were given the meaning of a human male and a human female. Afterwards they were used figuratively to designate any male or female among the other species of living beings...Thereupon the term woman was used figuratively to designate any object apt for, and fashioned with a view to being in conjunction with some other object."

[24] St. Albert the Great, Book V, Question 4. The entire quotation is as follows: "Matter is said to seek form and woman man, because woman seeks intercourse with man, but this is understandable because everything imperfect naturally seeks to be perfected; and woman is an imperfect human being compared with man. Therefore, every woman seeks to be subject to man. For there is no woman who does not want to take off the female "ratio" and put on the male naturally. And in the same way matter seeks to put on form."

philosophers thought they had discovered an explanatory mechanism to solve this problem by making the female a deformed version of the male. In this explanation, the universal form was human, the particular matter was responsible for the individual, and the relation of matter and form at the moment of conception became the explanation for the contrary generation of females or males. A perfect conjunction of form and matter produced a male, and an imperfect conjunction produced a female.[25]

Modern science rejected the Aristotelian theory of generation through the dual discoveries of the existence of formative material female seeds and multiple material and formative male seeds. More recent discoveries in genetics raise the question of how chromosomal structures, as extended in space and time, relate to the traditional metaphysical concept of form as nonmaterial (non-spatial and non-temporal). It is clear today that both females and males provide both active formal structure and material to conception through the two differentiated pathways of female and male chromosomes contained in the egg and sperm. Their complementary (i.e. equal, but differentiated) contribution shifts the argument away from Aristotle's premise that the male provided only an immaterial form and the female only material to generation and that the female was the contrary privation of the male.

We will now turn to two different contemporary theories which attempt to solve the metaphysical problem posed originally by Aristotle concerning how to explain gender differentiation. These two theories of Edith Stein and Bernard Lonergan have developed from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and so they seek to refine rather than undermine the use of the categories of form and matter in metaphysical explanations of human identity.

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[25] In the interim between this solution to the metaphysical problem reached by medieval philosophers and various contemporary solutions offered in this century, there were attempts to shift the balance somewhat to a different view. For example, John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308) challenged the view that matter was the principle of differentiation between two members of the same species; he argued that a plurality of forms caused this differentiation. In an interesting way, he also argued that females had a more formative role in generation than had been the case in the Aristotelian view. In Renaissance philosophy we find the female being associated with the beauty of form rather than with matter, and in modern philosophy we find the Aristotelian matter/form distinction being challenged by philosophers who spiritualize matter.

SOME CONTEMPORARY SOLUTIONS

Blessed Edith Stein (1891-1942), in a 1932 essay entitled "Problems of Women's Education" raises again Aristotle's question of whether or not the difference between men and women constitutes a difference in species.[26] The concept of an "unchangeable core" in woman's identity is later described by Stein as being due to an "inner form." She states: "I have spoken before of the species 'woman.' By *species* we understand a permanent category which does not change. Thomistic philosophy designates it by the term *form*, meaning an *inner* form which determines structure."[27]

The form which determines the structure of the individual woman or man is the soul of a particular gendered body. Now an individual soul, according to Stein, may be analyzed by abstraction according to a three-fold analysis of "the 'species' of humanity, the species of woman, and individuality."[28] Stein argues that just as there is a permanence of inner form that determines the structure of a woman as a human being, so also there is an inner permanence of form that determines her structure as a woman. So she appears to offer a different answer to the question raised by Aristotle than had the Greek philosopher himself. Aristotle had claimed that there was no difference in form between a man and a woman, while Stein suggests that there is some difference in form between a man and a woman.

When Stein begins to compare actual differences between the inner

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[26] Edith Stein, "Problems of Women's Education," *Essays on Women* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 150. The passage reads as follows: "The basic concept must be the *nature of woman*, for this is the foundation on which the entire educational system for girls must be built. But this nature is not uniform but varies according to types and individuals. We will have to investigate whether or not these different types share a uniform and unchangeable core which can be regarded as characterizing woman as a species (the historical types as well as the contemporary ones)."

[27] Stein, 162. She develops the Thomistic position. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* St. Thomas states that "The soul is the form of the animated body." (New York: Benzinger Gros., 1923-9), II, 58, 14.

[28] Stein, 167. Stein puts a footnote to the 'species' as follows: "Whether it is more advisable to speak here of genus of or species can be determined only after an inquiry into the formal, ontological problem.", note 22, p. 274. It is perhaps helpful here to call the category of humanity 'the species,' and the category of woman or man 'the sub-species.'

structure of a woman and that of a man, she introduces another distinction. She argues that **the relationship of soul and body** is different in the two sub-species of woman and of man. So for Stein, gender difference includes difference in body and difference in the relationship of soul and body. This theory is developed in some detail in her work:

> I am convinced that the species *humanity* embraces the double species *man* and *woman*; that the essence of the complete *human* being is characterized by this duality; and that the entire structure of the essence demonstrates the specific character. There is a difference, not only in bodily structure and in particular physiological functions, but also in the entire corporeal life. The relationship of soul and body is different in man and woman; the relationship of soul to body differs in their psychic life as well as that of the spiritual faculties to each other.[29]

By spiritual faculties, Stein is referring to the intellect and will. And by psychic life, she considers such areas as the 'lived experience of the body,' the interior and exterior sensations, imagination, passions, emotions, and so forth.

In these ways it seems as though Stein has moved more towards a contemporary version of Aristotle's view that the conjunction of form and matter determines gender differentiation rather than the form itself. In other words, if form is the principle of the differentiation of the human species, and matter the principle of the differentiation of individuals, then in the manner of the conjunction of the two we find the metaphysical explanation for the different engendering of men and women, for the species man and the species woman. However, Edith Stein does not suggest that the conjunction of form and matter is more perfect in man than in woman; instead, she suggests a theory of complementary, or different but equal analogous developments of persons in two different genders.

We are still left, however, with the problem of what it means to claim that the soul/body relation is different in men and in women. Stein

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[29] Stein, 177. See also Prudence Allen, "Sex and Gender Differentiation in Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein," *Communio* **20** Summer, 1993: 389-414, for a more detailed account of the particular ways in which Stein thinks that the subspecies woman differs from the subspecies man with respect to psychic and spiritual faculties.

never really explains this metaphysically, but instead uses a phenomenological method to consider certain different natural tendencies within men and women. She says, for example: "The feminine species expresses a unity and wholeness of the total psychosomatic personality and a harmonious development of faculties. The masculine species strives to enhance individual abilities in order that they may attain their highest achievements."[30]

Stein also argues that a man can learn those characteristics associated with the "feminine species" and a woman can learn those characteristics associated with the "masculine species." So the inner form associated with the subspecies man and woman appears to be more of an ontological and natural starting point in development than a point of completion. However, this gender-differentiated starting point is crucial, because it guards against a theory of androgyny.[31] Stein makes the meaning of inner form of the subspecies of man and woman very different from the form of the species human, whose inner form serves both as the starting point of development as well as the culmination or completion point of development. However, she also argues that: "...the species *man* and the species *woman* are also fully realized only in the total course of human development."[32] So the form of the subspecies man and the subspecies woman would serve as a culmination as well as an origination point.

Edith Stein's view is complex because it focuses on the identity of soul which contains simultaneously the principles of human identity, gender identity, and individuality. She suggests almost a nesting of forms within one another anticipating perhaps Lonergan's notion of conjugate form. So a conjoined human-gender-individual form of the person is present from the moment of conception. This inner structure develops over a life-time through natural dynamisms as well as the virtualities of free choice, and participation in the life of God by the

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[30] Stein, 178.

[31] Mary Frohlich, "Lonergan and...", incorrectly suggests that Lonergan holds a position of androgyny when she states: "Thus, careful attention to the data on the physical aspect of sex leads to an 'inverse insight' into the significance of the existence of two sexes. The inverse insight is that, at the level of human nature, the two sexes are identical; there is no difference. Whatever the significance of sex and sexuality may be, it is *not* that there are two definitively different types of human beings.", 183.

[32] Stein, 179.

infusion of grace, so that the woman or man achieves her or his full identity over time.

Stein's phenomenological approach within a metaphysical framework offers some possibilities for further thought about the relation of the form/matter distinction and gender identity. She also sought to elaborate a framework for integrating the findings of scholars in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, thus also anticipating Lonergan's insistence on interdisciplinary approaches to the human person. However, what needed more development in her thought, was the characterization of the subspecies of man and of woman what differences there are in their internal forms, and in what exactly consists the different relations of soul to body within the inner form of the human species. More specifically, what does it mean to say that men and women manifest a fundamental difference in their engendered psyches and also in the exercise of their faculties of intellect and will because their relations of soul and body are different?

It is at this point that the work of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) may help in our search for a solution to Aristotle's problem.[33] In an interesting historical coincidence, one year after Blessed Edith Stein died in Auschwitz (1942), Lonergan published his seminal article on gender identity, entitled "Finality, Love, Marriage."[34] Before comparing some of the ways that his thinking relates to that of Edith Stein's, we will consider first how Lonergan's introduction of an intermediary principle of conjugate forms may provide a framework within which to describe gender differentiation as a complementary dynamic process and activity which is accessible to researchers in many different fields of study.

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[33] Lonergan begins his seminal work by making a distinction between classical and contemporary science. Classical science, especially in its development in physics and mathematics, focused on certainties and universal laws, while contemporary science focuses on probabilities and statistical laws. See, Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), chapter ii. By applying this distinction to questions of gender, we could say that universal, univocal judgments about man or woman fall into the classical model, while probable judgments about sex and gender which are based on statistical probabilities of "schemes of recurrence" fall into the contemporary model. The two models also pick up the two aspects of Aristotle's dictum quoted above that science is concerned with "that which is always or for the most part."

[34] See, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Theological Studies* 4, 1943: 477-510.

Lonergan tells us in his 1957 work *Insight,* that while he and Aristotle agree that there are what could be called central and conjugate forms, "Aristotle did not grasp the notion of successive higher viewpoints, nor employ it to account for explanatory genera and species."[35] In other words, Aristotle did not explain a complementary differentiation of women and men within the human species and the genus animal.

Lonergan understood the role of metaphysics to be the integrator of the empirical sciences.[36] It was suggested earlier in this paper that part of the difficulty that Aristotle and subsequent Aristotelians got into by their polarization as contraries of male and female differentiation was their appropriation of what they believed to be the best scientific information available about generation. Lonergan suggests that while the metaphysician can describe the interdynamics of structures, he or she must be careful not to give too detailed answers. Lonergan continues: "On the contrary, he must refer questions of detail to particular departments; and he fails to grasp the limitations of his own subject if, in his hope to meet issues fully, he offers to explain just what various forms are."[37] So for Lonergan, metaphysics becomes a "transcendental" method rather than a set body of doctrine. We will now apply the dynamics of this method to some aspects of human and gender identity.

Lonergan uses the concept of "conjugate forms" to refer to "flexible circles of schemes of recurrence" that occur at different levels of organization within human beings.[38] Different sciences study different sets of conjugate forms. This schema of the study of conjugate forms with specific reference to human beings has a hierarchical structure,

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[35] Lonergan, *Insight*, 507. A fuller statement of this passage is as follows: "...though we are in basic agreement with Aristotle, we differ from him in many positive ways and it will not be amiss to clarify the matter very briefly. Aristotle acknowledged central and conjugate forms: as sight is to the eye, so soul is to the whole animal....On the other hand, Aristotle did not grasp the notion of successive higher viewpoints, nor employ it to account for explanatory genera and species."

[36] Lonergan, *Insight*, XVI, 3.1, 498. "If the metaphysician must leave to the physicist the understanding of physics and to the chemist the understanding of chemistry, he has the task of working out for the physicist and chemist, for the biologist and the psychologist, the dynamic structure that initiates and controls their respective inquiries and, no less, the general characteristics of the goal towards which they head."

[37] Lonergan, *Insight*, XVI, 3.1, 498.

[38] Lonergan, *Insight*, XV, 7.4, 469-70.

because within the human being the higher level organizes the lower one. So, for example, a cell organizes atoms, a reproductive system organizes cells, and decisions of intelligence can organize biological systems—all the while respecting the laws of the lower structure. Lonergan summarizes his schema as follows:

> Organic, psychic, and intellectual development are not three independent processes. They are interlocked with the intellectual providing a higher integration of the psychic and the psychic providing a higher integration of the organic. Each level involves its own laws, its flexible circle of schemes of recurrence, its interlocked set of conjugate forms.[39]

The higher system integrates the schemes of recurrence common to the lower system. In "Finality, Love, Marriage," Lonergan introduces the category of "vertical finality" to explain the relation of matter and form in this interlocked set of conjugate forms. He argues that the third manifestation of vertical finality occurs when the concrete plurality of lower entities serve as "the material cause from which a higher form is educed or into which a subsistent form in infused."[40]

Plato and Aristotle had stated that all form was immaterial. Lonergan claims, on the other hand, that all conjugate forms and corresponding central forms on the physical, chemical, organic, and psychic levels are material.

> ...the material can be defined as whatever is constituted by the empirical residue or is conditioned intrinsically by that residue. It follows that conjugate potencies, forms, and acts on the physical, chemical, organic, and psychic levels are material. Further, since central forms are differentiated by their conjugates, it follows that the corresponding central forms are material.[41]

This claim that forms on the physical, chemical, organic, and psychic level are material does not imply that they are extended in space and time as filling up a spacial container.[42] Obviously, if conjugate forms of

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[39] Lonergan, *Insight*, XV, 7.4, 469-70.

[40] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage", 20. The other manifestations of vertical finality are: instrumental, dispositive, and obediential; and the other types of finality are horizontal and absolute.

[41] Lonergan, *Insight*, XVI, 4.2, 517.

[42] I am grateful for a discussion with Patrick Byrne about the meaning of this passage, following upon his presentation of the paper "Lonergan's Retrieval of

higher levels of organization operate in the same space, this could not be the meaning Lonergan intended. And yet there is an interesting sense in which conjugate forms of atoms, compounds, molecules, organs, and systems can be considered as extended in space and time.[43]

To provide a metaphysical structure to explain human individuality, Lonergan uses the concept of central form.

> Man, the concrete being, is both material and spiritual; he is material by his physical, chemical, organic and sensitive conjugates; he is spiritual by his intellectual conjugates. Still, man is not just an assemblage of conjugates; he is intelligibly one, and that unity has its metaphysical ground in his central form.[44]

Lonergan claims however, that only some conjugate forms on the intelligible level, and the central form of an intelligent being are immaterial and spiritual. The range of operations of the intellect and will may occur in freedom from material determination, while simultaneously respecting the laws of material central and conjugate forms.[45]

Here we see that the ancient categories of immaterial form and matter are modified through the introduction of a hierarchical nesting of different kinds of forms, some of which are immaterial and others which are material, and all of which are integrated in an individual entity by a central form which would be either material or immaterial depending upon the identity of the entity. So Lonergan's more flexible metaphysical

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Aristotelian Form," at the American Catholic Philosophical Association Conference in Washington DC, Spring 1995.

[43] The phenomenon of germ cells in the ovaries of female fetuses, which contain the chromosomes for generations is worth reflecting on in this regard.

[44] Lonergan, *Insight*, XVI, 4.2, 518. See also, "Man is one. No less than electrons and atoms, plants and animals, man is individual by his central potency, one in nature by his central form, existent by his central act. Moreover, this basic unity extends to the distinctive conjugates of human intellectual activity. The conjugate forms of the atom constitute the higher system of the atom's own subatomic events. The conjugate forms of the organism constitute the higher system of the organism's own chemical processes. The conjugate forms of the psyche constitute the higher system of the animal's own organic processes. In like manner, the conjugate forms of a human intellectual activity constitute the higher system of man's sensitive living. In each case an otherwise coincidental manifold of lower conjugate acts is rendered systematic by conjugate forms on a higher level." 515.

[45] This principle of respect for the laws of the lover level has some application to contemporary theories of natural family planning.

theory is able to interweave immaterial forms, in the case of human beings, with material forms in conjugate sets. This flexibility helps to solve Aristotle's problem of the application of form and matter terminology to the gender distinction, and it opens a metaphysical basis for a theory of gender complementarity.

Referring to Appendix 2 at the end of this paper, we can now try to elaborate a possible schema for applying Lonergan's metaphysical distinctions to the study of sex and gender identity. The Appendix identifies the following categories: the field of study, the kind of form it studies, specific realities it investigates, an example of its findings with respect to gender, the gender-related category of its findings, and the relevance of its findings for hierarchically integrating capacities within the human being. The chart attempts to identify at what level particular kinds of gender differentiation occur.

As far as present evidence implies, there is no sexual differentiation at the level of physics. The average number of 10^{27} hydrogen atoms in a human being have the same, approximately 14 billion year old structure, in men as in women. At the level of chemistry there begins to be some differentiation of male and female hormone molecules and balances of the different hormones in women and men. In order to explain the different sex-related chemicals or hormone molecules, a higher biological order of explanation of the reproductive system must be invoked.[46] In "Finality, Love, Marriage," Lonergan describes complementary gender differentiation on the biological level as follows: "For elementally sex is a difference added to fecundity, dividing it into two complementary semifecundities and so obtaining for offspring the diversity in material cause [gender difference] sanctioned by the impediment of consanguinity[human gender equality]."[47] The sciences of chemistry, biology and the cognate fields of bio-chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and so forth study the material conjugate forms associated with these levels of gender differentiation.[48]

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[46] "The...three steps of anatomy, physiology, and their transposition to the thing-itself reveal one aspect of the organism as higher system in an underlying manifold of cells, chemical processes, and physical changes. Let us name that aspect of the higher system as integrator. The higher system itself is the set of conjugate forms." Lonergan, *Insight*, XVI, 4.3, 464.

[47] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 42.

[48] In response to a question about how persons with transsexual operations fit

When we reflect on the question of how to explain metaphysically the gender differentiation, not just of males and females, but also of women and men in their relation to masculine and feminine characteristics, [as seen in Appendix 1] we must go far beyond general schemes of recurrence in the biological range. On the psychic level of existence, gender includes vital, sensitive, and emotional characteristics. These include what phenomenologists refer to as the lived experience of the body. Lonergan describes it this way when reflecting on marriage: "More prominently, sex is the principle of reunion of the divided semifecundities, bringing together on the level of sensitive attraction and local motion what has been separated and placed in different beings on the level of physiology."[49] It is the social sciences that study these patterns of differentiation in women and men both in contexts of sexual union, as described above, and in other broader contexts as well. To the extent that an individual exercises the higher levels of cognition and volition, then both the immaterial and material conjugate forms will be studied.

Individual women and men, through the exercise of will and intellect in decisions, engage in their own development, self-definition, and self-appropriation. As well they enter into intersubjective communities of meaning, culture, and religion. Lonergan is well aware of the importance of the human individuality of persons and of communities of meaning.[50]

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into this schema of Lonergan, the following points need to be made. Gender differentiation is concerned with what is always or usually the case. If a person who is biologically male, but psychically identifies as a female, he or she is an exception, and one who suffers an affliction, in Simone Weil's sense. If, in addition, he has an operation to change the male anatomy and hormones to conform to the female model (although the chromosomes can not be changed), he then becomes legally female, or a she, according to the law. While often analytic philosophers and post-modernist philosophers argue that the exception proves that there are no essential characteristics of one gender or the other, and they conclude that gender may have a multitude of variations, I would argue that Lonergan's schema allows for this kind of exception to remain simply as an exception, philosophically speaking, and that it does not overturn the theory about what is always or usually the case.

[49] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 43.

[50] He states: "...at any stage of his development a man is an individual, existing unity differentiated by physical, chemical, organic, psychic, and intellectual conjugates. The organic, psychic, and intellectual conjugate forms ground respective flexible circles of ranges of schemes of recurrence that are revealed in the man's spontaneous and effective behaviour, in his bodily movements, in his dealings with

At the same time, Lonergan is also aware of ways in which gender identity functions on this higher level. In an important passage from "Finality, Love, Marriage," he summarizes it as follows:

> [Sex] is a bias and orientation in a large number of potencies, a typical and complementary differentiation within the species, with a material basis in a difference in the number of chromosomes, with a regulator in the secretions of the endocrinal glands, with manifestations not only in anatomical structure and physiological function but also in the totality of vital, psychic, sensitive, emotional characteristics and consequently, though not formally, in the higher nonorganic activities of reason and rational appetite.[51]

Leaving aside the classification of sex as a bias,[52] we need here to focus on the final phrase of this quotation, or Lonergan's claim that the complementary differentiation of gender is not formally in the reason and will, but only consequently there because of its presence at the lower levels of human identity. In this claim, Lonergan differs from Edith Stein, who had argued that the form of man and woman was gender-differentiated as a sub-species within the human species; but he agrees with Stein in her other claim that there is something different in the way the form connects with the gender-differentiated material in a man and in a woman. Lonergan seems to be arguing that material conjugate forms of women and men differ (their male or female identity and their relation to masculine and feminine psychic identity), and therefore affect *a posteriori* the reason and will. At the same time, the central form, while *a priori* as an individual soul, is not itself gender-differentiated.[53]

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persons and things, in the content of his speech and writing." Lonergan, *Insight*, XV, 7.4, 470.

[51] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 42.

[52] See, Michael Vertin, "Gender, Science, and Cognitional Conversion," *Lonergan and Feminism*, 62-64 for a consideration of the relation of gender and bias.

[53] This raises the theological question of what it means that a person was known by God before he or she was formed in the mother's womb, and how the philosophical principle of soul, or central form, relates to the eternal identity of a specific person as a man or woman with a specified vocation, such as the Virgin Mary, or John the Baptist. See also, *Jeremiah* 1: 4-6, "The word of the Lord came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." and Paul's letter to the *Romans* 8:29-30, "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who have been called according to his decree. Those whom he foreknew he

It might be helpful to flesh out Lonergan's theory by introducing a further factor to explain gender differentiation of a woman and a man within this structure of central and conjugate forms of a human being. This could be found in a theory of existential analogy, or a development of how a woman and a man are analogous to one another in their complementary metaphysical structures.[54] It is clear that Lonergan understood women and men, not as contraries but as complementaries. He explicitly said that sex is a complementary differentiation within the species; and sex makes male and female complementary beings.[55]

If we consider the application of Lonergan's method in the higher range of conjugate forms of intelligence and central form of a human being, we enter into the fields studied by philosophy and theology. Lonergan elaborates some general categories of these fields such as values and the human good, meaning and human intersubjectivity, religion and the existence of God, history and progressive knowledge, and dialectics and conflict, etc. In all of these ranges it is possible to consider questions related to gender. What is the value of a man or a woman choosing and acting *qua* man or *qua* woman? What is the meaning of men's and women's cultures? What is the relation between creation, redemption, and sanctification and gender identity? What do we know about women's and men's history? What is the place of dialectic and conflict in determining the truth about and the value of gender identity? And so forth.

Lonergan argues that philosophy studies ways in which gender evolves in human beings in their individuality and their identities as persons working not only to survive but to live virtuously, or to have a good life. He states that in marriage this dynamic may be expressed through the quality of the friendship of husband and wife and in their rational choice of building a common good through a legal contract. Theology articulates ways in which grace can animate this relationship

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predestined to share the image of his Son, that the Son might be the first-born of many brothers."

[54] See, Prudence Allen, R.S.M., "A Woman and a Man as Prime Analogical Beings," *American Catholic Philosophical Association Quarterly*, Vol. LXVI, no. 4, 465-482 for some developments in this direction. For an attempt to develop this concept, using the metaphysical theory of analogy of M. A. Krapiec and the Lublin School.

[55] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 43.

through the Sacrament of Marriage.[56]

Lonergan describes what he calls the dynamic of vertical finality in gender relations:

> Thus sex as a differentiation of fecundity is merely an instrument of fecundity in the latter's process to adult offspring. But at the same time, it is a quality and capacity of subjects or persons. To them its actuation is at least a material end, that is an end that can and ought to be integrated with higher ends. Further the actuation of sex involves the organistic union of a concrete plurality, and as such it has a vertical finality. Such an upward drive follows from our general theory. In the vegetal and animal kingdoms it has its verification in the measure of truth that may be attributed to theories of evolution in terms of statistical laws and probabilities regarding combinations of genes through random mating. But in man the upward drive is to the human and personalist aspects of marriage from fecundity and sex to the levels of reason and grace.[57]

The model that Lonergan uses frequently for the theological level of gender relations is participation in the Mystical Body of Christ through the perfection of the acts of charity in anticipation of eternal life. Without moving too directly into the range of theology, I might suggest that another analogy with perhaps even more poignant application to Lonergan's theory of gender complementarity would be the post-Vatican II development by John Paul II of the theology of marriage as a communion of persons called to be in likeness to the Divine Communion of Persons. The common element in this analogy is the significant differentiation and fundamental equality of dignity and worth of the persons within each level of the analogy, and the differential element in the analogy is the difference between the divine nature of the Persons in the Trinity and the human nature of men and women.

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[56] The theme of marriage is described throughout Scriptures. The first book, *Genesis*, begins with the generation of male and female and the last book, *Revelation*, ends with the analogical application: "The Spirit and Bride say: 'Come.'" In the middle, the book of *Hosea* describes God as a faithful spouse calling his bride to be faithful to the covenant, and in the *New Testament*, Christ is called "the bridegroom." The differentiation of male and female, and the call of man and woman into some level of covenantal marriage is a consistent theme throughout the Scriptures. The key for each Christian is to discover the specific kind of marriage (e.g., Sacramental, consecrated celibate, etc.) to which one is called.

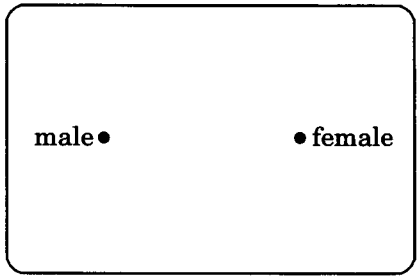
[57] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 43-44.

We will now bring this exploratory essay on the application of Lonergan's metaphysics of form and matter to the question of gender differentiation to a close. While we have not yet found a complete solution to Aristotle's dilemma about how to explain gender differentiation using the metaphysical principle of form as the differentiator of species and matter as the differentiator of individuals within a species, we have at least found a method within which this question can be approached. Using a model of internested and hierarchical conjugate forms, integrated by a central form in a woman or a man, philosophers can study and integrate the findings of sciences, social sciences, philosophy, and theology, concerning ways in which men and women are both alike and different. If we can borrow a statement from a different context in Lonergan, we can see how he provides the framework for interdisciplinary cooperation by scholars in different fields: "Method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt. It is a framework for collaborative creativity."[58] I would suggest then that a contemporary answer to Aristotle's question posed in the *Metaphysics* is to study in an interdisciplinary context the various schemes of recurrence that are articulated in different fields with respect to gender differentiation, while asking intelligent questions about the philosophical relevance of the data, all the while respecting the laws of each range of conjugate forms, respecting the non-material central form of each human being, and moving towards a greater integrity of building the common good in intersubjective communities.

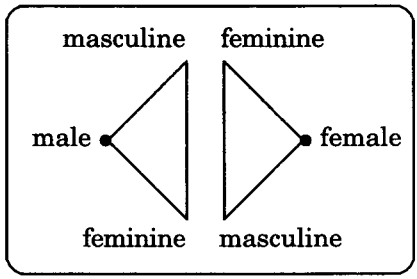
[58] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), xi.

APPENDIX 1: EVOLUTIONARY PHASES IN SEX AND GENDER

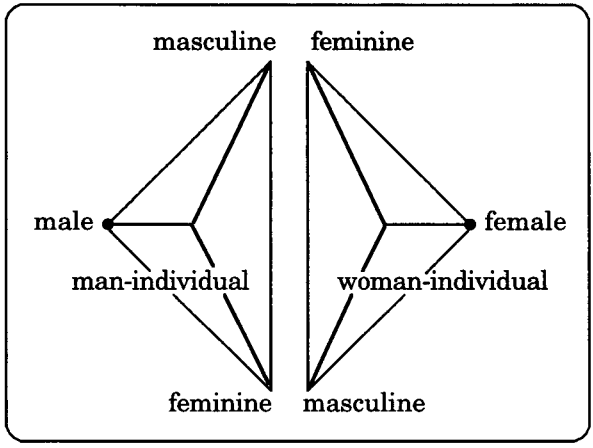
FIRST PHASE (750BC-1400AD)
Identification of sex identity



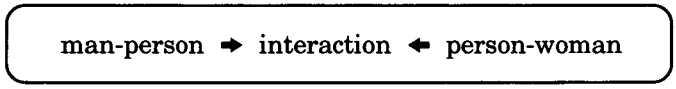
SECOND PHASE (1400-1800)
Identification of gender identity including sex identity



THIRD PHASE (1800-1920)
Identification of identity as an individual man or woman



FOURTH PHASE (1920→)
Identification of identity as a person (with sex and gender identity) in relation with other persons



APPENDIX 2: LONERGAN'S METAPHYSICS AND SEX AND GENDER DIFFERENTIATION

FIELD	KIND OF FORM*	INVESTIGATES	FINDS	CATEGORY	RELEVANCE
Theology	analogical spiritually conjoined forms and conjugate forms of spiritual realities	spiritual realities: God and relation of Divine and Human [Lonergan suggests the Mystical Body of Christ]	e.g. man and woman created and called to live in communion of persons in likeness of God, as a Trinity; choice of sexual act (or not) occurs in context of sacramental marriage or consecrated celibacy	Divine Communion of Persons is analogous (alike and different) to human communion of persons	a man and a woman enters into a communion of persons by free choice and repeated acts of self-gift to another person or persons [Lonergan suggests eternal life]
Philosophy	immaterial central form and intelligent and material conjugate forms	intellectual realities: the person; the soul as the form of the body; intelligence and decision; inter personal search for the common good	e.g. choice of particular sexual act (or not) in relation to the true and the good	self-definition as an individual man [male—masculine and feminine identity] or woman [female—feminine and masculine identity] in relation with others	a man or a woman defines himself or herself as a particular kind of man or a particular kind of woman by the choices he or she makes in relation with others [Lonergan suggests friendship, contracts, and the good life]
Anthropology Sociology Political Science Linguistics	analogical immaterial and material conjugate forms	inter cultural realities: patterns of interaction among human beings in families, society, governments, languages and cultures	e.g. sexual partners in broader contexts [Lonergan suggests education of children to adulthood]	influences on a male-masculine-feminine identity and on a female-feminine-masculine identity through language, history, culture, society, etc.	development of integrated sex and gender identity in a male or female human being in relation to others

Human Psychology --- animal psychology	immaterial and material conjugate forms --- material conjugate forms	intelligence, psychic realities: consciousness—sensations, passions, instincts, desires, and behaviour --- the same as above without intelligence	e.g. sexual attraction [Lonergan suggests vital, psychic, sensitive, and emotional characteristics]	male or female identity; masculine and feminine characteristics through the lived experience of the body	psychological identification as male or female organizes behaviour of the reproductive system
Biology	material conjugate forms	organic realities: physiology systems; genes; anatomy [Lonergan suggests endocrinal glands]	e.g. reproductive system; chromosomes; anatomy [Lonergan suggests biological fecundity]	male and female fertility – xx and xy chromosomes; and primary and secondary sexual characteristics	the male and female reproductive systems produce and organize male and female hormones
Chemistry	material conjugate forms	chemical realities: compounds and reactions	e.g. androgens (testosterone) and estrogens	male and female hormones	hormone molecules organize hydrogen atoms at higher level
Physics	material conjugate forms	physical realities: atoms and subatomic particles	e.g. structure of hydrogen atom: 10^{27} in average adult	no difference by sex/gender	"some things never change"– each hydrogen atom 14 billion years old

*1) For Lonergan: conjugate forms are "flexible circles of schemes of recurrences"
   a) forms of material things are material (in space and time)
   b) the higher system, the integrator, organizes the lower in hierarchical sequences among conjugate forms
   c) 'things' or systems with conjugate forms do not exist independently (outside the body)
   d) only concrete beings with central forms exist independently
   e) the central form organizes the being and all the conjugate forms within it
   f) there exist many complementary fields such as bio-chemistry, socio-biology, etc.

2) Male and female, categories of material aspects of concrete beings, are primarily applicable to the conjugate forms studied in chemistry, biology, and the social science of psychology (and their cognates)- [consider difference of female germ cells from other cells]

3) Masculine and feminine, categories of psychic realities in concrete material beings, emerge in psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science.

4) Man and woman, categories of concrete beings who are both material and spiritual, more fully emerge in philosophy (as individuals) and theology (as persons) with respect to central form and to forms conjoined by free will choice.

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BYWAY OF THE CROSS: THE EARLY LONERGAN AND POLITICAL ORDER

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INTRODUCTION

THE OVERALL THEME of this conference, "In Tune with the Divine Ground: Cultural and Social Conditions for Political Order," provokes a number of questions, such as: What does it mean to be "in tune" especially for those of us who are slightly out of tune? What is it and what can be said concretely and theoretically about the "Divine Ground?" What is "political order" and, with the possibility of some notion of that order, what would be the possible cultural and social conditions that foster that order? I suppose one could also ask about the social and cultural conditions that would allow the emergence of even a notion of political order. And, of course, what does the "Divine Ground" have to do with political order anyway?

Knowing that this particular community of scholars has a desire to transcend the superficialities of the liberal vs. conservative characterizations, I also know that within our own social and cultural contexts we are all plagued by the terms of the conversation being set by those tendencies. We have to develop positions, critique counter-positions, take stands on the issues of our day in our classrooms, in our neighborhoods, in our religious communities, etc., pay taxes, and possibly vote in elections for people who might possibly represent our positions—more or less. We live in states or countries with economic, political, military and judicial institutions and systems that execute people; that build, market, and use various types of anti-personnel

devices (weapons); that organize for war often against its own people or its neighbors; that channel the poor into prisons; that undermine the rights of its citizens and workers; that routinely abort its youngest either overtly by doctors or covertly by malnourishment. Those same contexts can also stimulate and nurture creativity, foster the desire for truth and justice and sometimes the freedom to live and love honestly and justly, and possibly encourage the development of the strength and courage to be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

My purpose in this paper is to concentrate on a couple of papers by the young Lonergan in order to give voice to (i) his critique of power and the modern state, (ii) his concern for progress and peace in history that is grounded in solidarity, and (iii) his articulation of the need for the supernatural as nonviolent and transformative.[1] The two essays offer a dialectical critique of modernity with a persistent concern for peace and justice in our modern world.

CRITIQUE OF POWER AND THE MODERN STATE

Lonergan opens the *Essay on Fundamental Sociology* by highlighting the problem of power along with intimating his critique of liberalism:

> . . . there can be no doubt that this fact of power is at the root of the distempers of the present day. A philosopher cannot be content to ask of history, Who holds the power? He must ask whether this incidence of power is for human progress or for human extinction. There is much in the present world-situation to confirm the view that liberalism in power is for the destruction of civilization.[2]

One is immediately struck by the concern in history for the use of power for either progress or extinction. Lonergan's profound suspicion of power and the role of modern liberalism in the "destruction of civilization" is certainly more understandable given the context of the 1930's, with the global impact of capitalism being experienced in the form of the

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[1] Bernard Lonergan, *Essay on Fundamental Sociology* and *Metaphysics of Human Solidarity*, (Toronto: unpublished manuscripts, mid-to late 1930's). Following references will be "essay" and "metaphysics," respectively.

[2] "essay" p. 95.

depression, the rise of fascism in Europe and Stalinism in Russia, and all of these on the eve of what would become World War II.

The focus on liberal culture as destroying civilization is a response to the historical track record of modernity. The promises of modernity—to eliminate intolerance by people and oppression by monarchs, dictatorial regimes, and authoritarianism in churches—had, in many ways, failed to deliver. The culture of toleration and freedom was supposed to give voice to the values of a democratic society of free, equal, and peaceful people. But, as Matthew Lamb has argued, the "hierarchic sacralist authoritarianism" of the premoderns is not radically different from the "bureaucratic secularist authoritarianism" of the moderns—"the two tend to reinforce each other over the heads of peoples and communities."[3] Liberal culture that has presided over this transition from premodern to modern authoritarianism has limited the conversation about the "common good" and marginalized faith and intelligence except as privatized and instrumentalized. The resulting cultural vacuum is easily filled with the propaganda for domination by the powerful, a domination which has often been tolerated and even accepted in the culture of indifference. The rampant relativism of liberalism's right and left wings offers very little for a standard of adjudication. With liberalism's restrictions on the public conversation about the true, the good, and the holy, the use of force and coercion often sets the standard—in other words, might makes right.

The primary target for Lonergan's social criticism is liberalism which, he argues, tends in the direction of two theories: modernism and Bolshevism. This is not some Limbaughesque tirade against "those damn liberals." He is especially concerned with the way these manifest themselves in social organization, and particularly, in the state. The problem with modernism is that the

> modernist desires to leave the whole of history without any higher control: all thought that is not positive science has no justifiable application to the objective situation since such thought has only a subjective value; all thought that is positive science merely

[3] Matthew L. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation.* (New York: Crossroads, 1982) p. 18.

> represents inevitable law, the truth of what is going to happen in any case.[4]

The Bolshevist begins with "the indifference of the modernist to the objective situation" and that the modernist's "religion is a sham, an opiate to soothe the misery of those oppressed by the modern state."[5] Lonergan continues his critique of Bolshevism:

> it is the science of propaganda, the strategy of revolution, the political creed of cowing men by brutality and terror, and the art of permanently winning hearts by moral perversion. . . Bolshevism is ludicrous with its initial assertion that man is no more than an animal; but Bolshevism is terrible in its power to prove its own truth by making man no more than an animal.[6]

One of the interesting things about Lonergan's anti-bolshevism is that it does not necessarily result in an inclination toward, or affinity with, fascist or Nazi anticommunism. Rather, the critique of bolshevism is an extension of the critique of the modern state and its virulent nationalism. For Lonergan, "the state is the villain of the modern piece" and with liberalism, the state

> surrendered itself hands bound to the domination of economic law. . . it deliberately fostered the mere dialectic of fact in the form of nationalism—the stupid appeal to a common language and an united geographical position as something of real significance.[7]

Lest we fear that Lonergan will end up being quoted in the survival manual of the Michigan Militia, he does dialectically give limited credit to the state for being "the social expression of the natural ambitions and desires of man" and woman in fostering certain forms of culture and attempting to "carry on the work of human advancement till the dream of a democracy which is an aristocracy for all be realized."[8] Lonergan's use of Aristotle's sense of "aristocracy" as the rule by the best is a technical use of aristocracy which does not necessarily and automatically carry classist, racist, or sexist connotations.

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[4] "essay," p. 110.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid. p. 112.
[8] Ibid. p. 113.

The problem he has with the state is that "it is the real power of modern times as in any time in the past. It deliberately exploits all that is excellent and much that is evil in the social mentality and in the desires of individual to make its power an absolute and unquestionable power."[9] To Lonergan, the state has no right to claim to be sovereign with its decisions being absolute and unquestionable.

> No modern state, generally speaking, is either economically or politically independent. The world is run by an oligarchy of "Grossmächte" and the justice of their decisions is as much open to question as the existence of their right to make decisions.[10]

Lonergan gives three reasons for the dissolution of the present order of sovereign states: 1) they conduct their affairs without any intelligible principle, i.e., their arguments are "not from what ought to be but solely from what is;" 2) there is no basis for their "pretended right to make absolute decisions" since "they are neither economically nor politically independent and therefore they are not sovereign;" 3) "their action is immoral and cannot but be immoral" and this follows from the state's lack of a principled basis for making the decisions they make. This immorality of the state is also manifest in

> the fomentation of nationalism by the perversion of the newspaper, the school, and practically everything else; nationalism is the setting up of a tribal god not merely in the case of Germany—at whom the world smiles for its self-idolatry—[11] but in every case; every nation foments nationalism according to its need.[12]

And one final and crucial element in his critique of the state is that "the action of the sovereign states is necessarily immoral in the matter of armament manufacture."[13] In line with this specific immorality, Lonergan asserts that

> [t]he modern state does not think in terms of the past, of its merits or demerits in being what it is; it thinks in terms of the future and if it foresees that it is being put out of the running by

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid. p. 115.

[11] This is indication of the pre-WWII dating of this piece.

[12] Ibid. p. 116.

[13] Ibid.

> those with more economic power and more diplomatic skill, then it simply turns berserk in the name of Odin, Thor or what you please.[14]

The early Lonergan sits squarely in the ongoing Christian tradition of being highly suspicious and critical of the state as the institutionalized patterns of authority in a given society. This tradition is not simply anti-state in general although it can be in particular times and places. The state for Lonergan is not simply the government; but rather the complex patterns of relationships that constitute political order. Authentically, the state is cooperative in fostering the schemes of unity and solidarity among people that is foundational for historical progress. Inauthentically, the state is cooperative with historical decline. For the young Lonergan, the modern state appeared too engaged in the schemes of extinction.

SOLIDARITY AND HISTORICAL PROGRESS

The concern for solidarity was growing among Catholic thinkers in the pre-WWII period. The divisiveness and destructiveness of liberal capitalism, the global economic depression, the rise of communism and the reactions to it in the forms of Nazism and fascism gave rise to a new sense of urgency regarding the unity of the human race. The xenophobic nationalism with its myriad of racist manifestations threatened peace and the movements for justice. According to Lamb, "Modern notions of solidarity as only 'common interests' tend to be extrinsic and voluntarist: solidarity is a tool for survival in the conflictive struggles of existence. Solidarity is thereby linked to violence and domination."[15] Lonergan, in the "Metaphysics of Human Solidarity,"[16] attempted to subvert the

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[14] Ibid. p. 124. The Persian Gulf war easily comes to mind since Japan and West Germany (the U.S.'s chief economic rivals) got most of their oil from Iraq.

[15] Matthew L. Lamb, "Solidarity," *Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, p.5.

[16] The title page of the work sketches out the topic as:

> "'Panton Anakephalaiosis' A theory of human solidarity / a metaphysic of the interpretation of St Paul / a theology for the Social Order, Catholic Action, and the Kingship of Christ, IN INCIPIENT OUTLINE."

divisiveness and destructiveness of modernity with an argument for peace and unity as the principled foundation of the political order.

The purpose of Lonergan's essay, it seems to me, is to set forth an explanatory or theoretical understanding of the unity of the human race which sublates a commonsense individualism and collectivism. This sublation does not destroy the individual but rather intensifies the role of the human person in history. Human beings are not just isolated monads living in this or that particular continuum of time unconnected to the rest of humanity and history, both past and future. Lonergan is addressing the severe fragmentation and alienation of modern industrial society. Given the insecurity and threats around the world at the time, Lonergan was correctly concerned with the foundational question of the peace and unity of the human race. He is highly critical of the pseudo-forms of solidarity that are manifest in "national self-idolatry,"[17] racism[18] and the "mass propaganda of national education, national newspapers, national morality and the peace that comes of police, armaments, and forced military service."[19]

Intrinsic to Lonergan's notion of solidarity is a rootedness in historical consciousness because history explains why people "are doing what they are doing."[20] It is intriguing that he uses the present tense to say what history does. One would suspect that history is more concerned primarily with what people have done in the past; and then possibly, the question about why they have done what they have done might be asked. Underlying Lonergan's discussion is the belief that history has a purpose or that it is oriented toward some end. Given the context of the 1930's, to be proposing a purpose in history so that people can understand themselves in what they are "doing," was probably a rather suspicious undertaking. Is not history only a tool for those with some ideological agenda? Propaganda of the state in its myriad forms is quick to use history for its own legitimation. Rampant at the time were appeals to the nationalistic historical tendencies against those considered less pure (or whatever), the writing and rewriting of national histories to assert state or party interests as being supreme, and the

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[17] Bernard Lonergan, *A Metaphysic of Human Solidarity* (Toronto: an unpublished manuscript, 1935) p. 4.

[18] Ibid. p. 18.

[19] Ibid. p. 6.

[20] "essay," p. 98.

multitude of ways of persuading compliance through historical arguments. The tenacity that the young Lonergan evidences in his critique of liberalism and its offshoot of Bolshevism makes one realize that this essay was not some idle tract; but rather this essay on solidarity is a profound reflection on the state of the world and what people are doing to themselves. The challenge is: are we going to intelligently foster progress or stupidly contribute to our own destruction?

Crucial to Lonergan's notion of progress in history is his focus on the subjects of history. Our understanding of ourselves is intimately connected to our understanding of other people in many places and times. To the degree that we truly understand another context in its complexity, we truly come to know ourselves in all of our plurality—and unity. The recognition of our basic humanity (our "one human nature") leads to a deeper appreciation for and more intense desire to understand why people "are doing what they are doing." The interconnectedness of all people at all times and places is a further specification of "history with a purpose."

The modern concern for historical progress is certainly evident in this essay but Lonergan does not accept the naive notion of ongoing, automatic progress in history. Nor is he a pessimist regarding the human possibilities for creating a more just world. Our historical existence is highly conditioned but not with some "iron cage" determinism. Human freedom is always a reality for Lonergan. In his discussion on historical progress in the "Essay on Fundamental Sociology," Lonergan said,

> The function of progress is to increase leisure that men [and women] may have more time to learn, to conquer material evil in privation and sickness that men [and women] have less occasion to fear the merely factual and that they may have more confidence in the rule of intellect, to struggle against the inherited capital of injustice which creates such objective situations that men [and women] cannot be truly just unless the objective situation is changed, and finally,. . . out of the very progress itself to produce a mildness of manners and temperament which will support and imitate and extend the mighty power of Christian

> charity. This then is the virtue of progress, the virtue of social justice....[21]

In other words, historical progress is intelligent, moral, and religious.

NEED FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

Furthering the discussion on solidarity and the critique of pseudo-forms of solidarity is the third area of concentration which is much more explicitly theological since it involves what Lonergan refers to as the "necessity of the supernatural" that has its premise in sin.[22] The explicitly social focus in response to the overwhelming individualism of modernity can be seen in Lonergan's concern, not only for personal salvation in the need for the supernatural, but for "the hope of the future [which] lies in a philosophic presentation of the supernatural concept of social order."[23] Reason alone and human activity, isolated from faith, are inadequate for dealing with the irrationality of sin and evil in the personal, political, and social order.

Sin is not understood simply in some privatized manner; Lonergan articulates what eventually would come to be called "social sin" by political and liberation theologians. To quote Lonergan:

> . . . the greatest evil in the world is the evil that is concretized in the historic flow, the capital of injustice that hangs like a pall over every brilliant thing, that makes men and nations groan over other's glory, that provokes anger and suicide and dire wars, that culminates in the dull mind and sluggish body of the enslaved people or the decayed culture.[24]

The evil that is made concrete in the flow of human actions becomes more powerful "when wrong sets itself up as a theory."[25] The contradiction in the human conscience, which is later called "moral impotence" by Lonergan, is the good people "would do they do not do"; thus, the contradiction fosters a tendency of asserting the wrong to be

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[21] Ibid. p. 128-9.
[22] "essay," p. 117-8.
[23] Ibid. p. 117.
[24] Ibid. p. 129-30.
[25] Ibid. p. 113.

right.[26] For those of us who cannot differentiate right from wrong, unconscious corruption occurs and there is a "generalization and universalisation of the defended sin."[27] Sin is not constitutive of nature, nor a consequence of nature; therefore, the need for the supernatural is not because of our human nature. Rather, it is required for human action or praxis, which is not just the final product of our individual intellect and will. Human action is intrinsically constituted by intelligence and free will (with its limitations) and is profoundly interconnected with all human action as the flow of history. The supernatural does not contradict the natural; although the supernatural does contradict "human corruption, arising from the refusal to have God in human knowledge, and brought about by a corporate responsibility of those who do evil and those that consent to evil-doers."[28] According to Lonergan,

> . . . the individual's act is not only a bracketed product of the past; it is a pre-motion for the future... Every individual is an instrument in the transmission of the pre-motion: he may be an instrument for more sin or for less. He may be an instrument of sin or for Christ."[29]

Theologically, the meaning of history is understood "from the intention of God's creating man [and woman] as one, one in nature and one in action."[30] Creation is oriented toward the manifestation of Wisdom, the Word of God. Because of the unity of nature and of action, "all good in the world flows from the pre-motion of Wisdom and would not be were it not for that pre-motion."[31] In the world and in history, "the manifestation of Wisdom lies in the triumph of good out of evil; because evil caused evil. . . the world brings good out of this evil." God does not cause evil to occur and evil cannot "triumph for every evil is permitted merely that good may more fully abound."[32] For Lonergan, all good has its causation both physical and moral in the "pre-motion of Christ"[33]

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid. p. 114.
[28] Ibid. p. 120.
[29] Ibid. p. 128.
[30] Ibid. p. 127.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

Consequently, the role and importance of the human person in the meaning of history "is to be a transmitting unit of the pre-motion of wisdom or to fail in doing so thus creating the growing evil of the world."[34] The evil that is concretized in the historic flow is overcome by "the mighty power of Christian charity."[35]

Despite the mechanical language of referring to people as "transmitting units" or "instruments in the transmission", Lonergan was attempting to counteract the ideology of the self-sufficient, monadic individual as the centerpiece of modernity's project in history. The enlightenment's "turn to the subject" is certainly taken seriously by him while attempting to overcome its distortions and myopic isolation of that subject. He does this by retrieving the insights of another "turn to the subject" in the Christian tradition during the medieval enlightenment with a focus on Thomas Aquinas. Using what appears to be mechanical language to counteract the instrumentalized notion of the human person may not be helpful or useful given the backdrop of the industrial, mechanistic age. Nonetheless, Lonergan was attempting to give an explanatory framework and cannot be understood as offering a mechanical misunderstanding of society and history.

Progress, for Lonergan, is not a fascination with technology and industry or profit-making as the standard; but rather it is a fascination with the potentiality of the human race for intelligently and morally overcoming with God's grace evil with good, or to be instruments in transmitting the pre-motion of social justice in solidarity with all people, especially the poor. The need for the supernatural is that only God can transform evil into good. We cannot do it on our own regardless of how intelligent and moral we happen to be. Evil remains evil until God's grace moves us to participate in transforming it.

The community of Christ carries on the pre-motion of Christ and the love that "does not nourish hatred or threaten war" but "with deepest thought and unbounded spontaneity ever strives, struggles, labors, exhorts, implores, prays for the betterment" of the human race.[36] This supernatural understanding of human history is an appeal to the ancient wisdom and reflection upon human happiness. No person

[34] Ibid. p. 128.
[35] Ibid. p. 129.
[36] Ibid. p. 130.

"without self-contradiction could deny that suffering injustice was better than doing injustice, that pain was incompatible with happiness, that shame, the interior contradiction, the lie in the souls . . . was incompatible with happiness."[37] It is the insight that when it comes right down to it, people "will be happy if only they have something to die for."[38] Lonergan argues that this "point is a common-place of history and literature; it is a fundamental element of human psychology; and it is none the less true because the nineteenth century liberals believed exactly the contrary" (105). It seems that modern liberals are only happy if they have nothing to die for; in other words, nothing is so worth committing oneself to that one would be willing to lay down one's life.[39]

Lonergan, in these early essays, is attempting to articulate the mediation of the metaphysics of the body of Christ historically. The attempt to present an organic understanding of society and history is extremely difficult with the modern assumptions of relationships as ultimately conflictual and self-interested. A further difficulty arises when the language of organic society is used as an ideological cover for a society organized unjustly and violence is used to maintain order as in national security states. To talk about the power of Christ to unify and reintegrate the human race from fragmentation is to Lonergan a non-dominative dynamic that is thoroughly humane and dignified. To reflect on a theology of the political order is not to desire to impose some extrinsic order on chaotic society but to reflect upon the God who calls and heals people in the concrete reality of their own lives.

According to Lonergan's essay on the "metaphysics of human solidarity,"[40] the work of Jesus Christ is mediated historically in the work of peace. The revelation of God through God's solidarity with humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is not just information or a disclosure of some ideas but it is above all transformative, that is,

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[37] Ibid. p. 105.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Although, (I must admit in my most cynical moments) taking into consideration the influence of the arguments of the Hobbesian "war of all against all," the isolation of the human person and the ideology of private property, along with the power of the modern state, some moderns are willing to risk their lives (or those of their draftees) for causes and commitments but the purpose is not to suffer and die but inflict suffering and to kill!

[40] "metaphysics," p. 20.

people putting on the mind of Christ (I Cor 2:16).[41] This "mind of Christ" is required because of "the twofold problem of intellectual unity and effective will."[42] At the heart of this transformed life for Lonergan is the sacrificial love revealed by God in the life and death of Jesus that redeems and saves history from destruction caused by the "Zersplitterung of humanity."[43] To quote Lonergan:

> Whether we read the Messianic prophecies, muse over the angel's hymn at Bethlehem, recall the discourse of the Last Supper, or turn to the texts of St. Paul on the 'anakephalaiosis', we always find the work of Christ described as the work of peace, the peace of an universal king, the peace that comes to men [and women] of good will, the peace that the world of sin with its balance of power and its economic imperialism cannot give.[44]

The tradition of the social teachings of the church with its attempt to transpose the teaching on the "common good" into the modern age is rooted in "the sole possibility of a catholicity that over-rides the petty differences of nationality and other tribal instincts and therefore the sole possibility of a practical human unity."[45] But to only argue rationally for the "intellectual unity" or solidarity of the human race is futile, according to Lonergan. A "false situation" based on irrationality and partial reason is not capable of listening to the truth of reason. Lonergan goes on to argue:

> The only possible unity of men [and women] is dogma: the dogma of communism unites by terrorism to destroy; the dogma of race unites to protect but it is meaningless as a principle of advance and it is impotent as a principle of human dignity; in plain language, it is not big enough an idea to meet the problem; it is a nostrum that increases the malady. There remains only the dogma of Christ.[46]

This dogma of Christ is crucial for peace since it is the memory of the Christian community of the crucified and risen One that is subversive of

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[41] Ibid. p. 16.
[42] Ibid. p. 22.
[43] Ibid. p. 20.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

violence, terrorism, and oppression and thus intrinsic to authentic historical progress.

The use of the word "dogma" and any discussion of metaphysics and even truth is highly suspicious language today. What is to keep the "dogma of Christ" from becoming a justification for violence and oppression (which seems to be a major modern concern)? Is truth dominative? Is any attempt at laying a metaphysical foundation a form of intellectual arrogance meant to undermine human freedom? Certainly, a false understanding of the "dogma of Christ" has led to untold atrocities (in conjunction with other political and economic dynamics, of course) and certainly what has been claimed to be "the truth" has been used to dominate human beings and attempts to set foundations have historically been done for ideological and oppressive purposes. If the peace of Christ has historically (and sporadically) been instituted by the sword or gun or imposed from above, then how does Lonergan propose to counter this misunderstanding?

Revelation is not just passing on ideas. The "revelation to which Christ was a witness is not only a content but premoves a living and developing mind: the mind of the mystical body; we have the mind of Christ." (I Cor 2.16)[47] Lonergan is not offering some static, essentialist understanding of revelation or dogma but he is profoundly concerned with the development of our understanding of the mind of Christ, in other words, the "expansion from the primitive tradition of dogma so as eventually to include a conscious body of social science illuminated by supernatural light."[48] The references to "Quadragesimo anno" and the Catholic Action movement are indications of what Lonergan had in mind.[49] Knowing and doing the truth in solidarity are integral to each other for historical progress.[50]

In the concentration on the supernatural dimension of transformation or what would later be called "religious conversion," intellect and will are not by-passed or eliminated but their operations are provoked to a higher level of understanding and willingness. "Putting on

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[47] Ibid. p. 16.

[48] Ibid. p. 19.

[49] Ibid. p. 18.

[50] Cf. M.L. Lamb's "Political Theology and Enlightenment: Toward a Reconstruction of Dogma as Socially Critical," in *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroads, 1982).

the mind of Christ" is not an abdication of personal and social responsibility but is an invitation to "live as one alive from the dead."[51]

> Christ is the anakephalaiosis of humanity as the Light of the world, the principle of human unity, the prince of peace. . . . From Christ by the sending of the Holy Ghost proceeds the active spiration in the human image of the Trinity; and in response to this active influence is the passive supernatural love of man [and woman], the theological virtue of charity. . . Christ is the centre of the love which all men [and women] must have for all men [and women] in the unity of human nature. For to love one's neighbour and to love Christ is all one. "Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee: thirsty and gave thee to drink? and when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in? Or naked and covered thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and came to thee?" (Matt 25.27ff).[52]

The meaning that Christ offers as the empowerment by God is the willingness and intellectual sense of solidarity with all human beings throughout all of history and into the future, especially and most profoundly the poor and oppressed, the victims of past, present, and future social disorder that result from the lack of "putting on the mind of Christ." Lonergan puts it rather starkly: people "can choose between the service of reason and of passion, only between the service of God or of sin, only between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Satan."[53] Humanity is "no more than an instrument." At the core of this "theological virtue of charity" is a life lived "in a perpetual rite of sacrifice. Sacrifice, the shedding of blood, is the whole meaning of life. This shedding of blood can only be construed as self-sacrificial given Jesus' refusal to use violence against human beings. Sacrificial love as "the distinctive doctrine of Christ" is "the only means of overcoming the evil of error and sin, the only alternative to the dialectic of sin which takes objective evil as a premise and elaborates false principles as laws for the greater misery of [hu]mankind."[54]

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[51] "metaphysics," p. 22.
[52] Ibid. p. 21.
[53] Ibid. p. 22.
[54] Ibid. p. 21.

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on Lonergan's concerns for the peace and unity in historical progress, his critique of evil that becomes systematized in social and political structures (the state), and his integration of the theological in the transformation of evil into good. As I have come to understand this reflection on the human condition, the early Lonergan was moving toward a theoretical account of redemption and the need for the supernatural that is intrinsic for trying to understand the transformation of evil into good through nonviolence. His dialectical critique of modernity is an effort to draw forth what is liberating for human beings in the modern age and to expose by the light of human intelligence informed by faith the darkness that enslaves often in the name of freedom. By highlighting the unity and solidarity of the human race, the young Lonergan was attempting to respond to the fragmentation and alienation of modern industrial societies not by some nostalgic return to premodernity or some leap into postmodernity. To argue that the refusal to accept sin, violence and domination as natural orientations for people as well as a more explicit articulation of self-sacrificial love or nonviolence as the most reasonable and faithful means of overcoming evil only is the point of Lonergan's focus on the "dogma of Christ." Thus, the "dogma of Christ" unites by the liberation of "putting on the mind of Christ." Self-sacrificial love can only be freely chosen, empowered by the grace of God's love—it cannot be imposed. Nor can this self-transcendent love seek to martyr others in some economic or political project of the state or in interpersonal projects like marriage or friendship.

REFLECTIONS ON LONERGAN

I recall reading Lonergan's *Method in Theology* for the first time in one of my first graduate seminars and wondering how any "monumental" book in theology could be written in the sixties and early seventies and fail to even mention the Vietnam war and the civil rights movement. Having been nurtured on the denunciations of the systemic injustice, torture,

and oppression delineated within various liberation theologies as well as on their consistent arguments for contextualization and praxis, I could not figure out Lonergan's omission in the North American context. And, of course, being schooled in the "liberal" concepts of freedom and equality, I assumed that all this talk of a normative structure or pattern of human consciousness was another version of some kind of imperialistic theology by another white male. I was wrong in my first impressions, not to mention pretty naive about the massive project that Lonergan was up against and the counter-project that he was proposing. Lonergan had a genuine interest in the project of promoting peace and justice by transforming the "civilization in decline [which] digs its own grave with a relentless consistency."[55] His counter-project of transforming modern civilization has much more to do with transforming human subjects and their communities and with what is meant by being intelligent, moral, and religious than with simply changing a few laws and opposing one war. The "bias" of racism and militarism is much more persistent and deeply-rooted.

The point, as I have come to understand it, is that Lonergan was attempting to promote a more authentic basis for a transformed praxis—a deepened or higher level of intelligent living and loving—rather than just a better application or practice based on a bigger and better theory. The deepened understanding of human praxis and the appropriation of human self-consciousness that is graced by God is encouraged by this paper to include a more conscious articulation of nonviolence as integral to the schemes of human knowing and living. An understanding of political order that is not specific about its nonviolence and concrete about its resistance to injustice often functions in a manipulative, dominative or oppressive manner. An explicit articulation of the nonviolence that is implicit in Lonergan's thought is fully consistent and coherent with the emerging direction of his thought.

Lonergan was concerned with the intelligent direction of history incarnated in the communities of people who pattern history (attentively, intelligently, critically, responsibly, and lovingly). This intelligent direction is only possible through the intelligibility of divine redemption. The schemes of recurrence fostered by peaceful, just, and nonviolent communities that creatively appropriate that intelligibility

[55] *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972) p.55.

emerge to be the instruments of divine healing in the history, created in cooperation with God. Historically in the Christian community, there is some approximation of nonviolence that flows from the self-sacrificing love of Jesus of Nazareth and the communities that continue to incarnate the body of Christ. The attempts of the Christian community at different times and places to severely restrict the use of violence and to place limits on the sacralization (abuse of faith) and secularization (abuse of reason) of war is an example of nonviolence as the withdrawal from violence and resistance to evil. Being nonviolent in the midst of violence and overcoming of evil by transforming it through sacrificial love cooperative with God are those redemptive moments of history to which Lonergan sought to give voice.

I will conclude with Lonergan's concluding reflections in the "Essay on Fundamental Sociology" from the prophet Isaiah (2:2-4):

> Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord. . . and he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths. . . . And he shall judge the Gentiles and rebuke many people: and they shall turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation: neither shall they be exercised any more to war.' Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure[!].[56]

[56] "essay," p. 130.

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THE IDEA OF A DESCRIPTIVE EQUALITY: LONERGAN EXPLAINS JEFFERSON

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PART I: THE IDEA OF A DESCRIPTIVE* EQUALITY

FORREST GUMP WON the 1995 Academy Award for best motion picture; some critics have even called it a Christian movie. It is, all the same, a rather good film. Here is the gist of the story: Gump, a young man of good looks but scant intelligence survives a dozen moral encounters, always choosing the right course while nimbler minds are bedazzled by doubt or fear. A kind of moral idiot-savant, his intuition for the good saves him from the confusions to which his subtler fellows succumb. Gradually they are drawn into his naive agape and find their fumbling humanity restored. Gump himself winds up morally fulfilled, rich, and loved by all—especially the girl. There is more to the story, but this is sufficient to our purpose, and we hesitate to spoil it.

The movie would come off better as one episode in a soap opera; for to appreciate the moral issues raised by this puerile prodigy requires at least two sequels. In *Forrest Gump II* we would witness the mentally marginal hero again doing his moral best. This time, however, he would keep getting the content of the objective good all wrong. When Lieutenant Dan orders Gump to let him die, Gump would follow orders;

when his beloved little son is bad, he would beat the child, supposing this good for his character; he would buy drugs for the addict to relieve his suffering from withdrawal; and he would sleep with the prostitute because he feels responsible to help her. We would have him behave like the nincompoop he is trying desperately not to be. And each of his miscues would earn him contempt from his associates. We could call this sequel *Forrest Slump*, remembering meanwhile that this bungler is really the same wonderful guy inside.

This thought, however, suggests the third version in which the blundering hero of *FG II* would get judged solely by his good intentions. The other characters would somehow recognize his honest effort and display the same love and respect they showed him when he was a man of good deeds as well as good heart. But this third perspective introduces more difficult questions. Even if the victims of his moral miscues could grasp his good intention, are we clear that this should matter? Is Slump really as good a person—as admirable as Gump? Or was Samuel Johnson correct in supposing the road to hell to be paved with such intentions?

That is the question we would put to Bernard Lonergan. Do honest mistakes about the content of the moral law make a person less perfect in moral terms than he would be if he were to recognize the real good and proceed to do it? What, for one very stark example, is the consequence for one who becomes a conscientious, pro bono abortionist?

There are three possible answers. Honest errors of chosen behavior are either morally: 1) damaging, 2) excusing, or 3) self-perfecting. That is, with each bungled but bona fide choice the actor is, morally speaking, either worse off, the same, or advancing. This issue—let us call it the Gump Difficulty—remains unsettled after two millennia of moral theology. It is a question whose importance over-matches the amateur strokes of a couple of lawyers. We have had to confront it, nonetheless, out of simple necessity. For therein lies the only solution to a problem that is more in the lawyer's line—one that has long vexed us.

We are looking for the coherent meaning, if any, of the claim that humans are equal. Since Jefferson, this assertion has remained as unexplained as it is common. We emphasize that the equality that is claimed is metaphysical and descriptive; it is declarative, not imperative, and has nothing directly to do with ideal social conditions or

theories of justice. Of social inequality too much has already been said, while the possible fact of human equality has been curiously neglected. Egalitarians refer off-handedly to the "fact" of human equality, as if it were the self-evident premise for some utopian scheme of morals or policy. But even John Rawls is keener to avoid than to clarify the notion. We don't blame him; for the only coherent interpretation of a descriptive human equality would pose serious problems for liberal theories of moral obligation. Indeed, a clear view of human equality makes many Scholastics distinctly uncomfortable, though for different reasons, as we shall see.

It is, therefore, gratifying that human equality finds apparent asylum in the moral metaphysics of Bernard Lonergan. We come here to test this insight (if such it be) and to consult, and be corrected by, those who understand Lonergan so much more profoundly than we. However, in order to see how we cross his trail, and how he offers us aid and comfort, we must tell you exactly what human equality means as a descriptive term. We will boil what could be a rather extended synthesis to its barest essentials.

Equality, Dignity and Relativity

Every instance of equality is a relation between two or more things that are different in certain ways (not identical with each other) and the same in regard to some specific property.[1] Of course, two things that are distinct still can be equal in many respects. A pound of sugar and a pound of nails though different, bear the relation of equality in respect of weight and possibly in respect of other properties such as distance from my eyes. Indeed, like every pair of physical substances, they have an infinity of equalities; on some plane in space there is an unlimited number of points from which they are equidistant. Of course, the relation of equality—like every relation—is non-empirical; pure relation has no sensible properties. On this very ground its reality is denied by many, though not by the authors (nor by anyone who would believe in equality as a descriptive reality).

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* "Descriptive" is used in this piece not in Lonergan's sense as the opposite of "explanatory;" but in the common post-Weberian sense as the opposite of "normative." (Editor)

[1] Peter Westen, *Speaking of Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 13.

The many descriptive equalities that hold among humans come in two forms, only one of which is sufficiently significant to be the human equality that was invoked by Jefferson. Here are three examples of the first (and trivial) type: All humans are equal in possessing bodies; most are equal in possessing intelligence; most adults are equal in possessing wealth. Thus, Mother Theresa and Donald Trump are related as equals, since both have wealth—she fifty dollars, he fifty million. Likewise Lonergan and I are equals, both possessing intelligence. These genuine human equalities, however, serve mainly to distract us from the more interesting relation that holds between Theresa and Trump and between Lonergan and me—namely, inequality. Grasping the reality of this disparity, we realize that equalities of mere possession have little human significance; the meaningful species of the equality relation is the double equality that arises whenever persons are uniform not only in possessing a property but uniform also in the extent or degree to which they possess it.[2]

This distinction between single and double equalities is carefully avoided by the egalitarian moralists—even by those who purport to rest justice upon a factual or descriptive equality. Thus (following Hobbes's example) John Rawls first tells us to look for a factual basis for equality, then settles instead for a "range property" (the capacity for "moral personality") that he quietly recognizes to vary in degree among us.[3] It is a great cross for the egalitarians that they can find no empirical sameness of human persons that holds in both possession and degree.[4] Mankind varies in every measurable dimension.[5]

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[2] See J. Coons and P. Brennan, "Natural Law and Human Equality," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* **40** (1995).

[3] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) 504-512.

[4] Bernard Williams, "The Idea of Equality," ed. Joel Feinberg *Moral Concepts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) speaks of the "...absurdity of the idea that achievement of the highest kind of moral worth should depend on natural capacities unequally .... distributed." Id. at 157-158. He nevertheless accepts it as true.

[5] Cf. Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

This exclusive reliance upon empiricism happily is an academic fetish to which we owe no allegiance.[6] To us a relation of double human equality founded upon some immeasurable but plausible characteristic would seem an interesting discovery. It might be inappropriate as an object of scientific proof but still worthy as an object for rational belief or disbelief. Equality may be one of those possibilities to which persons (or societies) can give or refuse allegiance as a core premise of our identity and connectedness.

Beginning the search for this relation we will for convenience here simply assume something basic on which we expect agreement: If a non-demonstrable (and irrefutable) relation of human equality were to exist, it would entail the same ontological elements attributed to that other elusive property, "human dignity." Equality, if real, is benign; it will rest upon the premises of free will and reason that allow the belief in a real morality. Equality is, in this respect, a Christian and not merely a modern conception. In its religious versions its ultimate source is humanity's creaturely privilege as God's image and likeness; we share finitely in his knowledge and freedom, and it is this which makes us interesting.

Curiously, the idea of dignity remains to this day an ambiguous and even dangerous premise for believers and unbelievers alike. No one has yet asked whether dignity is uniform in degree; but as a trait reserved to thinkers and choosers, dignity seems prone to wax and wane with the cognitive endowments of individuals. Maybe prodigies like Forrest Gump can get by on intuition; the rest of us are stuck with reason, as we go about the daily business of moral decision. And if reason comes in all sizes, our chance to participate in our own moral self-perfection (or salvation) through correct choices may be highly variant from person to person. We could easily differ in our moral powers precisely as we differ in natural intellectual gifts. We would be subject, as some philosophers like to say, to "moral luck."[7]

Whether one's capacity to grasp the intelligible content of the good affects the degree of one's potential for moral self-perfection is an ancient question. If the answer turns out to be yes, human dignity

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[6] Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984) 44-46.

[7] See generally the essays in D. Stratman (ed.) *Moral Luck* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992).

becomes relativized; intellectual horsepower is moral horsepower. Conceived thus in comparative terms, that dignity which is the medium of moral significance becomes potentially the medium on the one hand of the moral triviality of an individual and, on the other, of his ascendancy above the herd.

If dignity is to avoid being transmogrified into such a gnostic hierarchy, human persons must enjoy the same capacity for moral self-perfection. Though it is variable in potentia, this capacity must in fact be uniform in nature among rational humans. That it would be uniform seems at first implausible. Reason holds a central place in man's status as "image and likeness," and this could make the uniformity of capacity conceptually difficult. How can the marginal mind have equal opportunity for self-perfection in a moral economy that—like any other—emphasizes getting things right? We suspect that, if we manage to answer this question, we will simultaneously rescue human dignity from gnostic relativity and establish the meaning of human equality.

Giving Equality its Plausible Meaning

The initial step toward identifying the structure necessary to human equality appears in Jacques Maritain's *Redeeming the Time*.[8] Maritain commences with the familiar brace of descriptive elements—reason and will—that are the precondition of morality and love, hence the stuff of dignity. That the relation of human equality requires a realist metaphysics is a necessary first insight. That is, the relation itself must exist, and to do so it must rest upon a host property in the moral structure of the related persons. We are grateful to Maritain for the ontic foundation but disappointed that he stops there and leaves our question unattended; his view of equality allows the shared possession of a capacity for perfection that varies in effectual range from person to person. Far from establishing a substantive human equality, it would in that case provide a medium for a possible moral hierarchy based upon cognitive power. Human equality needs a host property that would

[8] Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time* (London: Bles, 1944). See also P. Brennan, "Human Equality: Maritain More or Less," in S. Long (ed.), *Maritain and the U.N.: Human Rights, Human Nature and Politics* (forthcoming, 1996).

plausibly be uniform among us in its potency for moral self-perfection (and for salvation).

We identify seven criteria for such a host. That the criteria are met in the real world is beyond showing; what can be shown is that nothing less will do. That their satisfaction in this world is plausible can be argued in a systematic way, but this short essay is not the place to relate all the evidence that supports the authors' belief.

Here then are the criteria or necessary premises for any conception of a real human equality:

1. Relation must constitute a distinctive category of being, one that is sustained by host properties in the things related;
2. Human equality must be a relation that is grounded upon a host property present in all rational human persons;
3. The host property of the relation must be a natural capacity the free exercise of which is sufficient to determine the moral self-identity of the person;
4. That capacity must include the conscious imperative freely to seek and attempt those actions that affect others and are correct in a way that is not dependent upon our knowledge or consent;
5. Honest misperception of the specific content of this order of correct actions must be possible in spite of diligent inquiry;
6. Moral self-perfection (and salvation) must be attainable by free commitment to the quest for correct actions in a way that cannot be identical with their actual discovery;
7. The capacity for this self-perfecting commitment must be uniform in degree among rational persons.

These criteria are partly our interpretation of the Western linguistic convention about human equality; it is what we think people implicitly mean—and what Jefferson perhaps consciously meant—by "created equal." Note that linguistic convention itself includes an reference to reality; in this case the convention refers to a metaphysical state of affairs. It further supposes that human equality relates one person to another in their distinctive human capacities freely to affect one another's circumstances. Human equality is about our power to

shape our own moral identity within the reciprocities of human-to-human experience.[9]

What it is not about is our actually and contingently developed ability to find the correct answers. Equality cannot concern our personal achievement of the external or common good; we are too varied and vulnerable in our mental and other circumstances to have the same talent for practical achievements. What could be uniform—and all that could—is the capacity to commit in acord with what light he or she has to that order of the external good as our ideal. If every person recognized the authority of the order of correct actions, he could have the plenary power freely to commit to or to reject the search for them. Human equality necessarily assumes this commitment itself to be the only act relevant to the moral self-perfection of human actors. It insists that Forrest Slump is every bit as morally fulfilled as Forrest Gump, though he perpetrates ever-so-many good faith violations of what would be the common and commutative good.

Now, one could believe in such a capacity for moral self-fulfillment through best effort and still not be certain that the capacity is uniform. Potentially it might be disuniform for reasons such as the distribution of divine grace that have nothing to do with relative intelligence or education.[10] Again, the claim here is only that this concept of moral self-perfection by sheer effort allows the possibility of human equality. It just might be the case that the variable capacity for moral self-perfection through best effort does not in fact vary. This could, then, be the double equality that satisfies the seven criteria. The plausibility of sameness in possession and in degree allows us to conceive and to affirm by believing in a descriptive equality; that belief delivers human dignity from relativization and hierarchy.

Certain Catholic theologians might be inclined at this point to slip into the language of "fundamental option." The idea of subjective personal commitment as the act which determines our personal moral state invites the comparison. However, we strongly urge resistance to

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[9] See, e.g., G. Outka, "Equality and Individuality: Thoughts on Two Themes in Kierkegaard," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* **10** (1982) 171.

[10] Cf. J. Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the Summa theologiae," in H. Beckley (ed.), *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* **19** (1992).

that impulse for the simple reason that the term "fundamental option" is ambiguous about the reality and authority of the order of the good. As a matter of language, human equality implies that there is an order of proper treatments of others; this is part of the definition. It would not be enough merely to recognize that all persons have the same capacity for moral effort apart from there must be a genuine object of that effort. It must be a moral order that obliges independently of the actor's own preferences and inventions.

There is an old English word for the specific decision to be made in respect to that moral order. Its infinitive form is "to obtend."[11] The act of commitment is an "obtension." The word nicely suggests the objective dimension of personal choice that alone can morally perfect, so that it denotes the subjective act of committing to the search for the real good. Human equality is the relation that is based upon the uniform capacity of Everyman to obtend—to respond yes or no to the recognized imperative to hunt for the true good in the environment of human interdependency. We are connected by our uniform capacity to try to identify and to carry out correct behaviors in relation to other persons.

Jefferson Distinguished

According to Garry Wills, Jefferson believed something like this when he drafted the Declaration.[12] He had been much influenced by Thomas Hutcheson and the Scottish moralists who wrote vaguely of a "moral sense" supposed to resemble the physical senses. This impulse and this instinct for correct treatment of others were conceived as a universal trait. Jefferson applied the notion to slaves, arguing in support of their moral (as opposed to political) equality. This application of the Scottish idea, however, did not produce anything like a coherent notion of equality. Neither the Scots nor Jefferson was clear about the crucial questions whether 1) a well-intending person always gets the right answers; or 2) if not, whether one who tries to get them but fails is morally marred, unchanged or perfected. In short, Jefferson was unclear about the morally fulfilling act and thus was in no position either to believe or disbelieve that the crucial capacity was uniformly distributed.

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[11]The *O.E.D.* ascribes this to "Higden (Rolls) V. 53."

[12] Garry Wills, *Inventing America* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

"Created equal" was at best a vague intuition about the specific premises necessary to a belief in human equality.

However, if the fact of our being created equal is not exactly self-evident, this remains as true for us as for Jefferson. Far from being self-evident, it is beyond proof one way or the other. Yet, once again, if it were plausible that its criteria are met in the real order, equality could be a relation worthy either of belief or disbelief.

The linguistic convention that has been shared by the humblest citizens and the noblest statesmen bears testimony that the seven criteria of equality are satisfied. One can believe in the uniform capacity of persons to achieve moral self-perfection by the act of obtension. Still, does such a belief affect attitudes and behavior? If not, we can consign equality to the remotest philosophical limbo and forego any personal judgment on the question. Conversely, if belief or disbelief matters, we shall have to choose. With Jefferson, Lincoln and John Courtney Murray we shall have to hold the truth either of equality or of disequality and act upon it in spite of its open texture.[13]

The Harvests of Belief in Equality: I. The Two Kingdoms

The first consequence of a belief in human equality is the implicit division of practical reality into two realms. Regarding the act which morally perfects from the standpoint of the moral agent's intention has the effect of precising personal moral achievement from the perfection of the social order. A person may do social evil while saving his own soul. If we suppose that Aquinas, for example, committed a serious practical injustice in the external realm by supporting the burning of heretics; nevertheless, in honestly advocating that policy, Aquinas was morally perfecting himself. Likewise, Saul conscientiously persecuted Christians; our understanding of the belief in equality allows us to assume that Saul thereby improved his own moral state and prepared himself to become Paul. Men today volunteer for wars they mistake as just. We can be morally fulfilled by the honest choice of evil acts. It is possible to be good while doing the bad.

We call this "obstensional disjunction." We believe the bungler simultaneously succeeds in one realm and fails in the other. Does this

[13] John C. Murray, *We Hold These Truths* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988).

belief that honesty suffices for moral self-perfection affect the social order? Or in other words, will the common good be better served by the behaviors of those who reject equality, believing instead that only those who are correct can be good?

Our brief and speculative response is that the believer in obtensional morality is, if anything, more likely than the traditionalist to achieve the common good. Limiting self-perfection to correct knowledge and performance tends toward the moral minimalism of seeking the rule qua rule and resting too easily in its apprehension. While obtension too looks for the rule, it does so as but one part of an unceasing commitment to the order of lateral or social good. Obtension does not rest in the rule, for not activity in accord with the rule but the constancy and sincerity of the quest determines the moral state of the obtending actor. To satisfy the rule, then, is no guarantee of the necessary intention. For the obtending actor has been given as his mission is more than a discovery of specific right answers: it is a vocation. And vocations are open-ended so that there is no safety in the minimum. One may find oneself called to transcend the rule.

The objectivist response to this claim is that men commonly delude themselves about their good intentions. We would agree but observe that self-delusion is a state that is incompatible with good intention; and it is a state freely chosen. It can corrupt either intention or our knowledge of correct behaviors. Once we have willed to blind ourselves, self-delusion is easily managed in respect either of acts or of intentions. While we take seriously the warning of the extreme objectivist, our overall conclusion must be that belief in moral self-perfection by honest quest for the good is no serious threat to the realization of social good and may well be its most efficient instrument.

The Harvests of Human Equality: II. Five Bonuses

The belief in equality affects our ideal picture of how we should regard and actually treat one another. We shall specify five such effects. First, however, we reemphasize that human equality is not a premise for any particular policy. We have discovered no inference from the structure of the moral person to any specific form of social order. God may be an equal opportunity creator, but his is not the kind of opportunity that the state can either advance or retard. It is one that simply goes with the human territory. Conversely, the question for the state is not moral self-

perfection but justice; and people who are by nature equal in their capacity for moral self-perfection may differ in many ways that the law can justly reward, discourage, mandate or punish.

The practical implications of equality are mostly matter of perspective and attitude. That does not diminish their importance, as we can now illustrate. Note that in every example the specific pathology for which equality is the cure is the gnostic reduction of the capacity of any person to achieve the highest moral state to his cognitive achievement.

1. **Human Dignity** As already noted, the benign moral thrust of the concept of human dignity has been virtually reversed by its vulnerability to relativization. If the extent of one's capacity for a free morality is hostage to his IQ, dignity entails not automatic respect, but only hierarchy. Its injection into a legal order as a ground of justice would at best be ambiguous in implication.

Belief in descriptive equality forestalls this gnostic interpretation of dignity. Equality of access to moral perfection is a belief that simultaneously humbles and exalts. Dignity survives both as a plenary moral opportunity and a responsibility for all.

2. **Church and Community** We shall later suggest that equality is a permissible belief for Catholics, even though it entails the admission that persons in every stage of ignorance and unbelief have full access to salvation through honest inquiry. The Church, then, is challenged not only to reconceptualize the effect upon the person of access to (and isolation from) the sacraments but even to perceive itself as encouraging religious disbelief in cases where honest belief is impossible. The pilgrim community turns out to be everybody who is doing the best he can, and this has more implications than we can here pursue. None is a challenge to orthodoxy.

3. **Racism** Racism ultimately is the conviction that genealogical segments of the species are on average deficient in the capacity for moral perfection. Generally the deficiency is seen in gnostic terms: Moral capacity varies by cognitive power, and "they" have less of it than "we." Hence the inordinate passion of the responses to *The Bell Curve* which was taken by much of the professoriate and the media as a

moral statement.[14] Gnosticism is a special temptation for the academy; there the environment makes it possible to believe Kennedy's unfortunate conflation of the "best and the brightest." It is also a belief that is peculiarly painful for those gnostics whose "liberal" political commitments require verbal assent to human equality as a fact. This contradiction between moral hierarchy and liberalism makes affirmative action and similar ventures in the university deeply conflictual and helps explain the taboo that has inhibited the study of cognitive racial differences. The awful logic of the gnostic makes affirmative action into an artificial moral elevation. It also implies that, when at last the world is truly ruled by cognitive merit, we will have created a new moral underclass consisting of the dull of every race.

All this painful hierarchy is displaced by the belief in human equality. Intelligence is still allowed its role in the distribution of responsibilities (and, if necessary, incentives) but is never mistaken for moral superiority. Cleverness loses its cosmic significance.

4. **Moral Evolution** Among the several forms taken by the idea of "progress," none is more gnostic in spirit than the claim that mankind is on its way toward an earthly moral perfection. Teilhard de Chardin, for example, would have the race constantly drawn on by a cognitive elite that grasp more and more and thereby perfect themselves more efficiently than their ancestors.[15] Equality flatly rejects this interpretation of the human condition. There is no variation in the capacity of individuals to achieve moral self-perfection; there is no variation either across time or among contemporaries. Whatever our own epoch, each of us faces the same invitation to submit to the obligation to search for the good as best we can. That is the one task for which every rational person is as prepared as any other. However much the race increases in sophistication, the vocation of personal goodness and the capacity each of us brings to it are exactly the same.

5. **World unity** The modern idea of one world is distinct from that of moral evolution; it is a political state of affairs that could be (and may be) achieved. Though sometimes associated with equality, world unity is a very different conception. It vaguely supposes a polity in

[14] Richard Hernnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

[15] Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* trans. B. Wall (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959).

which justice is done both privately and publicly according to rules set by reason. This does not necessarily imply the descriptive equality of persons. Those different in their natural capacity for moral perfection might be governed by a universal rule of political equality; and vice versa. And, even within a world order, for believers in human equality the only uniform factual element would be our individual capacity to choose or refuse the quest for the good. Those free choices—for and against—will always divide mankind into two invisible cities. Unlike Augustine's cities there will be no impermeable boundary set by predestination; but there is no reason to expect that all of us will freely choose to seek and realize the moral ideal in relation to our neighbor. Some will choose one city; some the other.

The Harvests of Belief in Equality: III. From Equality to Fraternity

Finally, as we tally the practical consequences of the belief in human equality, account must be taken of equality's historic relation to fraternity and its peculiar promise to restore and vitalize that concept. Fraternity barely survived the French Revolution whose friends and foes alike preferred to discourse exclusively in terms of a liberty and an equality that were conceived less as facts than as social aspirations. Men were to be made politically free and equal; whether nature had already made them so—or even what a descriptive liberty and equality could mean—was never made clear.

The egalitarian energy of those times filled the available moral space, and fraternity never made itself felt as a serious political norm. Marx rejected it as bourgeois sentiment; the individualists rejected it as a restraint on liberty; the aristocrats rejected it as a form of leveling; and the levelers have rejected it as inconsistent with a rigid egalitarianism.[16] Over the two centuries there is almost no serious literature on the subject.

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[16] Take Rawls for example. After astutely observing that "[i]n comparison with liberty and equality, the idea of fraternity has had a lesser place in democratic theory...," Rawls completes fraternity's demotion by allowing only as much of it as can be squeezed out of his concept of justice: "We have yet to find a principle of justice that matches the underlying idea [that is fraternity]...." *A Theory of Justice,* 105-06.

Of all political symbols, fraternity comes closest to capturing the authors' notion of the ideal civic perspective. Committed neither to conservative nor to liberal policies, it transcends both attitudes in a personalism that brings out the best in any legal structure. Its familial metaphor invites society to treat persons with respect and even affection in accord with their differences in needs and gifts. In its concern for the unique it utterly rejects the barren arithmetic of egalitarianism.

To understand human equality as a descriptive instead of a normative term is to grasp its unrealized importance to both liberty and fraternity. First of all we see that liberty—like equality—can be a descriptive term; specifically it identifies our capacity for free and reasoned choice. Liberty is personal power and is fueled by knowledge; under ordinary circumstances every increment of knowledge enhances the power by which a person alters his environment and himself.

Conceived as a metaphysical reality, it is human equality that puts the necessary moral brakes on this connection between knowledge and power. Equality severs our moral self-perfection from our practical sophistication. In the task of morally perfecting ourselves the only knowledge that is efficacious is the bare grasp of our obligation to seek the real good, and that we all possess in the same degree. Equality thus closes off the gnostic threat. It tames liberty's alliance with intellect, making its variations in magnitude irrelevant to the moral self-perfection of the actor.

But descriptive equality also gives liberty its moral marching orders. Equality channels the capacity for free moral choice, making it precisely the capacity to say either yes or no to the search for the lateral order of our obligation to fellow humans. And, for the content of that order we know of no better name than fraternity. The three-cornered French slogan thus turns out to be a pyramid with the twin facts of human liberty and human equality at the base supporting the moral ideal of fraternity. We do not suppose that this metaphor will tell us how to revise the welfare system or the Internal Revenue Code, but as a collective aspiration, it is a cut above Hobbes.

But, after all this wind-up, where is the pitch about Bernard Lonergan? We have at last arrived at our central point.

PART II: THE JUST DESERTS OF INVOLUNTARY ERRORS OF PRACTICAL REASON: THE LIMBO OF THE EXCUSED OR THE PARADISO OF THE PERFECTED

We claim to have sculpted our interpretation of human equality from common usage. But if this belief in human equality is popular, it is almost undiscoverable among the premises of the perennial geniuses of philosophy and theology. In search of allies, we have canvassed the tradition from Plato to Pufendorf to the present Pope. The roster of friends is a short one. A strong gnostic current ever pulls the intelligentsia in the direction of inequality and exclusivism, the theologians being willing to defeat even God's revealed will that "all men be saved" (I Tim. 2:4).[17] The favorite equality stoppers include such unscriptural devices as double predestination, the extra ecclesiam nulla salus, the "fragility" of goodness, and the inexorable obligation to get the details right. To find a luminary innocent of every barrier is no mean feat.

In Bernard Lonergan, however, we may have located human equality's rare intellectual ally. Our thesis is not that Lonergan was an equality bandstander; indeed, we lack evidence that he explicitly embraced human equality or even recognized it as a consequence of his premises. Our hypothesis, rather, is that in Lonergan's fateful shift from logic to method, from concepts to transcendental precepts, human equality quietly comes as a bonus. The ballast of Lonergan's life's work commits him and his intellectual progeny to human equality as we have interpreted it. If we fail to show this, please send us back to California understanding why it is better to hold Lonergan a believer in disequality.

There is difficulty enough. We recognize tensions in Lonergan's thought, sentences on which no Gnostic exclusivist could improve.[18] We know of no thinker so given to call folks silly and stupid. For Lonergan, moreover, this is no mere epiphenomenon. Lonergan wants people to get things right.

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[17] See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 19, a. 6. Cf. H.U. von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988).

[18] See infra footnote 47.

Like the tradition that begat him, Bernard Lonergan believes in right answers and acts. Unlike that tradition, however, Lonergan reckons that those right answers and acts are the contingent achievements of a personal struggle. Lonergan's epistemology requires a good word for everyone who quests for what is correct—a word whose utterance is not contingent upon the luck of discovering and performing correct actions.

Aristotle, Thomas, and The Traditional Predicament

Equality demands that people be celebrated exactly for their commitment to and search for the good—not for the fine fortune of finding it. Discovery and performance of the good cannot, alone cannot for the advance of a person's moral cause; morally, at least, results cannot be all that matters. Human equality requires that the good faith bunglers among us be as morally perfected as those clever casuists who identify and dutifully perform correct acts.

Any less flattering a judgment of the involuntary perpetrators of harm, and disequality ensues. Such judgments do come, however—and in two widely available flavors: one bitter, the other bland. The first is pagan, the second Christian. We consider Aristotle and Aquinas in turn.[19]

The niceties of the *Nicomachean Ethics, Magna Moralia,* and *Eudemian Ethics* to one side, Aristotle's ethics is basically simple. There is a constellation of more or less determinate excellences of which certain men[20] are capable, and these they must achieve if they are to be happy and good. In Aristotle's cosmos, goodness and happiness are solidary. In Alasdair MacIntyre's words, Aristotle asks, "What am I to

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[19] There is, of course, a third flavor—the one congengial to equality, but it has been virtually unobtainable. Even its leading—and enthusiastic—proponent, St. Alphonsus Liguori, couched it as we do in terms of probabilities: "*Non solum autem qui operatur cum conscientia invincibiliter erronea non peccat, sed etiam probabilius acquirit meritum . . . .*" (*Theologia Moralis* 1.I, par. 6, in *Opere Morali di S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori* [Turin: Marietti, 1846], vol. 5, 2). For a statement of the prevalent Thomistic anxiety with such a position, see Dominicus Prümmer, O.P., *Manuale Theologiae Moralis,* (13th ed.) (Rome: Herder, 1958), I.IV, Ch. II, sec. 313, vol. 1, 205.

[20] Notice that with Aristotle already we are accepting the disequality of natural slaves and of women.

do if I am to fare well?"[21] Should my intellectual limits or some other form of bad luck prevent these achievements, I remain unfulfilled, unhappy and, for that very reason, not good. There is, as Martha Nussbaum says with an unsavory relish, a "fragility" to goodness. For those who involuntarily fail to do what the phronimos would, there is neither consolation prize nor solace. The unlucky are condemned to wander with Oedipus. Tragedy—unchosen moral catastrophe—prevents human equality.[22]

As he was appropriating Aristotle's biology and metaphysics in the service of a Christian self-understanding, Aquinas was aware, of course, that there are limits to how far Christians can go with the Greeks and even with the Stagirite. Belief in God's loving providence preempts the conclusion that some men are tragically damned simply through bad luck—Augustine's and Calvin's spin on the decretum absolutum notwithstanding. God created humans with the capacity freely to choose beatitude; moral evil is chosen and so, too, is the consequent damnation. Thus Thomas raises the question whether the will that is specified by involuntarily erroneous reason is good ("Utrum voluntas concordans rationi erranti, sit bona"). Were it, Oedipus could come home, equality would be possible, and that would be the end to the story.

But to that sharply honed question, Aquinas provided only an evasive reply, and so the story continues. Instead of answering, Thomas rephrased the question as "whether an erroneous conscience excuses" ("utrum conscientia erronea excuset"). With a single, obscure stroke Thomas gave this new question and its answer their canonical form: an involuntarily erroneous conscience binds and the person who follows it is "excused."[23] Little is known or said of the "excused." He never is celebrated. Neither morally advancing nor regressing, the "excused" is—for aught that appears—dispatched to a new Limbo. Moral theologians

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[21] Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966) 84.

[22] See Jacques Maritain, *Moral Philosophy* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964) 47-48.

[23] *Summa Theologiae,* Ia-IIae, q. 19, a. 6, c. If the error concerns the moral law (rather than a "circumstance"), the error, as we shall see, is deemed voluntary and, for that reason, unexcused. A sustained and persuasive critique of Thomas's refuge in excuse is Eric D'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961).

in the Thomistic mold confirm the existence of this elusive place[24] but without details. We are left wondering whether the Limbo of the excused is any less parched than the present haunts of Oedipus and other tragic wanderers.

Whatever the quality of Thomas's Limbo, however, he likely imagined it as quite compact. Only the unchosen ignorance of a "circumstance" admits a wrongdoer to the house of the excused, for this is the only sort of error Thomas deems involuntary. The paradigmatic example proffered by Thomas is the archer in the forest. Having taken "proper precaution" ("diligentia adhibita"), he shoots and kills an undetected passerby on the road.[25] The archer's lack of access to the crucial fact, as it were, earned him an excuse.

Ignorance of fact is to be distinguished from ignorance of the moral law. Mistake about the rules of behavior never is excused, because it always is voluntary.[26] This judgment of voluntariness springs from Thomas's general optimism about the knowability of the moral law. Access always is possible. Thomas's occasional opinion, exaggerated in our own day by Grisez and Finnis, is that the first principles of morality are self-evident.[27] And, even when he does not speak the language of self-evidence, Thomas holds that the moral law is perspicuous even to minds darkened some by original sin. Rather than collect and parse all the relevant Thomistic passages, we quote one of Thomas's leading modern expositors, Josef Pieper:

> Moral action is "doing the truth," veritatem agere. The knowledge of the theoretical reason is in the identity of its "what" with the objective world of being, with the "things" from which it receives its "measure." This is an unbroken chain of providing and

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[24] In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993), the Limbo of the excused is, instead, the land of "unimputed evil." § 1793.

[25] *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-IIae, q. 6, a. 8, c.

[26] *Summa Theologiae,* Ia-IIae, q. 19, a. 6, c. "For instance, if erring reason tell a man that he should go to another man's wife, the will that abides by that erring reason is evil; since this error arises from ignorance of the Divine Law, which he is bound to know. But if a man's reason errs (*ratio erret*) in mistaking another for his wife, and if he wish to give her her right when she asks for it, his will is excused from being evil: because this error arises from ignorance of a circumstance, which ignorance excuses, and causes the act to be involuntary."

[27] See, e.g., John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 64-69.

> receiving the measure. Knowledge is reality become subjective, the "command" is directive knowledge, and moral action is command that has become real.... Objectivity as an attitude in knowing means that the subject, as subject, refrains from taking any part in determining the content of knowledge. This attitude on the part of man guarantees true knowledge.[28]

On this, the Thomistic view, man certainly can reach reality by his being "objective," and reality, in turn, provides the "final criterion" against which to measure man's knowledge.[29] Man is to "mirror" reality, first in knowledge, then in action.[30] It's that simple.[31]

And when it seems as simple as that, there is little incentive to tarry over those who, for whatever reason, don't get it right. An extreme example of the Thomistic nonchalance is Francisco Suarez's assertion[32] that any obscurity in the moral law is of only "slight importance" in determining the agent's culpability.[33] Rather than explicate the process by which darkness is dispelled and the moral law is known, Suarez tells us not to worry: "every judgment derived from the natural law is of such a character that it rests either upon self-evident principles or upon deductions necessarily drawn therefrom...."[34] Ethics is made easy. By imagining these self-evidences as little nuggets accessible to every man, Suarez and similar "Thomists" slight the difficulty of moral understanding.[35] Error and its consequences never get sensitive treatment, because obscurity is written out of the moral law, by fiat.

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[28] Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 171. On the darkening of man's mind by sin, however, see John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 103-09.

[29] Pieper, *Living the Truth* 177.

[30] Id. 146.

[31] Gratian encapsulates the traditional view: "ignorantia juris naturalis omnibus adultis damnablis est." See Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology*, 193-94 n.60.

[32] Perhaps fueled, ironically enough, by a creeping insecurity as to the knowability of being.

[33] Francisco Suarez, *Tractatus de Legibus,* II.XIV.6.

[34] Id. at II.XIII.3

[35] Conceptualism of this sort is, of course, one of the errors Lonergan was most eager to annihilate. See, e.g., Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1958), 604.

Not surprisingly, it is the one who most appreciated the "slow, if not ... bloody entrance"[36] of knowledge, who pauses to appreciate those who do their best. Aristotle and Aquinas had their reasons for condemning or merely excusing good faith bunglers. The question will be why Lonergan, who was "reach[ing] up to the mind of Aquinas,"[37] does not share them. The answer will be that, for Lonergan, the "final criterion" cannot be reality itself but rather the authenticity of the personal search for that reality.

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Lonergan starts, as you know, with the problem of knowledge and ignorance, and he attacks it, as he does every other problem, on the most fundamental level. Lonergan gives no quarter to the metaphors and images that ordinarily do service as a theory of knowledge and being. The real is not what is out there waiting to be seen and mirrored in the mind's eye. There are no intuitions of being. Life is not like the *Posterior Analytics*. A person's fundamental obligations are found neither in logic nor in things nor in concepts nor in nuggets of self-evidence. They emerge, rather, from the exigencies of the unchosen human drive for understanding. Questions arise; they can be evaded or answered. The eros of the mind is for answers, for being, for the real. By us the real is reached only through experience, understanding, judgment. But the eros of the mind is not satisfied, questions are not answered, the real is not reached, by just any experience, understanding, judgment. The self is transcended, immanentism is avoided, the real is reached, questions are answered, exactly when one is faithful to the specific transcendental precepts: Be attentive (when one experiences)! Be intelligent (when one understands)! Be reasonable (when one judges)! But after one has been attentive, intelligent and reasonable, it is not time to rest. We sense, inquire and understand in order to choose and to act. So, fourthly, be responsible (when you deliberate, choose, and act)! Conform your choice and action to your knowing; choose what is of real value. The only four acts that Lonergan enjoins us to perform are the very acts our own cognitive structures already enjoin upon us: Be attentive! Be intelligent!

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[36] Id. at 186.
[37] Id. at 748.

Be reasonable! Be responsible! These, "the transcendental precepts," are the law of the human spirit. They, and they alone, are rock.[38]

In the shift from concepts to transcendental precepts, we meet the possibility of equality. The law no longer is a code, a series of deductions, or a congeries of inferences.[39] The measure of men is not given over there (where I am not), but internally. To discover the four universal precepts one need not, indeed cannot scour the cosmos, nor even Sinai. One need only advert to the exigencies of the internally given demand for understanding to discover the transcendental precepts. Ignorance of the transcendental precepts, therefore, never asks to be excused for impossibility. The transcendental precepts are there, inside each of you, to be known. They are universally accessible; no angelic missionary must bear them to the isolated rustics. Often they may go unnoticed (submerged within the parade of the objects of consciousness), and often they may be evaded; but already they are there waiting for recognition, already pulling for compliance. No person with a faint flicker of rationality can plead invincible ignorance of a law that is within himself and already operative. Finally, it is plausible to hold that ignorance of the law is not involuntary and is, for that reason, unexcused.

But what of the archer's ignorance of circumstances? Lonergan has registered the observation that the moral law is internally given, but Lonergan has not internalized circumstances. This is not idealism. The world—that of facts and circumstances—lies beyond the subject, and the subject's only access to it is the data of experience. So far Aquinas would agree.

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[38] Because the preceding paragraph was written to summarize Lonergan for the Lonergan experts, those less familiar with Lonergan may find it opaque. For our fuller exposition of Lonergan's basic stance, see Coons and Brennan, "Nature and Human Equality," supra. As will be apparent, the preceding paragraph's contents are drawn broadly from *Insight, Understanding and Being,* chapters 1 and 2 of *Method in Theology*, and Lonergan's many collected essays. This summary, moreover, ignores the development of Lonergan's moral theory from *Insight* to *Method.*

[39] To be sure, a code can be created. The difference, however, is that it is not the last word but, rather, ever subject to the higher law of the transcendental precepts. See "Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium," Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (ed. W. Ryan and B. Tyrrell) (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 33, 39-40 (Response to Michael Novak); *Insight*, 595.

But the agreement ends when Lonergan concludes that the real world is not available as a sure justification—Pieper's "final criterion"—of our knowledge. Not only are the transcendental precepts universally knowable, they are all that anyone can know with certainty. What behaviors are truly good, what one really ought to make of oneself, what is of enduring value, never are fully, finally and definitively apprehended. What is and what ought to be are never, so long as this life shall last, finally settled in an exhaustive way. The real and the good remain "emergent probabilities."

Yet the subject's eros for the real and the good presses for more than probability. It demands that she stay in the search. No one is exempted from the search, nor is anyone privileged to hold a casuist's map. Owing to their different horizons, some pilgrims set out for Canterbury, others for Mecca, still others for Delphi. Despite their differences, however, all are obligated to search and are provided with a common compass. The desire for understanding presses for the real and can be satisfied only by fidelity to the transcendental precepts.[40] "Emergent probability is," in a word, "the great equalizer . . . ."[41]

If emergent probability equalizes humanity, it does so not by sending the whole lot of us on a picnic. Responsible living in a cosmos of emergent probability is the devotion to maximizing the real good, and this makes it indistinguishable from obtensionalism. The moral life is not a series of pitfalls to be avoided, with the prize for the clever and the lucky being supine repose upon the insipid interstices. The eros of the mind summons every subject to move to understand the real correctly and, then, to act in responsible conformity with that true understanding.

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[40] "We have no choice but to follow the advice of John Henry Newman—to accept ourselves as we are and by dint of constant and persevering attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, strive to expand what is true and force out what is mistaken . . . ." Bernard Lonergan, "Merging Horizons: Systems, Common Sense, Scholarship," *Cultural Hermeneutics* (Boston College) I (1973), 98.

[41] Tad Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 66. Ignorance, as John Mahoney astutely observed, always has provided the "major escape clause in objective morality." (*The Making of Moral Theology*, 193.) The difference militated by Lonergan's analysis, however, is that what the tradition knew as involuntary ignorance now is understood, instead, as probabilistic knowledge. Appreciated not as the (rare) exception but as the rule, hard-won probabilities, and behavior in conformity therewith, are not merely to be excused. As the apex of human achievement, not an aberration, they command reward and praise.

That final exigence for responsibility, moreover, is met not by autonomically executing a discovered plan, but by choosing a potential good (previously grasped by intelligence and affirmed by judgment) and deciding, thereby, what to make of oneself. No less than a relentless struggle is required.

There is, now, just one ultimate question about a person: viz., whether he or she has been authentic, that is, faithful to the transcendental precepts. No other standard appears; every subordinate question has been rolled into this decisive moment: have I been authentic? Where I have failed to be either attentive, intelligent, reasonable or responsible, I am unauthentic. I am guilty of basic sin.[42]

Authenticity as the Perfection of Which We Are Capable

Re-consider, now, the consequences for our hapless archer. Examined with reference to whether he has satisfied the transcendental precepts, it appears that he was attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible—"diligentia adhibita." Thomas, I think, would confer every one of these accolades upon him, but, scrambling to avert the coronation, would protest that the archer is not perfected. Equality has been bought on the cheap, by changing the relevant standard from perfection to authenticity. Perhaps the archer is "authentic," but surely he is not perfected by authentically taking the errant shot that kills an innocent. Lonergan alone would step up and complete the job by crowning him authentic.

The shift we have been considering under the aspect of knowledge or epistemology has its metaphysical correlative in horizontal finality.[43] With Aristotle, Thomas supposed that a person's natural finality is to participate in a constellation of excellences by acts (behaviors) of a determinate kind. According to Thomas, natural moral goodness occurs

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[42] Basic sin "consists, not in inadvertent failure but in advertence to and in acknowledgement of obligation that, none the less, is not followed by reasonable response." *Insight,* 667.

[43] For Lonergan's understanding of "horizontal finality," see, for example, "Finality, Love, Marriage," Bernard Lonergan, *Collection,* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, 4 ed. F. Crowe and R. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 17, 17-23.

exclusively in reasonable acts.[44] The person is perfected exactly by doing those acts; where a person is prevented from doing them, as by ignorance or bad luck, the person remains unfulfilled, unhappy and unperfected.[45] When the Thomist excuses (rather than judges "perfected") a person who involuntarily does incorrect acts, he does so exactly because the necessary "perfecting" acts simply have not been performed. The dogged struggle to perform them passes unnoticed and never appears as a candidate for the crown of perfection. There is no fund to reward best efforts; only correct deeds pay and perfect.

For Lonergan, by contrast, the performance of this or that "perfecting" act must be a subordinate moment in a larger process that is itself dispositive. Man's nature is not timelessly specified with reference to a host of good acts that he must perform if he is to be perfected. Such good acts may emerge in history, and with the passage of more time they may lose their lustre; indeed, what was once required now may be prohibited (e.g.,persecution of heretics). But man's nature continues, and so does the single criterion of its satisfaction and perfection:

> Now Aristotle defined a nature as an immanent principle of movement and of rest. In man such a principle is the human spirit as raising and answering questions. As raising questions, it is an immanent principle of movement. As answering questions and doing so satisfactorily, it is an immanent principle of rest.[46]

A person must let questions occur. He must answer satisfactorily the questions that do occur to him, and to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable is to answer them satisfactorily. To avoid irresponsibility, he then must act in accord with those satisfactory answers. When a person has let questions occur, and when a person has satisfactorily produced an answer to the questions that in fact have arisen, he has

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[44] James Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's* ***Summa Theologiae*** (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992).

[45] Contemporary Thomists perpetuate this narrow focus upon perfecting behaviors. Robert George, for example, holds that "men can [make themselves moral] only by freely choosing to do the right thing for the right reason." Robert George, *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 1.

[46] Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection: Papers By Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* ed. F. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 173.

done the act his nature bids, and with that he is authentic, that is, perfected.[47]

Equality's rescue occurs in the shift from acts to persons, from deeds to the subject that does them. When behaviors are what is being evaluated (as by Aquinas), the only question is whether they are reasonable; questions about the good faith and long efforts by which they were chosen do not arise; the opportunity to commend the good faith bungler is systemically excluded. But when it is the subject that is evaluated, his struggle can appear and be gauged. Lonergan, deprived of an ahistorical super-perch from which abstractly to evaluate actions, turns to the subject and asks not about this or that act but, instead, the only question he can: has the subject been authentic? Neglected by the tradition in favor of logic and concepts and static abstractions, the subject has returned. What he makes of himself, through fidelity to the transcendental precepts, is what counts.

Perfected but not good?

But is the subject Lonergan praises "good?" So far we have seen that he is authentic and perfected. The tradition, as we observed at the outset, describes the (morally) perfected person as good. What of "goodness" in Lonergan's cosmos? As to when the subject is good, Lonergan has this threatening observation:

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[47] To put the matter otherwise, knowing (i.e., answering questions satisfactorily) is the ontological perfection of the subject. But this emphasis draws Lonergan to a conclusion potentially hostile to equality: "A fellow who knows something is better off than a fellow who is ignorant; an intelligent person is better off than a stupid one, and he is more likely to know something. Knowing is a perfection of the subject that knows." (Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on* ***Insight,*** Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, **5** ed. E. Morelli and M. Morelli [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990] 159). While we cannot utterly explode the possibility that by this sentence Lonergan commits himself to gnosticism, a plausible alternative reading is available: Smart people generally can have better insights—insights that lead to further understanding. But everybody—given certain assumptions about grace (see infra)—can try to advance from experience to understanding, and in the measure he does so authentically he will know more than he did before, even if his advance in knowledge is not as great as Einstein's. It's not knowing as much as Einstein but, rather, being a committed knower—instead of an obscurantist—that perfects a person.

> Just as the existential subject makes himself what he is, so too he makes himself good or evil and his actions right or wrong. The good subject, the good choice, the good action are not found in isolation. For the subject is good by his good choices and good actions.[48]

Could it be that, after all we have seen, Lonergan nevertheless holds personal goodness hostage to correct acts in the world? Could it be that our tireless archer is authentic and perfected but not good? Lonergan is clear: "The subject is good by his good choices and good actions." The only question is what are "good" choices and actions; but even the answer to that question is clear enough: "Good" actions and choices are "right" actions and choices. The moral is inescapable: If he chooses wrong acts, the subject makes himself evil. There looms a cognitive-moral hierarchy that would prevent human equality.

The escape, which may be obvious enough, lies in Lonergan's understanding of right and good decisions and actions. They are those that intend what is intelligent and reasonable (or, if you like, what is of enduring value):

> [D]ecisions are right not because they are the pronouncements of the individual conscience, nor because they proceed from this or that type of social mechanism for reaching common decisions, but because they are in the concrete situations intelligent and reasonable. Again, . . . decisions are wrong, not because of their private or public origin, but because they diverge from the dictates of intelligence and reasonableness.[49]

But where there has been divergence from intelligence and reasonableness, there has been an unauthentic subject. The question whether a decision or an act intends what is good or valuable, then, has been transmuted into the question of whether it is the fruit of an authentic subject. By fidelity to the transcendental precepts, the subject freely determines concrete instances of the good. But "[t]hat subject is not just an intellect or just a will. Though concerned with results he or she is more basically concerned with himself or herself as becoming good or evil . . . ."[50] And the measure of the success of that

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[48] "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, 69, 83.

[49] *Insight*, 628.

[50] "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, 84.

struggle is the transcendental precepts—authenticity. Authenticity is both the low road and the high road—the only way.[51]

Other Difficulties Resolved

But if we almost have convinced you that authenticity makes human equality possible by shifting focus from acts to persons, from correspondence with static abstractions to personal fidelity to the interiorly given transcendental precepts, from what only some can do to what everyone, everywhere can do, it is time we meet two problems that we have postponed. We have been suggesting that authenticity is something everyone can achieve exactly because it is a standard that fits like a bespoke suit:[52] the measure of what I must do is what I am internally prodded to do by the unrestricted desire to know and love the real; the case of the unknown, unfulfilled obligation never arises, except in radical self-contradiction.

But though given internally, the trancendental precepts are not received and understood in splendid purity and isolation. Men live in history and are shaped—willy-nilly—by their traditions. There exist traditions that encourage authenticity. There are, however, unauthentic traditions, and some must live in them. They may purport to hasten us along the path of virtue, but instead they retard growth and impede progress. As such a tradition mistakes what counts for attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, or responsibility, so soon its participants will too. "If, in such eventualities, anyone were to accept a tradition as it

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[51] Another description of what a person must achieve is, as Aquinas and Josef Pieper properly would contend, "objectivity." For our analysis of how Lonergan's re-understanding of objectivity as the product of authenticity makes human equality possible for the first time, see Coons and Brennan, "Nature and Human Equality," supra.

[52] "[T]he method, offered by our critique, asks no one to believe that he subscribes to mistaken beliefs. Without undue optimism it expects people of even moderate intelligence to be able to discover for themselves at least one mistaken belief. Again, the proposed method does not offer anyone a putative list of his mistaken beliefs; it does not even offer a list of alternative lists, as the clothing industry offers a range of ready-made suits of different sizes. Rather it aims at the perfect fit . . . ." *Insight*, 717.

stands, he could hardly do more than authentically realize unauthenticity."[53]

Here, according to Lonergan, the subject is nevertheless authentic, even as he critically appropriates a mass of unauthentic meaning that will further mire him down and prevent him from doing correct acts and attaining concrete goods. Human equality would be safeguarded, because the bogus tradition in which one woke up and necessarily operated would have no capacity to prevent one's being personally authentic. Still, whether this is Lonergan's judgment again is not so clear. Elsewhere he repeats the sentence quoted above and then goes on ominously:

> [I]f one takes the [unauthentic] tradition as it currently exists for one's standard, one can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity. Such is unauthenticity in its tragic form, for then the best of intentions combine with a hidden decay.[54]

Could it be that Lonergan holds women and men that authentically appropriate unauthentic traditions truly "tragic"—with Oedipus, moral failures despite their attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility? Were Lonergan to hold men and women to a standard higher than personal authenticity he would abandon his own moral epistemology. He would require them—on pain of moral obliteration—to step outside and get a clear look at how the real ought to be; this is exactly what he has told us is impossible.

Lonergan has not been seduced. He keeps himself and the rest of us in the universal struggle that makes equality possible:

> So it is that commonly men have to pay a double price for their personal attainment of authenticity. Not only have they to undo their own lapses from righteousness but more grievously they have to discover what is wrong in the tradition they have inherited and they have to struggle against the massive undertow it sets up.[55]

To discover "what is wrong" in a tradition could be a tall order, but presumably the requirement is not one of exhaustiveness, since in any case, all we can know is whether we have been faithful to the

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[53] "Pope John's Intention," *A Third Collection,* 224, 233.

[54] "Religious Experience," *A Third Collection,* 113, 121 (emphasis added).

[55] Ibid.

transcendental precepts. To struggle against the massive undertow of a tradition is an act we are all, plausibly enough, capable of performing. But those who have spent time in the sea (had Lonergan?) will recognize that as mightily as one may swim against an undertow, one sometimes finds oneself carried, exhausted, to the distant end of the shore (or even out to sea). Equality insists that where one ends up on the beach of life is not the moral question, and in the end Lonergan comes back to affirm, sufficient to equality, that what morally matters is the struggle:

> However much we may react, criticize, endeavor to bring about change, the change itself will always be just another stage of the tradition, at most a new era, but one whose motives and whose goals—for all their novelty—will bear the imprint of their past. The issue is not tradition, for as long as men survive there will be tradition, rich or impoverished, good and evil. The issue is the struggle of authenticity against unauthenticity, and that struggle is part and parcel of the human condition, of our being animals yet equipped to live not just by instinct but principally by the symbols by which we express our self-understanding and our commitments.[56]

The intonation of the note of tragedy, then, may have been improvident. In the end Lonergan seems satisfied to observe that we are all on the inside of being, that we live historically, that all we can do is to insist upon our personal authenticity and hope that it will stave off or reverse the decline of tradition.[57]

This brings us to the second problem we postponed. Human equality, as we interpret it, requires a double equality, viz., 1) the common possession of the capacity for moral perfection that is 2) uniform among all rational persons in its possession. Lonergan's morality of authenticity is an appealing candidate for that double

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[56] Id. at 122.

[57] See, e.g., "Dialectic of Authority," *A Third Collection*, 5, 9: "The fruit of unauthenticity is decline. . . . There is no use appealing to the sense of responsibility of irresponsible people, to the reasonableness of people that are unreasonable, to the intelligence of people that have chosen to be obtuse, to the attention of people that attend only to their grievances. Again, the objective situation brought about by sustained unauthenticity is not an intelligible situation. It is the product of inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility. It is an objective surd, the realization of the irrational."

equality, because authenticity is an act all of us at least plausibly are uniformly capable of. But whether such uniformity is a fact, we cannot know. The potentially disequalizing forces are legion. One is particularly threatening. So far we have concentrated on the usual route to goodness, perfection and authenticity—the route from experience right up to responsibility. But, of course, there is the unusual route where God, to whom man already is connected in the relation of vertical finality, floods man's heart with the grace of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5); then man falls in love with God and neighbor and learns—in the reverse order—to be responsible, reasonable, intelligent, attentive. That flood of grace, says Lonergan, "[m]ight awaken such striving and groaning as would announce a new and higher birth . . . ."[58]

The question for human equality, then, is whether those whose hearts are flooded certainly have a relative advantage. On that question we invite the comments of the experts on Lonergan's theory of grace, but we cannot resist two observations: First. Lonergan portends a universalist response when he observes, in the context of I Tim. 2:4 (the inclusivist's locus classicus), that the gift of charity may be how the Christian accounts for the religious experience of "any and all men."[59] Second. Lonergan urges that, "It could be the grace that God offers all men, . . . that explains how those that never heard the gospel can be saved."[60]

The end of the day has come and, with it, the need to conclude. The jury (of Lonergan experts!) will have to decide whether Lonergan really has everyone equally equipped, by best efforts, to snatch the moral crown from the hands of the gnostic exclusivists who would reserve it for Martha Nussbaum's lucky elite. Be the details as they may, Lonergan clearly has brought us beyond the disequalizing trichotomy of acts that perfect, damn or excuse. He did so by looking to the subject and his struggle to know, and by asking not whether he has gotten the answers right, but whether he is following the method universally necessary and sufficient to human authenticity. By taking the longer view of the man and the method by which he morally advances, rather than the occasional snapshot of this deed or that misdeed, Lonergan shifts focus

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[58] "Mission and Spirit," *A Third Collection*, 23, 26.

[59] "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection*, 55, 71.

[60] *Method in Theology*, 278; see also at 282-83.

from "interim results" to the ongoing process of self-correction[61] and conversion. For Lonergan, the person who is all that he should be is not one who has been converted, but one always on the way: "The authentic Christian strives for the fullness of . . . conversion."[62] This wide-angle view of persons finally makes equality possible, for instead of acts abstracted from people and from their struggles, at last we behold the very people who might be moral equals.[63]

So next time you find yourself in the wilds of Maine, about to launch a shaft, take heart. If you've been attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible—"diligentia adhibita"—but still skewer some passerby, your perfection shall remain unsullied. But when the sheriff allows you one call, dial some other lawyer, as neither authenticity nor obtension is a recognized legal defense, and that is as it should be.

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[61] See *Method*, 286-87. See also *Insight*, 729-30

[62] "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection,* 239, 248. "[C]onversion is from unauthenticity to authenticity. It is total surrender to the demands of the human spirit: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love." *Method*, 268.

[63] "Freely the subject makes himself what he is; never in this life is the making finished; always it is still in process, always it is a precarious achievement that can slip and fall and shatter. Concern with subjectivity, then, is concern with the intimate reality of man. It is concern, not with the universal truths that hold whether a man is asleep or awake, not with the interplay of natural factors and determinants, but with the perpetual novelty of self-constitution, of free choices making the chooser what he is." "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 205, 220.

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JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY ON LEGITIMATE AND NEEDED SOCIAL PLURALITY

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We who are Christ's disciples must not hesitate to harness this force—the world's expectancy and ferment and unfolding—which needs us and which we need. On the contrary, under pain of allowing it to be dissipated and of perishing ourselves, we must share in those aspirations, in essence authentically religious, which make men today so intensely aware of the immensity of the world, the grandeur of the mind and the sacred value of every newly discovered truth. This is the schooling which will teach our present Christian generation how to wait for the future (Teilhard de Chardin).[1]

In its turn, the Second View [i.e., those at the Second Vatican Council who support civil religious freedom] asks some questions. It inquires, for instance, 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 a continually changing social-political context, and in response to the growing personal and political consciousness. In the face of this question, the First View [those who opposed a conciliar endorsement of civil religious freedom] tends either to look blank or to launch the accusation that this is juridical modernism. In either case, there is no dialogue (John Courtney Murray).[2]

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[1] *Hymn of the Universe* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1961), 149.

[2] "The Problem of Religious Freedom," in *Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, edited by J. Leon Hooper S.J. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 180.

IN THESE TWO citations, Teilhard de Chardin and John Courtney Murray peered into their own times, found themselves surrounded by moral and religious discoveries, and claimed that those disclosures ought to inform Christian living. Central for Teilhard was an appreciation of, and a drive toward, an ever deeper understanding of the natural world—a complex posture that he found in the modern scientific community. Central to Murray was a new awareness of the historical character of truth claims and a new modern public consensus from which the church had learned something about human dignity.

The following is an exploration of what Murray characterized as "the rising personal and political consciousness" of contemporary peoples and its implications for Christian theology. I write as someone who has been studying Murray and the uses of Murray in American policy debates over the last fifteen years. From this rather narrow field of studies, that reflects many of the tensions of our own times, I hope to consider the larger question of normative Christian (and Catholic) approaches to these times.

How might we describe our times? My reflections concerning our times at least in part are shaped by my experience over the last three years of Boston College's annual Lonergan Workshop. I have myself tried to weave through contemporary approaches to modern societies—from MacIntyre's early work, through the less than interesting approaches of Michael Novak and several others who claim Murray as their own. Having struggled with Charles Taylor's and David Tracy's[3] attempts to understand where we have come from and what possibilities are open to us, I am struck by how our readings of modernity range, from outright rejection, to nuanced critiques, to basically positive appreciations of modernity, post-modernity, or, as I recently saw a couple of articles titled, post-post-modernity. Of course, what unites us is the conviction that Bernard Lonergan offers tools and, we might say, virtues for dealing with the obvious problems bred by modernity and post-post-modernity.

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[3] I rely mostly on Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) and David Tracy's collection of Concilium essays, *On Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics, and Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

As for Murray, as we all know he was a Jesuit who was at once very American and very Roman Catholic. His uncompromising insistence that Roman Catholicism offers cures for many American ills has endeared him to contemporary conservative Catholics and even some Protestants. The fact that he dissented from Roman Catholic teaching on establishment and intolerance, that he was silenced by his church but (partially) won the day in the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on Religious Liberty," has made him a hero to Catholic neo-conservatives and social liberals alike. In many American Catholic social arguments, Murray serves as a totem or a talisman that Catholics who work in the trenches of policy debate must touch to indicate that they stand within an American Catholic tradition of dealing with pluralistic America.

I am more interested, however, in the changes in Murray's Catholic approaches to contemporary religious and moral pluralism. Over the forty years of his professional life, until his death in 1967, he adopted and used in public argument many (though not all) Catholic approaches to the social composition of the United States and to the growing international arena. This makes him a fertile source for many contemporary Catholic social stances and, if we avoid appealing to a canon within a canon of his writings, we can see how and why he and his church moved through those various stances.

Here I will outline what was going forward in Murray's thought. I first describe the four stances he adopted from his own tradition and how he adapted them to the American pluralistic scene. I then describe how Murray has been received among those writers who currently appeal to him. Then I highlight two elements in Murray's later work—and to their parallels among at least some authors who offer guidance in our current larger cultural debates—that might help us get beyond our present state of cultural war.

Throughout that discussion my operating definition of "pluralism" or plurality[4] relies in part on Charles Taylor's notion of "moral source."

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[4] I prefer the term "plurality" to describe our present cultural state. The term "pluralism" is too abstract, obscuring the fact that differing moral and religious viewpoints are held by concrete, living people. Both Murray's growing notions of concrete social actors and of the open-endedness of our knowledge are important for my argument. His own shift between the "pluralism" in his earlier work and

By a pluralistic social environment I mean a society in which many diverse groups insist that they can and ought to contribute to our collective self-understanding, that they are significant sources of needed moral and religious insight and choice. Here I will outline how Murray came to recognize and accept as legitimate multiple sources for our ongoing constitution of moral and religious self-understanding.

I. MURRAY ON AMERICAN PLURALISM: FROM PLURALISM AS AN EVIL TO PLURALISM AS A MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SOURCE

Let me briefly outline Murray's four stances toward modern Western, primarily American society.

1. Outright rejections of religious pluralism

First, many contemporary Catholic integralists—a group of Catholics who reject as intrinsically evil the modern pluralistic composition of Western societies—often appeal to a 1954 Murray article in which, after a description of the limited role of the American government in religious matters, Murray wrote:

> ...government represents the truth of society as it actually is; and the truth is that American society is religiously pluralistic. The truth is lamentable; it is nonetheless true (*WHTT*, 74).[5]

In the context, Murray was trying to move those who appeal exclusively to religious ideals to adopt more nuanced stances toward the fragile stuff of our national understanding. Even though he granted the negative assessment, he still said that We the People have room to "conspire" together. The opinion that American moral and religious pluralism is

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"differentiation" in his late writings would be one way of tracing the movement in his own thinking, even though the term "differentiation" carries too many static, functionalist undertones that cut out consideration of the development of future understanding..

[5] *We Hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed & Ward. 1960). This was originally published as "The Problem of Pluralism in America," *Thought* **24** (Summer 1954): 165-208.

intrinsically evil, however, had deep roots in his own thought and his tradition. He picked up this evaluation during his Roman theological training in the late 1930s and carried it into the early war years. From that perspective, America was indeed corrupt at its core. In the face of European fascism and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1940, Murray could even write:

> It would seem that our American culture, as it exists, is actually the quintessence of all that is decadent in the culture of the Western Christian world. It would seem to be erected on the triple denial that has corrupted Western culture at its roots, the denial of metaphysical reality, of the primacy of the spiritual over the material, of the social over the individual.[6]

Murray found at the heart of pluralistic America a materialism, an individualism, a practical atheism that was even more insidious than the militant atheisms then rampant in Europe and Asia. Here he argued that America could survive only by returning to Catholic doctrines of the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Cross, thereby reclaim the West's foundational understanding of "the dignity of human nature," the essentially "social nature of man," and a sense of transcendence from the material, respectively.[7]

Thus Murray's first evaluative stance toward the pluralistic West. It allows only two sectarian options—either a withdrawal or an imposition of one particular community's truth claims. Not surprisingly those guided by a post-modern conviction that different faith horizons are incommensurable appeal exclusively to this stage of Murray's work,

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[6] "The Construction of a Christian Culture: I. Portrait of a Christian; II. Personality and the Community; III. The Humanism of God" in *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular: Selecting Writings of John Courtney Murray*, edited by J. Leon Hooper, S.J. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994): 102. Three talks given in February 1940 at St. Joseph's College.

[7] This strong claim for the social importance of explicitly theological doctrines disappeared from both his American studies and his in-house Roman Catholic debates on religious freedom. For most of his life Murray insisted on the sufficiency of natural law moral and theistic premises for America's public health. Strong claims for the importance of explicitly Roman Catholic truth claims would not emerge until during the council, after Murray recognized the possibility and need for ecumenical theological discussion. Those later claims, however, would not function in such a deductionistic manner as they do in this earlier argument.

because it legitimates a principled rejection of any segment of society that rejects the truth of Christ or understands that truth differently. More broadly it is the foundation on which many religious traditions reject civil religious freedom as a religious good, i.e., as a condition for the possibility of vital participation in God's life.

Murray of course did not settle for sectarian withdrawal or imposition. To move away from those alternatives, he had to offer positive evaluations of some types of social pluralism. Where, then, might he find acceptable ways of understanding modern pluralistic societies? He might have turned to the social sciences and even comparative religious studies, but for various reasons he did not. Rather, he sought legitimate distinctions within Roman Catholic thought, and looked for examples of social plurality within, not external to, the Roman Catholic community. These types of pluralism Roman Catholics could consider legitimate within their own history and actual community structures.[8]

2. Pluralism as a Necessary Evil

The first type of legitimate plurality that allowed Murray to mitigate the stark conclusions of the first approach followed from the distinction between the temporal order and the supernatural order.[9] In agreement with those who helped found the 1930s Catholic Action movement, Murray argued that the temporal realm belongs to the laity, whose particular charism it is to constitute the institutions by which we

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[8] Besides being strategically expedient for his arguments with his own faith community, these appeals to plurality in Catholic thought and organization also kept alive the necessity of bridging plurality within the church that allows different but not thoroughly incommensurable ways of understanding the truths of the church across time and space.

[9] This recognition of a legitimate pluralism, based on distinctions within Roman Catholic thought, was born—as were most of Murray's arguments—within a highly polemical public battle. At issue was the degree to which Roman Catholics can safely and legitimately cooperate with non-Catholics in the post-war reconstruction. For Murray's argument for full cooperation, see 1942b. "Current Theology: Christian Co-operation." *Theological Studies* **3** (September 1942): 413-31: 1943a. "Current Theology: Co-operation: Some Further Views." *Theological Studies* **4** (March 1943): 100-111; and 1943b. "Current Theology: Intercredal Co-operation: Its Theory and Its Organization." *Theological Studies* **4** (June 1943): 257-86.

are organized and governed. Because these institutions are temporal (contingent, finite), they will never measure up to the full truth of Catholic faith (treated by Murray at this time as a classicist set of eternal propositions). Murray even proof-texted this claim with an appeal to Luke 12:51, "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." In his words, "a mysterious necessity attached to the fact of religious division and moral incoherence" through which God's wishes for humanity will be fulfilled (*"Unica status religio,"* 8).[10] The world of social action, then, as lamentably pluralistic in religion and morals, is nonetheless the "normative condition" (as J. Bryan Hehir currently describes it) for Roman Catholic social action. We have to adjust to other viewpoints, because that is the way God has allowed our modern societies to develop. A plurality of social viewpoints is accepted, and God's providential care is affirmed.

Thus Murray's second stance, predicated on a legitimate distinction between the temporal and the eternal, calling for different ways of dealing with this world—ways that are tied to distinct roles within the community of faith. As regards these roles and this distinction, Murray relied on a sharp division between practical reasoning and reasoning within the realm of faith, which he at this point conceived as purely theoretical.[11] The temporal order, within which the laity have some autonomy, is governed by practical reasoning; theoretical reasoning belongs to the clergy. Theoretical theology touches the temporal only through motives it supplies to the laity in their task of constructing a more just social order.

3. Parallel Natural and Revealed Societies in Time

Murray soon found that a plurality of roles based on the temporal/eternal distinction was insufficient to support religious

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[10] "Unica Status Religio," 1959d, Murray Archives, file 7-558. This was written during his period of being silenced, submitted to his censors, and rejected.

[11] For his attempt to describe a new theological approach that is appropriate for the laity in their task of reconstruction, see "Toward a Theology for the Layman: The Pedagogical Problem" *Theological Studies* **5** (September 1944): 340-76, and "Toward a Theology for the Layman: The Problem of its Finality" *Theological Studies* **5** (March 1944): 43-75.

freedom. He therefore developed a third Roman Catholic approach to social pluralism—an approach that finds something worth affirming in the midst of that plurality. His eventually successful argument for religious freedom asserted that a religiously pluralistic society in the Anglo-American West discovered a deep truth about the human person long overlooked by the Roman Catholic church. That truth regards the inherent responsibility and, therefore, the right of all citizens to shape the moral meaning and morally-directed institutions of contemporary society.[12] In the light of this truth, it is illegitimate to foreclose *a priori* the possibility that moral truth is being spoken by any person or group in society. This presupposes universal, moral agency. Murray claimed the principle of universal, moral agency to be a legitimate development of the Thomistic natural law's authorization principle, according to which the people, not the king or the clergy, are the ultimate judges of the justice of governmental action. He had further claimed that the tradition shaped by the viewpoint of Locke and Hobbes had nonetheless grasped something of God's wishes for the modern world despite its individualism and antagonism toward Roman Catholicism.[13] Hence, Murray was arguing, the truths by which we live in fact have emerged from multiple, relatively autonomous sources.

Aspects of American constitutionalism reflect an "intention of nature," an intention of the Creator of our common social nature. On the way to this affirmation, Murray's theory of natural law moved beyond the model of doctrinal development as a further specification of general

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[12] For Murray's conciliar definition of human dignity as an exigency that emerged within the Anglo-American tradition, see "The Problem of Religious Freedom," pp. 137-46, in John Courtney Murray, *Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, edited by J. Leon Hooper S.J. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). For his last attempt to clarify modern notions of human dignity, see "Arguments for the Human Right to Religious Freedom," pp. 229-244, in the same volume.

[13] For example, a 1950 article moved from rejecting Locke's nominalism and individualism to claim that he nonetheless developed the Thomistic principle of authorization, "The Natural Law," in *Great Expressions of Human Rights*, edited by Robert M. MacIver (New York: Harper), 69-104; Chapter 13 in WHTT. Even as early as 1954 he described America's founding more comprehensively as dependent on a complex of religious, philosophical, and practical factors, which could not be reduced to Locke's anthropology and political theory ("The Problem of Pluralism in America," *Thought* **24** (Summer 1954): 165-208; Chapters 1 and 2 of WHTT).

principles toward a new stance in the future. Murray had argued initially that the American founders' separation of church and state and freedom of public religion arose from a legitimate desire for public peace. Since any Establishment would result in religious war, the founders prudently and legitimately kept government from coercive enforcement of religious belief. This understanding of America's foundations is consistent with Murray's earlier distinction between the temporal and eternal. Political constitutionalism is confined within the temporal order of contingent adjustment; it is not directly a product of the order of religious and moral truth.

Soon, however, Murray realized that he would have to give religious freedom a surer grounding than mere prudential adjustment to a more or less unfortunate social order. He therefore argued that, at least in relation to the emerging modern social order, the American founders were more true to the natural law tradition than European Catholics.

Yet this argument proved unconvincing. Therefore, in the late articles written for *WHTT*, he argued that, regardless of the founding premises of the republic, we now face the task of refounding our social contract on realistic premises that are critical, not naive. That is, we need to develop a new way of knowing the truths that ground us, and it has to permeate public consciousness. The required development of Western constitutionalism was not simply a further specification from more general principles. It was the in-breaking of a new way of understanding who we are and what we are about into public discourse. It is to be realized in the future.

At this point, then, Murray recognizes society's need for both emerging new insights and even of emerging modes by which we constitute our common understanding. The knowledge we need of the natural order takes on a historical form that cuts into the future, a permanent realization that what we now hold can be transcended.

Curiously Murray avoided any claim for the static priority of one type of knowing over other types of knowing (and in this he seems to have differed from Lonergan). Concentrating on a living social arena, he stressed the social importance of all forms of human knowing. By the early 1960s, under the influence of Lonergan's *Insight*, Murray gave to problems facing America an epistemical cast, that are actually more in the realm of cognitional theory:

> ...at stake [in our cultural debates] is an epistemology—the question of the criterion whereby to test the validity of insight and the certainty of affirmation.
>
> If one could arrive at a view on these related questions, one would understand the meaning of the verb "to know" and of the correlative verb "to be," when there is a question of Aquinas, Aristotle, Locke, Spinoza, Newton, Einstein, Bohr, Gödel, Spengler, Shakespeare, Picasso, Mother Hubbard, and the man in the street, to cite random symbols of the modes of knowing: theological, philosophical, scientific, mathematical, historical, artistic, common-sensical. Here, I suggest, is the broad area in which the true lines of the philosophical battle of the books are to be drawn.[14]

Murray was envisaging the relative legitimacy and independence of multiple methods of coming to know the truth. He defended the epistemic and cognitional distinctions which are always embodied in a social plurality that also cannot be reduced to any one, static viewpoint in the rich reality of historical living.

During and after the council, Murray insisted that the church arrived "a little breathless and a little late" at a moral truth that had become a guiding consensual principle even within international law. Public moral pluralism, as concretely enacted in the West, has in fact been good. It has helped the church discover a deeper truth in its own claims about human dignity. By acknowledging the relative autonomy and historical embeddedness of natural knowledge, and by leaving the question of revealed truth in a black box, Murray was able to justify the affirmation of civic religious freedom.

4. A Plurality of Religious Sources

Finally Murray brought to light a third legitimate basis for social pluralism in Catholic thought that opens the way for an affirmation of theological, not just moral, pluralism. He knew that the core of much turn-of-the-century Catholic polemics against Protestantism was a defense of the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds. Murray insisted against what he considered Protestant romantic primitivism, that the non-

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[14] "On the Future of Humanistic Education," in *Humanistic Education and Western Civilization*, edited by Arthur A. Cohen (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston), 231-47.

biblical languages of those creeds represented a legitimate development in the understanding of revealed, redemptive truth.[15] He claimed that the Roman Catholic councils defended the proposition that God has redeemed human theoretical intelligence, not just human bodies or human emotions—a central concern of his 1930's reading of Matthias Scheeben,[16] and of his 1940's distinction between two theological modes of knowing.

This paralleled his affirmation in the realm of faith of epistemology and cognitional pluralism in modern civil society. But he also moved from recognizing legitimate plurality, past and present, to acknowledging the conditions for coming to new understandings of our God. This is a shift from history as the community-constituting story of past facts to history as an ongoing and open-ended, process of fostering or suppressing insight and choice. We may say that Murray gradually came to appreciate that even Catholic doctrine depends on the dynamics of the dramatic pattern of living. In his last discussions of *Dignitatis humanae personae*, and *Gaudium et spes*, he described the council as a contest between theoretical modes of knowing versus historical modes, relying of course on an early version of Lonergan's distinction between classical and historical consciousness.

According to Murray's last work, the Second Vatican Council endorsed a historical mode of knowing the truths of our faith, much as Nicaea endorsed, without realizing it, the theoretical mode of knowing. He described the church and society as relinquishing a Platonic understanding of its own truth claims—with "ideas always up there in Heaven"—in favor of an appreciation of the social embeddedness and contingent emergence of those truths. He saw the church realizing that its primary contact with the living God is in history, which is the locus of personal interiority and sacramental mediation. God's encounter with the human is irreducibly historical.

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[15] In the following I rely on *The Problem of God, Yesterday and Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964) and "The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma" *Chicago Studies* **5** (Spring 1966): 65-80.

[16] *Matthias Scheeben on Faith: The Doctoral Dissertation of John Courtney Murray* (Toronto Series in Theology, edited by D. Thomas Hughson S.J., vol. 29,) (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, [1937] 1987).

Both the theoretical and the historical modes of understanding Catholic truth are legitimate. Each teaches us something about God's redemptive action and is a participation in that action. Redemptive truth is intrinsically pluralistic and religiously good, as long as none of its embodiments is absolutized. Only at that point, could Murray claim that Roman Catholics have to arrive at new truths about their God ecumenically, and even in conversation with atheists. God can speak even in the voices of the latter.

We have seen, then, Murray's four stances toward societies produced by the movements of Enlightenment, of nineteenth-century Romanticism, and of Modernism: 1) an uncompromising opposition to religious pluralism, 2) an almost Freudian accommodation to it, sometimes under divine sanctions, 3) an admission that the church can learn moral, though not religious, truths outside itself, and 4) the elaboration of a theological basis for the church's commitment to listening for God's future truth spoken in any social sector. It seems to me that Murray moved through these positions because he was constantly aware that he spoke from a quite particular tradition, and that he had to face up to diverse conversation partners within that tradition. His commitment to his own rich, diverse, historical community really determined the movement of his own thought.

II. CATHOLIC APPROACHES TO "POST-MODERN" SOCIETIES

So, for the last fifteen years I have been part of a discussion with people who want to implement and expand our "Murray legacy" or "the Murray project." I am increasingly puzzled by appalling attempts to ignore or neutralize social and historical models of ongoing conversation that dominated Murray's later civil and religious analysis. For instance, Keith Pavlischek's recent book[17] reduces Murray's thought either to Murray's own earliest expediency argument for religious tolerance (associated with the second approach to plurality mentioned above); or to what Pavlischek calls an "Enlightenment, anti-religious Esperanto." By doing

[17] *John Courtney Murray and the Dilemma of Religious Toleration* (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994).

so, Pavlischek disregards any discussions of legitimate plurality Murray recognized both within the community of faith, and within civil society. This puts faith and moral commitments into a black box, without any means of cross-community, mutual understanding. Pavlischek's misreading of Murray is rooted in and reflects much of currently fashionable cultural criticism. He operates explicitly within the religiously-based post-modernism of Stanley Hauerwas, without Hauerwas's commitment to pacifism. On such post-modernist premises, force cannot be distinguished in principle from violence. Absent sectarian withdrawal, blind force becomes the only effective public method of social transformation.

Other public appeals to Murray do far less violence to his texts. With Bryan Hehir one can describe our present confused, pluralistic environment as the "normative condition" of doing public ethics and public theology. Hehir suggests that we must concentrate on workable public policy, striving toward agreement despite our differing religious traditions. Given the complexity of our society and our social problems, Hehir seeks to bypass American religious stances that reduce moral complexity to assertive simplisms of a loyalty creed.

Also helpful is Robert McElroy's *Search for a Public Theology*.[18] Belying his title, McElroy confines our public religious discussions to Murray's natural law theism. This theism functions almost deistically in excluding from public discussion the more difficult and embarrassing episodes of our faith community. It also excludes the rich, revelatory languages that point us beyond values that dominate most of Murray's public arguments. While I applaud McElroy's attempt to push the discussion beyond Murray's defense of civic immunity rights, I am nonetheless concerned that this approach leaves voiceless what Taylor describes as the West's inarticulate moral concerns by disallowing explicitly religious expressions that have emerged within faith communities—both our own and those very unlike ours.

Finally, there is an attempt to approach problems of public meaning primarily through Murray's work on what he called a Christian Humanism that spanned his public life. It is closely linked to his later

[18] *The Search for an American Public Theology: The Contribution of John Courtney Murray* (New York: Paulist, 1989).

Trinitarian studies and to his turn toward ecumenical dialogue. If indeed our public square is naked (and I'm not so sure that such a claim is ultimately defensible), then we must find ways of bringing our particular faiths into public discussion in socially constructive ways. But how can we do so in a society where our individual self-understandings are contracting into what Murray called the ethics of the tribe, or into warring ideologies that submerge individuality within the biases of a certain group?

Particularly in his late work, Murray himself offers us some clues.

Consider the set of virtues that Murray, in his civic writings clustered in the term "civility," and in his late ecumenical studies described as an initial conferral and expectation of equality. The tendency of some to speak of civility as a type of patronal kindness toward the benighted suggests how very difficult it is to break into the late Murray's expectation that helpful religious and moral insight can emerge from any social sector.

A second clue lies in Murray's post-conciliar comments on what the church embraced, albeit unknowingly, at the Second Vatican Council. The first, of course, is a more generalized form of the earlier, institutionally specific, Gelasian dualism: namely, a distinction between the sacred and the secular. This distinction implies a fundamental plurality of moral sources at the heart of the West.

More interesting, however, are his comments on Modernism. Murray interpreted the church's wholesale rejection of Modernism as a rejection of historical consciousness as a legitimate mode of understanding the truths of faith. "Here again" Murray claimed, "a work of discernment needed to be done, and was not done." Murray's construal of Modernism parallels his attempts to reconstruct American political constitutionalism. In all his late work he proposes something like a public dialectic that would involve: first, a public recognition of the good within counter-positions; second, a common recognition of the inadequacies in all positions as presently lived realities within the human community; third, a striving toward new, higher ideas and viewpoints within which various positions are mutually purified and made more commonly effective.

It is with suggestions about reformulating virtue ethics in light of the dynamics of lived, social dialectics that I occasionally peek out from

my own fractured community of Murray studies to our larger social debates. Because of that virtue ethics, I have been greatly impressed by the work of Charles Taylor and, somewhat less so, by that of David Tracy. To my reading, Taylor's approach to modernity is permeated by attitudes and insights necessary for engaging our present brutal social environment. By approaching someone even as repulsive as Hobbes with the question: "What moral good was Hobbes trying to defend?", Taylor demonstrates how not to only preserve goods developed within our common tradition, but also to correct the ultimately destructive means by which some have thought to defend those goods. Helpful also is the humility in David Tracy's most recent insistence that the truths that will make us religiously free lie within our future, if we reclaim the marginalized voices beyond our own tribal communities.

Secondly, Murray's social dialectics leads me to suspect that our future depends on our ability—in a favorite Murray phrase—to "judge, direct, and correct," but also to appropriate three truths of modernity. The first are the universalist claims of the Enlightenment, particularly as expressed in its better democratic theories and its overturning of patronal and class-based regimes. The second (relying on Taylor) is nineteenth-century Romanticism's affirmation of the historical particular, with its implication that all theory is historically conditioned and its recognition that our discourse arises from our faith-bound communities. And the third is the Modernist insistence on the contingency and incompleteness of our knowledge of anything, including our knowledge of God.

My own modest comprehension of Western civilization leads me to believe that without the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Modernism our present faith would not be as appreciative of even our own past, or as universal in its hopes, or as open to a God drawing us into God's future. Arguing contrafactually is risky. But without the Enlightenment, or Romanticism, or Modernism, would Catholics have come to understand their commitments to justice as intrinsic to their faith? Or without these movements would we now have such access to the broad social hope of our own scriptures? Does not the fact that these truths found initial expression outside the church suggest both performatively and substantively that our times constitute a genuine source for deepening even our very particular Catholic faith?

Again, if we regard Western civilization in this way, it would seem, that all three aspects of our modern experience must be appropriated together. To appropriate only one of these modern claims while rejecting the others is harmful to our faith. To affirm Enlightenment universalism leaves us with a calm, but vacuous, public square; rejecting it leaves us with a patronal, class-based ethics. To appropriate and celebrate only our own particularity gives us some rich sources, but no grounds for dialectically purifying our histories of intolerance and brutality. To appropriate only the Modernist claim that truth lies in our future keeps us humble, but offers no way of assessing, with Tracy's recent work, the marginal voices that speak of God's future for us.

Obviously, these are important truths to be learned for our faith. If my argument for that judgment is not sufficiently thorough and decisive, there are practical grounds for following through on the late Murray's three-fold dialectic of social engagement of mutual recognition of goods, admission of sinfulness and inadequacy, and openness to higher viewpoints. First of all, I see no other way to overcome the brutal tribalism that we all abhor but which many of us employ to preserve our faith. In these times, the greatest danger may be group bias propped up by religious faith that is publicly monolithic, non-universalistic, and closed to new futures.

Second is the practical example of Murray and his accomplishment. While Murray was not a great systematic thinker, his very immersion in the nitty-gritty of our contemporary dramatic pattern taught him something about what a Catholic approach to our own culture ought to be. The emergence of viewpoints outside his religious community is the historical means by which God has deepened our faith. Their emergence is not simply a socially embarrassing fact to be ignored for the sake of preserving claims that God is with us until the end of time. To fall back on an aesthetic criterion: Isn't such a God more interesting than the tribal alternatives?

But I wish to underline that path by which Murray learned these affirmations. We need to make our own his ability to recognize and affirm the plurality within our community of faith, whose stated beliefs are always situated in history, and yet sometimes wildly transcend particular spaces and times. We need to appreciate our own plurality in order to discern the truth in the voice of the other. Unless we are able to

hear the truth of the other, we will be liable to resort to force, which will be indistinguishable from violence.

Above I outlined four American Catholic approaches to social plurality. Of course there is another approach that categorically rejects any use of force, best exemplified by Dorothy Day's refusal to draw tribal boundaries even within the radical demands of the Gospel. This Catholic approach to religious plurality does not depend on the temporal/supernatural or natural law/revealed law distinctions by which Murray eventually reached a God of contemporary history. Yet I suspect even Dorothy Day was helped by modernity to read the scriptures and to grasp more fully that even now God can intervene in human history and speak in many voices.

Common to Murray's turn to the God of history and to Day's social action are both a refusal to restrict God's free action within history and a love that reaches out to embrace that God. Both spoke less optimistically than did Teilhard at the beginning of this essay. Yet both were guided by a deep faith that God continues to shape human society from within history, sharing at least partially in Lonergan's growing appreciation for historical emergence, with which I close this essay.

> If a clear and sharp formulation of the antitheses occurs only at the end of a long and difficult inquiry, still that inquiry today is prepared and supported in a manner unattainable in earlier centuries. The development of mathematics, the maturity of some branches of empirical science, the investigations of depth psychology, the interest in historical theory, the epistemological problems raised by Descartes, by Hume, and by Kant, the concentration of modern philosophy upon cognitional analysis, all serve to facilitate and to illumine an investigation of the mind of man. But if it is possible for later ages to reap the harvest of earlier sowing, still before that sowing and during it there was no harvest to be reaped (Bernard Lonergan).[19]

[19] *Insight, 386.*

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PLURALITY, LOVE, MARRIAGE: DEBATING JUSTICE IN THE FAMILY

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN I WAS about twenty, I became friends with a couple in their thirties, both academics, who had three small children. At the time I knew them I was planning to get married myself, and I looked to my friends (whom I'll call Diane and Michael Fayre), and to their marriage, as a potential model for my own. I watched Diane and Michael struggle to give sufficient time and attention to both professional and family life, and I admired their efforts to have a full life that included establishing two careers. There was one aspect of the Fayre's marriage, however, that grew to trouble me. This was an almost obsessive accounting process that they had developed for keeping track of the burdens and benefits of their life together. The goal of this system was to ensure that neither he nor she would receive more than half, either of the goods they had to distribute (chief among which was leisure time) or the burdens they had to share (mostly the household chores). I would listen as Diane reminded Michael of some chore she had performed, or as Michael reminded Diane that she had had an extra half an hour of leisure time a week previously, and I remember thinking that in my marriage we would never be like that. When I got married I would never be so petty as to keep a balance sheet of burdens and benefits; my husband and I would give to each other freely and never count the costs.

Fourteen years of marriage and two children later, I am not as judgmental as I once was. I now understand too well the kinds of pressures that might lead spouses to keep balance sheets as did the

Fayres. And yet I still believe that I was right to be disheartened by that aspect of my friends' approach to family life.

The dual response of dismay tempered by empathy, which I felt for my friends' scrupulous fairness, serves as a touchstone for me as I read the work of Susan Moller Okin and Michael Sandel concerning justice in the family. In what follows, I will report on the debate between Sandel and Okin over whether the family should be arranged, as my friends' family clearly was, in order to meet a standard of justice. With Okin, I will argue that the family should be just, and also that it must be more than merely just. Finally, I will argue that Lonergan's essay, "Finality, Love, Marriage," and Lewis Hyde's *The Gift: Imaginaltion and the Erotic Life of Property* go beyond Okin in their ability to explain why justice alone is not sufficient to fulfill the ends of marriage.

JUSTICE, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY

In *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, Susan Okin makes an eloquent case for the reform of the contemporary gender-structured marriage and family. By "gender-structured," Okin refers to families in which the unpaid labor of the household is primarily performed by the woman. Okin's goal is to make the family a more just institution.[1] To this end, she uses the notion of justice developed by John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice*. She agrees with Rawls that a just society would be framed according to principles derived from an "original position," in which those who are to participate in a society choose principles of distribution of benefits and burdens without knowing crucial facts about themselves. In the interest of fairness, Rawlsian agents stand behind a "veil of ignorance" that hides from each "his place in society, his class position or social status,...his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like,...his conception of the good, the particulars of his rational plan of life, even the special features

[1] Although Okin focuses in her book on families in developed nations, she addresses in a later article the issues facing families in developing countries. See Martha Nussbaum, "Justice for Women!" *New York Review of Books* (vol.39, October 8, 1992) 43.

of his psychology."[2]

While Okin faults Rawls for assuming without argument that the institution of the family is just, she finds Rawls' theory to be a powerful tool for assessing the justice of the family. If knowledge of one's sex is added to the list of characteristics concealed behind the veil of ignorance, gender-structured marriage is revealed to be an unjust institution. From behind the veil of ignorance, people would not choose a family structure in which women have primary responsibility for the family's unpaid labor, particularly given the laws and employment practices of contemporary American society. Under the present social conditions, Okin argues, women and children are vulnerable in ways that men are not, and women far less than men are able to withdraw from a marriage without suffering harmful consequences.[3] Because women are less able than men to withdraw from marriage without economic sacrifice, women's voices within marriage are likely to be less effectively heard than are their husbands'.[4]

Gender-structured marriage, Okin argues, "involves women in a cycle of socially caused and distinctly asymmetric vulnerabilities."[5] These vulnerabilities arise, first, because girls growing up expect to be the primary caretakers of children and as a result often aspire to less time-consuming and therefore less well-paying careers than do boys.[6] Within marriage, women are disproportionately responsible for the household chores and for childcare. On average, even women who work full-time do far more of the unpaid labor of the family than do their husbands. The result of the unequal division of these responsibilities is that women are more likely than men to give up career advancements in favor of family responsibilities. Moreover, employers typically structure paid labor with the assumption that, as Okin puts it, "'someone' is home at least part-time during the day to assume primary responsibility for children."[7] For example, the typical schedule of work does not permit parents with full-time jobs to care for children after

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[2] Quoted in Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989) 91.

[3] See Okin 136-137.

[4] Okin 138.

[5] Okin 138.

[6] Okin 143.

[7] Okin 155.

school or during school vacations. Moreover, Okin points out that the professions, including law and university teaching, place their heaviest demands upon employees during the years when their children are likely to be young.[8] Working women who put the care of families before the advancement of careers end up with less seniority and fewer promotions than most of their male counterparts. Within a marriage, then, husbands tend to have greater salaries and more secure positions than wives, with the result that women become highly dependent on their husbands' incomes.[9] This dependency appears to affect women's influence on family decisions.[10]

Such dependency becomes an extremely dangerous condition for both women and children in the event that the marriage ends in divorce. Okin cites statistics (including the prediction that half of all marriages contracted in the 1970's will end in divorce) to confirm that divorce is a real possibility that couples should confront.[11] Following divorce the economic status of men typically rises while that of women falls.[12] Okin traces this inequality in standards of living to the practice of awarding custody of children to women while dividing the couple's property equally between them, as well as to the fact that upon divorce the husband typically has greater earning potential than the wife. As Okin points out, by taking on the unpaid labor of the family, women contribute to their husbands' ability to advance in their careers. In divorce settlements, however, the contribution of the unpaid spouse is rarely acknowledged.

Okin proposes a number of reforms that would make marriage a more just institution. Some of these reforms would foster a "move away from gender,"[13] i.e., a transformation of the expectation that women will be the primary caretakers of children and men the family providers. As things stand, even couples who wish to share parenting equally are often

[8] Okin 156.

[9] Okin 156.

[10] Okin 158.

[11] Okin 160.

[12] Okin 160.

[13] Okin puts this point provocatively, saying that for a just society, "[in] its social structures and practices, one's sex would have no more relevance than one's eye color or the length of one's toes." (p. 171) When she spells out this point, Okin concentrates on the proposal that one's sex should not determine whether one is expected to do the lion's share of household chores or to care for children more than one's spouse.

unable to do so. Therefore Okin proposes workplace reforms such as family leave and flexible hours for both men and women with young children,[14] and educational reforms to encourage children not to assume that they will take up traditional gender roles as adults.

Okin recognizes that, even if shared parenting becomes easier, many people will continue to live by traditional gender roles, and for these she proposes that the choice to contribute the greater share of the family's unpaid labor should not be allowed to render women (or men who take on such roles) more economically vulnerable than their spouses. Employers would recognize unpaid family labor by paying half an employee's wages to the person responsible for work at home.[15] For both traditional and nontraditional households, divorce settlements would aim to produce the same standard of living in both post-divorce households.[16]

In the light of Okin's book, Diane's and Michael's elaborate balance sheet of burdens and benefits will surely appear more intelligible than it did to me at the time. At stake for the Fayres was not just an hour of free time here or there, but the equal involvement of both with their children, the equal influence of both upon family decisions, and the development of career assets for each, ensuring that, if they were to divorce, neither would be left at a desperate economic disadvantage. One could see my friends' accounting system as, among other things, a kind of insurance policy against divorce, necessarily extreme because, lacking social and institutional support of the kind Okin advocates, the only place they could turn to for extra time was to one another.

But if Okin's book makes the Fayres' balance sheet more understandable, what of the dismay I felt when I was with them, the sense that their marriage had suffered a loss when it became dominated by the quest for complete reciprocity, or, as I would now put it, for justice? That dismay is addressed in Okin's work, when she considers whether Michael Sandel is correct to argue, in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, that the family is "beyond" justice.

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[14] Okin 177.

[15] Okin 181.

[16] Okin 179 and 183.

SANDEL ON RAWLS AND THE FAMILY

Sandel's book presents a challenge to Okin at two levels: first, as a discussion of justice in the family, and second, as a principled critique of Rawls, whose work provides a framework for Okin's own. Sandel's overall purpose in the book is to point out conceptual limits of the liberalism that derives from Kant and is carried forward by Rawls and many others. Sandel characterizes the "core thesis" of what he terms this "deontological liberalism" as follows:

> [S]ociety, being composed of a plurality of persons, each with his own aims, interests, and conceptions of the good, is best arranged when it is governed by principles that do not themselves presuppose any particular conception of the good; what justifies these regulative principles above all is not that they maximize the social welfare or otherwise promote the good, but rather that they conform to the concept of right, a moral category given prior to the good and independent of it.[17]

In viewing the right as more essential than the good, deontological liberalism distinguishes itself from utilitarianism (on the grounds that some actions that promote the general welfare may still not be right) and from "teleology" (including ethical systems derived from a "thick" or fully developed conception of the human good).

For Kant, the human capacity for choice (autonomy) is more essential than any actual ends we may choose. Any attempt to prescribe particular ends for people violates human autonomy.[18] This position results, according to Sandel, from Kant's division of the subject into an empirical or phenomenal self, which has particular ends, and a noumenal self which, in order to be thought of as free, must not be conditioned by the desire for particular ends.[19]

As we saw in Okin's summary of Rawls, Rawls includes knowledge of how one conceives the good among those things concealed from agents in the original position. In this way he follows Kant in giving pride of

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[17] Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 1.

[18] Sandel 5.

[19] Sandel 9.

place in the theory of justice to a pure, autonomous subject, divorced from its ends and goals.[20] Rawls accepts, then, the Kantian conclusion regarding the primacy of autonomy over ends (and the resulting primacy of justice over utility or the good) but he is unwilling to ground this conclusion in Kantian metaphysics.[21] Where Kant removed the autonomous self to the nonempirical, noumenal realm of freedom, Rawls' thought-experiment places agents behind a veil of ignorance in a world governed by what Rawls considers to be actual "circumstances of justice."[22] The circumstances of justice (a notion developed by Hume) are conditions in which "mutually disinterested persons put forward conflicting claims to the division of social advantages under conditions of moderate scarcity."[23] Rawls argues, following Hume, that justice would not be called for unless these conditions existed (just as physical courage is not called for unless life or limb are threatened) but that since in fact human society is characterized by these conditions, justice is called for. Thus, as Sandel underscores, the primacy of justice is for Rawls justified by an empirical claim concerning the facts of human society.

Sandel contends that human society is not, however, always characterized by these particular conditions, and thus that there is insufficient empirical support for the primacy of justice.[24] It is in the context of this argument that Sandel makes his remarks concerning the role of justice in the family. Sandel argues that if Rawls were to be consistent in his Humean claim that empirical conditions of human life determine the primacy of justice, then he should also admit, with Hume, that not all social situations are characterized by conflicting claims to advantages.[25] As Hume put it, "Between married persons, the cement of friendship is by the laws supposed so strong as to abolish all division of

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[20] Thus to divorce the subject from its ends is important for both Kant and Rawls because the right will place for both thinkers a limit on what goods can be chosen. Justice, or equal consideration of everyone's ends, takes precedence over good outcomes.

[21] Sandel 24.

[22] Sandel 29.

[23] Rawls, quoted by Sandel 29.

[24] The implicit notion of "justice" here is the fair distribution of benefits and burdens, which is to be made without also making judgments concerning which ends are truly worth pursuing.

[25] Sandel 30.

possessions; and has often, in reality, the force ascribed to it."[26] According to Sandel, the predominance of shared goals and mutual affection in families and in other small, closeknit groups belies Rawls' notion that justice is the primary virtue of all societies.[27] Moreover, Sandel argues, following Hume, that if people were benevolent enough, justice would be unnecessary.[28] It follows, ironically, that the reason a given society has become more just might be that it has suffered a loss of the "rival virtue" of benevolence. Sandel imagines a family ruled initially by a spirit of generosity, in which "questions of what I get and what I am due do not loom large in the overall context of this way of life."[29] He proposes, further, that this "harmonious family comes to be wrought with dissension," such that they begin to demand fairness and rights from one another, and that they "sullenly" but with full integrity grant to one another the just consideration of Rawlsian agents. Sandel asks, rhetorically, whether the second situation, which is clearly more just than the first in a Rawlsian sense, is truly preferable to the first. If it is not preferable, then Rawls' claim that justice is the primary virtue of all social groups seems to be further undermined.

As I mentioned earlier, Sandel's book presents obstacles both to Okin's characterization of the family as in need of justice and to her adherence to Rawlsian liberalism. Okin responds to the first obstacle explicitly, in her chapter, "The Family: Beyond Justice?" She objects to Sandel's account of the family on the grounds, first, that when Rawls says that justice is the "primary" virtue he does not mean that it is the highest virtue but that it is the most necessary or essential. Just as a theory must at least be true, though it is best if it is also "elegant or economical," so an institution must at least be just, though it is all the better if its members also act from self-sacrifice, heroism, benevolence, and so on.[30]

Okin objects, further, that when one looks at the examples of happy, generous families cited by both Hume and Sandel, one must be careful not to idealize them and thus to overlook unfairness that may lie beneath the surface. The families cited by Hume, she points out, were

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[26] Quoted in Sandel 31.
[27] Sandel 31.
[28] Sandel 32.
[29] Sandel 33.
[30] Okin 28.

ones in which property was not common to all members, but in which, rather, ownership of women's personal property passed to their husbands, but not vice-versa.[31] Thus, she suggests, it may not have been generosity or unity of feeling that lay at the heart of Hume's ideal family. Similarly, Sandel's ideal family may be a product of mutual generosity but it may instead be shaped by social conditions in which women have little choice as to whether to contribute the greater share of domestic labor and childcare. Okin argues that it is impossible to assess a family "from a moral point of view" simply by looking at how generously women are dealt with when they ask for a share of family property. One would have to know "whether, if they asked for [a just share], they would be considered entitled to it."[32]

Families, Okin argues, and particularly women and children, cannot depend on generosity, because of what happens to so many following divorce.[33] But there is nothing to preclude families from aspiring to be both just and generous. "Why should we suppose," she asks, "that harmonious affection, indeed deep and long-lasting love, cannot co-exist with ongoing standards of justice?"[34]

Perhaps we can clarify the dispute between Sandel and Okin by asking how each might respond to the Fayres and their familial balance-sheet. Sandel might see my friends as an example of a family in which justice has become a primary virtue, perhaps corresponding to a loss of generosity and benevolence. Okin might reply that Sandel fails to consider that the Fayres did not choose on some whim to become so focused upon justice; social circumstances left them few alternatives. Under the circumstances it is possible to say that their approach is more desirable than that of a family in which generosity prevails but women and children are not considered to be entitled to anything.

Were Sandel to concede these points, he might nevertheless take the opportunity to answer Okin's question as to why harmonious affection and a concern for justice might be thought difficult to reconcile. Sandel considers the following situation:

If, out of a misplaced sense of justice, a close friend of long

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[31] Okin 30.
[32] Okin 31.
[33] Okin 32.
[34] Okin 32.

> standing repeatedly insists on calculating and paying his precise share of every common expenditure, or refuses to accept any favor or hospitality except at the greatest protest and embarrassment, not only will I feel compelled to be reciprocally scrupulous but at some point may begin to wonder whether I have not misunderstood our relationship.[35]

Sandel might ask Okin to concede that, even if justice is a necessary and important virtue in the family, it is one whose acquisition comes with a potentially high cost. If Lewis Hyde is correct to say that "the way we treat a thing [as a gift or as a commodity of exchange] can sometimes change its nature,"[36] then a family in which justice becomes a central virtue runs at least the risk of diminishing in mutual generosity and sacrifice.

FINALITY, LOVE, MARRIAGE

Even if Okin and Sandel can be brought closer together on the question of justice in the family, still it remains to be seen whether Okin's reliance on Rawls' overall framework is problematic. Liberal political theory, with its minimalist conception of the good, has tremendous appeal in the United States because it is so compatible with American values such as individual freedom and respect for diversity. Many questions have been raised, however, as to whether or not Rawls' conception of the good is too "thick" (i.e., incorporating too many controversial elements) or too "thin" (incorporating so few judgments concerning what is truly worthwhile that it is unable to do the work of a complete ethical theory).[37] Some of

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[35] Sandel 35.

[36] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) xiii.

[37] In the remainder of *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, for example, Sandel develops a critique of the human subject implied by Rawls' theory of justice, emphasizing that it is a subject whose relationship to its own ends is considered arbitrary and contingent. Moreover, as Sandel argues, the Rawlsian self is presumed to be unable to order its ends rationally. Rawls' subjects, as Martha Nussbaum points out, are allowed to know, not their own complete visions of the good, but instead a list of the primary goods which might be useful to anyone. (These goods include liberty, wealth, and income, as well as the conditions needed for self-respect).

Like Rawls, Susan Okin does not assume a common vision of the good among all

Rawls' critics have themselves proposed alternative accounts of the human good.

It is here that Lonergan's 1943 article, "Finality, Love, Marriage," is of great relevance to the question of justice in the family. In this early article, Lonergan began to develop the theory of the human good which came to more complete expression in *Method in Theology*. (Since "Finality, Love, Marriage," contains Lonergan's only extended discussion of marriage, I will focus on it rather than on *Method in Theology*, although a more complete discussion of these issues would have to transpose them into Lonergan's later framework.)

Lonergan wrote his article as a response to contemporary controversies in Catholic theology over the purpose of marriage, especially over the relative importance of procreation and the personal relationship of love. With his penchant for looking at issues in broad, explanatory contexts, Lonergan placed marriage within a general account of cosmic finality:

> For it is only in the cosmic breadth of a simultaneous context of nature, history, and grace, that appear at once the justice and the assimilative capacity of the, on the whole, traditional view that the most essential end of marriage is the procreation and education of offspring but its most excellent end lies on the supernatural level of personalist development.[38]

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the agents behind a veil of ignorance. As we saw, she allows that they may be either traditionalists or revolutionaries where gender roles are concerned. As Nussbaum points out, however, Okin is not entirely neutral concerning the question of the human good, for she "insists...that in a just society religious views that teach the inferiority of women will simply not be admitted for consideration in the construction of basic institutions..."

Nussbaum argues that Rawls, and Okin following him, need to address the human good more fully. For example, for Rawls money is a "primary good" of which it is assumed that more is always better than less. Nussbaum argues that the capitalist acquisitiveness that builds on this premise adds to the difficulties faced by married couples and helps to create the conditions of injustice in the family. A theory of justice, Nussbaum claims, must say more than Rawls or Okin does concerning what is good for human beings, while leaving room for people of various religious and metaphysical traditions to develop fundamental human capacities in their own ways. See Nussbaum 48.

[38] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," in *Collection,* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 19.

Unpacking this quotation will provide the background needed in order to see how Lonergan might contribute to the Okin-Sandel debate.

First, Lonergan distinguishes among three kinds of finality: the absolute finality by which all things are oriented toward God as absolutely and intrinsically good; the horizontal finality by which beings at different levels respond to God, each in a manner limited by its capacities;[39] and the vertical finality by which lower levels of being are oriented toward higher levels.

Horizontal ends, Lonergan argues, are more essential, while vertical ends are more excellent. Just as oxygen, he writes, has its essential end in "perform[ing] the offices of oxygen as oxygen" and its more excellent end in helping to maintain human life,[40] so marriage has its essential end in the procreation and (Christian) education of children, and its most excellent end in the advance of the married couple in Christian perfection.[41]

Second, Lonergan places marriage within a larger account of human ends, which are "life, the good life, and eternal life."[42] We pursue life through the repetitive, cyclical activities of our physical nature; we pursue the good life through reason and its ongoing attempts to advance in truth and to improve institutions; we pursue eternal life with the assistance of divine grace.[43]

Marriage contributes to all three human ends: to life, through the procreation of offspring; to the good life, both through the education of children who will carry forward social traditions and through the virtuous friendship of the spouses for one another, and to eternal life both through the preparation of children to accept God's graces (the horizontal end of marriage) and through the way married life prepares the spouses themselves to receive such grace (the vertical, or most excellent, end of marriage).

In the midst of his highly technical treatment of marriage, Lonergan writes very beautifully of the way marriage molds and forges the spirits of both spouses, in a process that begins with sexual attraction and ends in the beatific vision:

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[39] Lonergan 20.
[40] Lonergan 23.
[41] Lonergan 48.
[42] Lonergan 38.
[43] Lonergan 38-39.

> Thus eros leads to company; but company reveals deeper qualities of mind and character to set up a human friendship; a human friendship cannot but intensify the mutual charity of members of the mystical body; finally, it is in charity to one another that, in truth and reality, as St. John so clearly taught, people come to the love of God. But next, sexual differentiation makes man and woman complementary beings for the living of life: it sets up spontaneously a division of labor not only with regard to children but also with regard to the whole domestic economy; each partner is part of a larger whole, invited to fit into that whole, and so intense is the intimacy of that common life, so serious its responsibilities, that reason seals it with an inviolable contract and grace with a sacrament. Now in that contract and sacrament, consummated in the flesh, another self is most intensively apprehended, loved, realized. So married life is launched, but the human and infused virtues that already exist will be tested by the life in common; they will be heightened by the almost palpable responsibility of children; they will develop in the midst of trials faced together; they will be purified in the serenity of old age, when perforce the self becomes selfless as the field of enjoyment contracts to joy in the enjoyment of others, in the romping vitality of grandchildren. This educative process is objective; it comes whether willed or not; but if, as should be, at some time people begin to cooperate with the scheme of things, then their hearts turn and settle on the real meaning of life; their goal will be not just fun but, here below, the humanistic goal of the Aristotelian good life, and supernaturally the beatific vision. Then their mutual actuation of a common consciousness and conscience will be a rejection of the world's dialectical rationalizations, a focal point in the stream of history for the fostering of growth in the mind and heart of Christ, a pursuit of the highest human and eternal ends.[44]

Clearly, Lonergan's account of the ends of marriage and of human life goes far beyond the pluralistic and neutral accounts of human flourishing typical of liberal political theory and shared by Okin. Can Okin and Lonergan be brought into dialogue concerning justice in the family, or are their frameworks too disparate?

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[44] Lonergan 36-37.

LONERGAN AND OKIN: JUSTICE AND GIFTS IN THE FAMILY

It appears to me that Lonergan and Okin would find some areas of agreement as well as some respects in which their frameworks are difficult to reconcile. First, in light of both the horizontal and vertical ends of marriage, Okin's general call for familial reform is justified. To leave children (and women) particularly vulnerable to economic disaster, or to impoverish them following a divorce, is both a failure to support them physically and a failure to educate them in the virtues. While Lonergan would be likely to seek to strengthen marriage and prevent divorce if possible, still in a society in which marriages are easily dissolved, the effort to assist women in developing career assets and the divorce-settlement reforms Okin proposes are defensible for the way they would ultimately ameliorate the effects of divorce on children.[45]

Moreover, Okin's call for justice in the family is also defensible in light of the vertical, personalist ends of marriage: the development of the spouses toward virtue and grace. Through workplace reforms, Okin calls for an end to the rigid expectation that men will work and women will care for children. Such reforms could open up chances for both women and men to develop experiences as well as capacities for understanding, judgment, and deliberation, that bridge the public and domestic spheres of life. When both spouses perform paid and unpaid labor, they may deepen the source of the "common consciousness and conscience" praised by Lonergan.

If Okin's proposals find some support within Lonergan's framework of human ends, what of Sandel's objection that justice is a rival virtue to generosity and benevolence, and that a family in which justice prevails may be a family in which these other virtues are undermined? Surely generosity, charity, and the giving of oneself without counting the cost, are central to the Christian life and thus central both to the example Christian parents should set for their children and to the married couple's spiritual growth. If it is really a choice between having families

[45] I am assuming here that when Lonergan writes of the spontaneous division of labor in the family on p. 37, he is not committing himself to the position that for women to perform the unpaid labor of the home is universally normative.

in which each member insists constantly on his or her rights and families in which each gives generously to the others, then one would have to choose between Okin's vision and Lonergan's. But is it not possible that the development of a "common consciousness and conscience" will occur partly when families consider together the problems of economic vulnerability and gender roles, when we learn to see how these institutions affect us both together and separately?

In *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* Lewis Hyde writes that the work of art exists in two economies: that of the marketplace and that of the gift. In the market economy, a commodity has a price. It is exchanged for something else, of a value settled in advance of the exchange, and those who buy and sell from one another have no lasting connection to one another. A gift, however, is donated freely, without certainty of recompense, and the giving of it establishes a relationship between giver and recipient, for the recipient has a responsibility to move the gift, either back to the giver or onward to someone else. Where market economies value us for how much we have, gift economies value us for how much we give away. And, while a work of art can exist in both economies, if it becomes a pure commodity it is no longer art.

Perhaps marriage, like the work of art, exists simultaneously in two economies. Justice governs what we are entitled to ask for, while generosity governs the rest; and a marriage with only justice and no gift-giving would fail to fulfill its goal of developing a virtuous and grace-filled community of friends. Such was the source of my discomfort around the Fayres—that gift-giving had been forgotten in favor of market exchange. Hyde writes that "a work of art can survive without the market, but where there is no gift there is no art."[46] Can we say, analogously, that a marriage can survive without justice, but where there is no gift there is no marriage? My own answer is that, if we must choose, it is better for marriage to be based on the giving of gifts. But I believe, with Okin, first, that a gift which is prescribed by rigid gender roles is not always given out of love, and second, that we can have both justice and gifts, that we can make familial justice a gift to one another.

[46] Hyde xi.

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LIBERTY, HISTORY, AND THE COMMON GOOD: AN EXERCISE IN CRITICAL RETRIEVAL

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THE QUARREL OF THE ANCIENTS AND THE MODERNS REVISITED

IN THIS ESSAY, I want to explore two important pre-modern moral traditions: the classical republican tradition of public liberty and the Aristotelian tradition of the common good. By public liberty I mean the political ideal of active, informed, participatory citizenship in a self-governing republic, the ideal Lincoln expressed in the historic phrase: government of the people, by the people and for the people. By the common good I mean the philosophical conviction that the purpose of public institutions and practices is to preserve, augment, and perfect the commonweal, where the commonweal refers to the comprehensive good of the whole civic community. The question I want to address is this: Are these moral traditions and the distinctive goods they espouse still relevant to the conditions of contemporary life?[1]

The founders of modern political philosophy, Hobbes and Locke, explicitly rejected these pre-modern moral ideals.[2] They adopted an

[1] There are several ways of expressing the intended contrast to the notion of public liberty: negative liberty (Isaiah Berlin), civil liberty (Hannah Arendt), private and individual liberty (Benjamin Constant). For the sake of clarity, the common good should be distinguished from utility or the general welfare, when they are conceived as the aggregate sum of individual satisfactions. See Bruce Douglas, "The Common Good and the Public Interest," *Political Theory XIII* (1), February 1980.

[2] "Political Societies in the understanding of Hobbes, Locke, Bentham or the common sense that they have helped shape are established by collections of

instrumental view of public institutions and claimed that the purpose of government was to serve essentially private interests—the preservation of individual life and property. They embraced a new philosophical anthropology that legitimated the calculated pursuit of private advantage and radically undercut the anthropological and moral basis of the common good tradition.[3]

Many representatives of contemporary liberalism support this early modern critique. They insist on the religious and moral neutrality of public institutions and identify the legitimate ends of government as guaranteeing private liberty—the legal protection of individual rights—and promoting economic growth and the expansion of national wealth.[4]

There is also an historically based criticism of these classical traditions which emphasizes the profound historical discontinuity between ancient and modern life, a division that affects philosophy, culture, social institutions and our understanding of the human person. According to these historical critics, the classical ideals of public liberty and the common good essentially depend on the cultural, political, and economic conditions of ancient societies; these conditions no longer obtain in the twentieth century, and we neither could nor should seek to re-establish them.[5] Moreover, as Rousseau asserted in the *Emile*, there are no more fatherlands, no more classical republics today, and it would

individuals to obtain benefits though common action that they could not secure individually. The action is collective, but the point of it remains individual. The common good is constituted out of individual goods, without remainder." Charles Taylor, "Cross Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life* ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) 166.

[3] See Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[4] It is important to acknowledge the great variety of liberal theories and theorists, only some of whom fit this restrictive description. See Taylor's deliberately contrastive account of "procedural liberalism" in "Cross Purposes" 164-165.

[5] "...the republican thesis, whatever its validity in ancient times, is irrelevant in modern mass bureaucratic societies. People in the modern age have become individualist....To hanker after the unity of the earlier republics is to indulge in bootless nostalgia." Taylor, "Cross Purposes," 173. See also the extended dialogue between the traditionalist, the modernist and the pluralist in Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 280-298.

be vain, nostalgic, and ultimately repressive to attempt to restore them.[6]

At the same time, an increasing number of thoughtful critics—Robert Bellah, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor—have questioned the legitimacy of the modern liberal polity. This communitarian critique emphasizes the numerous malaises of modernity: the deep alienation of democratic citizens from the institutions and culture of Western societies; the withdrawal of allegiance and support from modern governments and political parties; contemporary cynicism about public institutions and contempt for public servants; increasing doubts about economic growth, the rewards of affluence, and the opportunity for meaningful and dignified work in late modern capitalism.[7]

In the face of this liberal and communitarian cross-fire, in which the liberals defend the public culture of modernity and the communitarians challenge its integrity, I want to execute a project of critical moral and political retrieval. My purpose is not to heighten the sound and fury of the present cultural debate, but to deepen my own understanding of what the ancient goods really were and what relevance they might still have for the contemporary world.

I borrow the concept of critical retrieval from Charles Taylor, and I note the similarity of Taylor's genealogical project with Bernard Lonergan's call for a critical appropriation of tradition.[8]

The following are the intellectual moments in the task of critical retrieval:

a) **articulation**—to clarify the nature of these highly compressed ideals; to explain what public liberty is and has been and what is really meant by the common good.

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[6] "There are no longer any real fatherlands and therefore no real citizens. The words 'fatherland' and 'citizen' should be expunged from modern languages." Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Emile* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967) 13.

[7] See Robert Bellah et al. *The Habits of the Heart and The Good Society*; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*; Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2. MacIntyre insists that his trenchant critique of liberalism should not be described as communitarian even though it is often classified under that rubric.

[8] For Taylor, see *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 23. For Lonergan, see "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" in *A Third Collection* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 176-182.

b) **appraisal**—to explain why these goods are really important and of lasting concern and to clarify their relation to the numerous other goods we presently seek.
c) **relevance and viability**—Is it really possible to recover these contested goods? What are the concrete possibilities of their renewal? What are the obstacles that prevent their recovery?
d) **the price of loss**—what cultural and political price do we pay for their neglect or rejection?
e) **conditions of actualization**—what philosophical, cultural, and institutional changes would be required for their effective embodiment in public life today?

I am guided in this project by a recent claim of Charles Taylor in his essay "Cross Purposes: the Liberal-Communitarian Debate." Taylor writes:

> The Republican thesis is as relevant and true today, in its distinctive contemporary applications, as it was in ancient or early modern times when the paradigm statements of civic humanism were articulated.[9]

By the republican thesis Taylor means the civic humanist belief that patriotism is an essential requirement of a free, non-despotic society. By "patriotism" Taylor means that the citizens of a free society have a strong love for, identification with, and allegiance to the particular historical community in which they live and to the public institutions on which their common life depends. A sign of authentic patriotism is the readiness of ordinary citizens to accept voluntarily the self-discipline and personal sacrifices that are required for the well-being of their community and for the effectiveness of its public institutions. This readiness is particularly important in periods of military danger or socio-economic contraction, or when the society seeks to remedy long-standing social ills and injustices created by racism, poverty, and the abuse of its natural and historical environment.[10]

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[9] Taylor "Cross purposes," 175.

[10] Taylor's account of patriotism in "Cross Purposes" bears a close resemblance to his treatment of legitimacy in "Legitimation Crisis?" in *Philosophical Papers*, Vol 2 and in "Alternative Futures: Legitimacy, Identity and Alienation in Late Twentieth Century Canada" in *Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Society in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

So another way of stating my concerns is this: In what sense is the republican thesis still true, and what are the distinctive applications that reveal its enduring importance for our public life?[11]

B.

Let us begin our inquiry by revisiting Benjamin Constant's famous speech, "The Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns," delivered to the Athénée Royal in Paris in 1819, four years after the final defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. I want to examine four central themes in Constant's remarkable essay: history, liberty, the Jacobin error and the intrinsic dangers of a commercial society.[12]

Constant belongs to the French liberal tradition that derives from Montesquieu; an important strength of that tradition is its acute sensitivity to historical change.[13] In his essay, Constant emphasizes the radical contrasts between two fundamentally different epochs: the ancient mediterranean world of classical Greece and republican Rome (the normative models for the civic humanist tradition) and the modern European world of centrally governed nation states. These two epochs can be distinguished by their patterns of social organization, their forms of government, their cultural priorities, the moral dispositions and habits of their citizens, and by what Montesquieu called their esprit—the animating spirit that pervades and energizes their public life.[14]

For Constant, these are the defining features of the ancient Greek republics: very small territory and population; close proximity to hostile and dangerous neighbors; both the polity and the society were organized for the continual possibility of war; the economic order was based on slavery; the citizens were animated by an intense republican patriotism, a deep identification with their polis and its way of life; these citizen

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[11] This paper is a small part of a larger project to develop a credible, historically minded version of civic humanism for the contemporary world.

[12] From Benjamin Constant, *Political Writings*, trans. and ed. by Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press1988) 307-328.

[13] For a useful contrast between the English and the French liberal traditions with respect to historical mindedness see Larry Siedentop, "Two Liberal Traditions" in *The Idea of Freedom,* ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 153-157.

[14] Constant, "Liberty," 319.

soldiers were energized by public virtue, by their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the preservation of the ancient city.[15]

By contrast, the modern European nation-states are much larger and more populous; they are devoted primarily to commercial rather than military activity; their economic practice is based on the elimination of slavery (it is a constitutive principle of the modern state that all citizens will work for a living); there is a much weaker identification of the individual with the body politic, especially the public governing authority. The focus of modern existence is not on war and political engagement, but on commerce, economic exchange, the pursuit of private pleasure and comfort. Because of this cultural outlook, modern citizens are very reluctant to sacrifice their personal happiness for the commonweal; their animating esprit is enlightened self-interest rather than republican patriotism.[16]

The two epochs also had essentially different understandings of liberty and the purpose of government. In the ancient city, freedom meant the right of each citizen to participate directly in self-government, in the exercise of public authority; the ancient citizen engaged immediately and directly in political deliberation, legislative activity, military action, and the administration of justice. The ancient republics prized as the highest human good this direct involvement of their citizens in the conduct of public affairs which they called public liberty.[17]

Lest we become nostalgic for this lost era, Constant reminds us of the moral and political limits of classical republicanism: it was not concerned with individual rights or personal happiness; it placed no constitutional limits on public authority; there was a radical inequality between the citizen class and everyone else, including slaves, resident aliens, and women; the extensive leisure required for ancient politics was based on radical injustice to other persons (in the ancient polis the many were coerced so that the few might be free).[18]

The understanding of freedom and the purposes of government is also very different in the modern epoch. Modern nation states embody a

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[15] Constant, "Liberty," 312.

[16] Constant, "Liberty," 313-314.

[17] Constant, "Liberty," 311.

[18] "by an equally necessary result of this way of being, all the states had slaves." Constant, " Liberty," 311-313.

non-classical distinction between the state (the locus of governmental power and coercive legal authority) and civil society (the non-governmental associative communities which modern citizens can enter or abandon at will).[19] The vast majority of modern citizens do not participate directly in government, but select designated representatives to secure and protect their individual rights. They want the operations of government, the state, to be strictly limited by law; the state's primary function is the protection of individual or private liberty. According to Constant, a disciple of Adam Smith, the state should not interfere with the various enterprises of civil society, particularly its economic and commercial transactions.[20] For the modern citizen, freedom is defined by negation. It is the security guaranteed by enforceable law to exercise and enjoy one's individual rights without interference by the state, organized social groups, or private individuals.

Though the modern emphasis is on private liberty, on individual rights, limited government, unregulated free enterprise and trade, Constant insists that the state and the law should guarantee this liberty for all—that equal liberty (negative liberty) should be a common right for all citizens guaranteed by their delegated representatives in government.[21]

Why is Constant so concerned with these extended historical contrasts? He believes that the failure to appreciate the political importance of history was the primary cause of French Revolutionary terror. The men who initiated the Revolution were united in their commitment to universal freedom and equality, but the Jacobins who assumed control of the revolutionary movement in the early 1790's were unduly influenced by the neo-classical republicanism of Rousseau.[22] According to Constant, the Jacobins sought universal freedom and equality under modern social and cultural conditions, but they interpreted that freedom on the model of the ancient republics. As a result, they attempted to impose the ancient liberty of direct citizen participation on a modern people who wanted secure individual rights and the opportunity to pursue private happiness and wealth. Under the

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[19] See Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument" in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy* ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992) 89-107.

[20] Constant, "Liberty," 313-315.

[21] Constant, "Liberty," 325-326.

[22] Constant, "Liberty," 317-320.

banner of advancing universal freedom, the Jacobins resorted to unlimited terror against their fellow citizens.[23] From Constant's perspective, their noble ideals led to slaughter and ruin because they tried to force modern Frenchmen, who wanted to become free economic agents, to assume the identity of ancient republican citizens. By confusing the public liberty of the ancients with the private liberty of the moderns, the Jacobins led the revolution to its doom.[24]

For most of his essay, Constant defends the principles of laissez-faire liberalism, but towards the end of his speech, the tone of his rhetoric markedly changes as he issues a double warning to his contemporaries. There are serious political and moral dangers facing a commercial society whose members are immersed in the pursuit of private happiness. The first warning is addressed to their enlightened self-interest; unless modern citizens remain engaged in political affairs and scrutinize their chosen representatives with vigilance, there is a serious risk that their elected surrogates will become despotic and deprive the majority of the security and freedom it cherishes.[25] The second warning has an ancient flavor, though it is framed in a modern idiom, not that of the enlightenment but of the romantic movement that arose in direct opposition to it. Constant, who had praised the bourgeois liberal ethic in his critique of the Jacobins and Rousseau, now speaks critically of its serious limitations. A bourgeois life, devoted exclusively to commerce, the acquisition of wealth and the pursuit of comfort lacks elevation, nobility and greatness.[26]

The full development of the self's potential, the full expression of the highest human powers, can only be achieved through direct participation in political life. As Constant reminds us, there is a grandeur in the ancient practice of public liberty that the moderns

[23] For Hegel, it was the Jacobins' commitment to absolute freedom that resulted in the Terror; for Constant, it was their misguided commitment to ancient freedom that "caused infinite evils during our long and stormy revolution." 317-318.

[24] Constant, "Liberty," 319-321 "Individual independence is the first need of the moderns; consequently one must never require from them any sacrifices to establish political liberty."

[25] Constant, "Liberty," 326.

[26] Constant, "Liberty," 327.

ignore at the peril of their rights and the contraction of their very selves.[27]

C.

Alexis de Tocqueville belonged to the same French liberal tradition as Constant. Though both shared Montesquieu as a mentor, the emphasis in Tocqueville's political writings is strikingly different from that of his liberal contemporary. Like Constant, Tocqueville was attentive to historical change and disruption. He believed that a gradual but irresistible social revolution had been transforming Europe since the high middle ages. The climax of this revolution occurred towards the close of the eighteenth century in France with the legal abolition of the feudal aristocracy.[28]

For Tocqueville, this historic shift from an aristocratic to a democratic social order had the characteristics of a providential fact: it was universal, irreversible, and ongoing. Its immediate effect was a radical equalization of social conditions among the French people. In the wake of the revolution, the medieval feudal order, the Ancien Regime, was effectively destroyed. This meant the disappearance of hierarchically ordered estates (nobility, clergy, and commoners); it also meant the abolition of legally sanctioned class divisions, differentiated by the political privileges they enjoyed, the laws by which they were governed, and the public obligations for which they were responsible.[29]

As the old sources of political power were eroded (aristocratic birth, landed property, ecclesiastical office), new sources of power (education, legal training, money and credit, commercial ambition) thrust the urban bourgeoisie into public prominence. Tocqueville identified several common tendencies in the post-feudal order. There was greater economic equality and a more uniform manner of life (democratic social

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[27] "It is not to happiness alone; it is to self-development that our destiny calls us; and political liberty is the most powerful, the most effective means of self-development that heaven has given us." "Liberty," 327. Note the profoundly non-classical separation of happiness from self-development as appropriate human ends.

[28] See Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983) "...a great democratic revolution is going on among us;...it seems irresistible because it is the most uniform, the most ancient, and the most permanent tendency that is to be found in history." Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* Vol 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) 3.

[29] Tocqueville, *Ancien Regime*, 14-21; *Democracy in America*, 4-7.

levelling). Wealth and power were more clearly dissociated; work and gain were more clearly united. A wage-earning society was forming in which all citizens were expected to work and in which nearly all private and public activities were paid. The operative ideal was the Napoleonic principle of careers open to talent (meritocracy).[30]

Tocqueville did not believe that the moral and political consequences of this social revolution were antecedently determined. The political destiny of democracy would be influenced by a wide range of moral variables, including the intellect, character, and wisdom of democratic leaders and citizens.[31]

Tocqueville's main concern was that the collapse of aristocracy and of hereditary monarchy did not mean the end of political despotism. Democratic social equality can coexist with either free or despotic government. Tocqueville set himself the intellectual project of articulating the political principles, customs, laws and institutions that would strengthen democratic liberty and check democratic tyranny.[32] This was the purpose of his exercise in critical retrieval. To paraphrase Tocqueville's famous maxim— "A new science of republican politics is needed for a new democratic world."[33] Adopting Montesquieu's distinction between free and despotic political regimes and connecting it with his insightful observations of American democracy, Tocqueville carefully distinguished the factors that promoted democratic despotism from the essential requirements of democratic liberty.

"I should have loved liberty at all times, but in the age in which we live I am prepared to worship it."[34] The love of liberty was the animating passion of Tocqueville's life, but what did he mean by liberty? We should pay close attention to his account, for it combines in a fascinating mixture both modern and ancient conceptions of freedom.[35]

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[30] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* Vol II, 349-350.

[31] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* Vol I, 334; *Democracy in America*, Vol II, 348.

[32] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, Vol I, 298-342.

[33] " the political world is metamorphosed; new remedies must henceforth be sought for new disorders." Tocqueville, *Democracy*, Vol II, 347.

[34] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, II, 340.

[35] Many of the same elements can be found in Constant's and Tocqueville's analyses of liberty, but the distribution of emphasis is strikingly different in the two authors. I have found Raymond Aron's commentary on Tocqueville particularly useful

Tocqueville's negative conception of liberty coincides with personal security. No one is free whose person, life, and property are not legally protected against illegitimate power, whether that power belongs to the state, to organized social groups, to disorganized mobs, or to private individuals. In a free society the basic rights of its citizens are secured by law and custom. Both Tocqueville and Constant share Montesquieu's emphasis on security as a primary condition of liberty, where security means legally assured protection against coercion and the abuse of power.[36]

Tocqueville's conception of positive liberty has two aspects—personal and political. Personal liberty is the freedom to think, to speak, to write, to express one's opinions and convictions in the public realm; it includes freedom of worship and conscience, the right to choose one's spouse and vocation, freedom of economic initiative and the right to acquire, inherit, and dispose of private property. The purpose of a bill of individual rights is to articulate explicitly this positive conception of personal liberty.[37]

Tocqueville's understanding of political liberty, by contrast, corresponds closely to the ancient conception of freedom. It means the assured opportunity to participate directly in democratic self-government and to share in the conduct of public affairs. It means the freedom to engage directly (through participation) and indirectly (through elected representation) in republican politics—to deliberate, to decide, to act in concert with others in determining public policy and law. Public liberty is supported by freedom of assembly and association, the right to petition for redress of grievances, the accountability of elected representatives, freedom of the press, etc.[38]

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on this point. See R. Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought I,* (New York: Anchor, 1968) 295.

[36] Tocqueville, *Democracy II,* 344-346.

[37] Tocqueville believed that the American respect for the rights and liberties of private persons derived from their English inheritance. These civil rights and liberties are the blessings of limited government and should not be confused with the citizen's political right to share in the conduct of public affairs. See *Democracy, II,* 100 and Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1965) 126-127, 133-135.

[38] For the singular importance and fragility of political liberty see *Democracy* II, 99-103. "...political liberty is more easily lost; to neglect to hold it fast is to allow it to escape."

The crucial point is that Tocqueville, far more than Constant, assigns to public liberty, ancient republican freedom, an essential role in a free democratic order. "The only effective remedy for the evils of democratic equality is political or public liberty."[39]

Tocqueville's love of liberty was fueled by his hatred of despotism and servility. His greatest fear was that new forms of despotism might emerge and prevail in the age of democracy. "Despotism appears to me to be particularly dreaded in democratic times."[40] What are the factors that prepare the way for democratic despotism?

1) Democratic individualism—the natural bias in an egalitarian society towards a concern for private affairs and a neglect of the commonweal. Democratic individualism isolates and disperses the members of the body politic.[41]

2) The loss of aristocratic and intermediary powers, especially the power of great noble families and provincial assemblies, leaves the authority of the central government unchecked.[42]

3) The absence of aristocratic experience and practical wisdom weakens the democratic conduct of foreign affairs.[43]

4) The vulgar democratic passions for wealth and material comfort degrade the nation and enervate the souls of its citizens.[44]

5) Mediocrity of education and democratic levelling foster a narrow and mean-spirited selfishness among the people.[45]

6) Demagogues invariably cultivate despotic passions among the majority and weaken their commitment to defend the rights of unpopular minorities.[46]

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[39] *Democracy*, II, 113.

[40] *Democracy*, II, 109.

[41] For the contrast between democratic individualism and moral egoism, see *Democracy*, II, 104-113. For the similarity of their effects, see *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution*, XIII. "...in a community in which the ties of family, of caste, of class and craft fraternities no longer exist people are far too much disposed to think exclusively of their own interests, to become self-seekers practicing a narrow individualism and caring nothing for the public good."

[42] *Democracy*, II, 341.

[43] *Democracy*, I, 243-245.

[44] *Democracy*, II, 136-141.

[45] *Democracy*, I, 273.

[46] On the tyranny of the democratic majority, see *Democracy*, I, 269-280.

These interrelated factors can converge to create a majoritarian despotism whose lawless exercise of power goes unchecked by countervailing power. In the face of this novel danger, Tocqueville insists that only the ardent love of God and neighbor (the religious spirit fostered by Christianity) and the active love of country (Taylor's republican patriotism) are capable of diverting democratic citizens from a degrading attachment to gain and material comfort, the spiritual breeding grounds for democratic despotism.[47]

The political history of the twentieth century confirms the prophetic character of Tocqueville's fears and the continuing relevance of his analysis, but I am more interested now in recalling the institutional and cultural practices he recommended to strengthen democratic liberty.[48] "Municipal institutions constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science. They bring liberty within the people's reach and teach them how to use and enjoy it."[49] For Tocqueville, the republican political and cultural institutions that support democratic liberty are also centers of civic education where the arts and virtues of freedom are learned. Without these habits of public liberty, deliberately cultivated in a republican culture, democratic institutions are subject to corruption and abuse.

What are the institutional and cultural practices Tocqueville explicitly encouraged for a democratic society?

1) active, independent local government; the independence of the townships, of municipal self-government, is the mainspring and life of American liberty.[50]

2) a federal constitution that delegates power and responsibility to the lowest effective governmental level rather than concentrating it in a single centralized authority (the principle of subsidiarity).[51]

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[47] "Do what you may, there is no true power among men except in the free union of their will; and patriotism and religion are the only two motives in the world that long urge all the people towards the same end." *Democracy*, I, 97.

[48] See Ch. XVII *Democracy*, I "Principal Causes which tend to maintain the Democratic Republic in the United States," 298-342.

[49] *Democracy*, I, 63.

[50] For the importance of the townships, especially in the governance of New England, see *Democracy*, I, 62-86.

[51] "The second manner of diminishing the influence of authority does not consist in stripping society of some of its rights, nor in paralyzing its effects, but in distributing

3) a constitutionally guaranteed bill of individual rights which both law and tradition are prepared to enforce.
4) the deliberate creation of independent, intermediary public powers committed to the promotion of public goods (the strengthening of civil society, the principle of voluntary association).[52]
5) free, public-spirited religious congregations (the rejection of an established church is consistent with strong public support for religion). Tocqueville draws a critical contrast between the United States and France; in the United States, the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty are effectively united; in France, they are disastrously at war.[53]
6) an independent judiciary; judicial review; the due process of law for all citizens; trial by jury.[54]
7) the accountability of elected representatives to the people on a regular basis.
8) a free, self-disciplined and responsible press.[55]
9) administrative decentralization—the avoidance of remote, impersonal, paternalistic bureaucracies; there should be an effective and immediate local response to social welfare needs.[56]

Despite their overlapping concerns, Tocqueville is far more apprehensive than Constant about the dangers of the post-revolutionary era. His vision of commerce is less benign and his analysis of despotism far more complex. For Tocqueville, the great theoretical and practical task after the Revolution is to promote the essential virtues (patriotism, public spiritedness, political liberty) and to check

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the exercise of its powers among various hands and in multiplying functionaries to each of whom is given the degree of power necessary for him to perform his duty....The authority thus divided is, indeed, rendered less irresistible and less perilous, but it is not destroyed." *Democracy*, I, 73.

[52] "The art of association between them becomes, as I have said before, the mother of action, studied and applied by all," *Democracy*, II, 125. For the American exercise of the art of public association, see *Democracy*, II, 114-128.

[53] "the Americans have succeeded in incorporating to some extent and combining admirably...the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty." *Democracy*, Vol i, 319. " In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions." *Democracy*, Vol. I, 319.

[54] *Democracy*, I, 291-297.

[55] For the liberty of the press in the United States, see *Democracy*, I, 188-197, and *Democracy*, II, 342-343. "the press is the chief democratic instrument of freedom."

[56] For the important, but neglected distinction between centralized power and centralized administration, see *Democracy*, I, 89-101, and *Democracy*, II, 337-339.

the intrinsic evils (isolation, individualism, egalitarian envy) of a modern democratic society.

D. I

Hannah Arendt's political philosophy was profoundly influenced by Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville in turn drew heavily from Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, while Montesquieu himself based his political sociology on the causal pluralism of Aristotle's *Politics*. These seminal texts from classical Greece and modern Europe thought have decisively shaped the civic humanist tradition and kept alive the republican conception of political order.[57]

At the core of Arendt's historical consciousness is her critique of nineteenth century liberalism, which she identifies as an important causal factor in the rise of this century's totalitarian mass movements. She depicts the urban, capitalist bourgeoisie as the dominant social force in the stratified class society of post-revolutionary Europe. For most of the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie remained aloof from politics, embracing a philosophy of laissez-faire capitalism.[58] While Constant largely accepted the principles of enlightenment liberalism, and while Tocqueville incorporated elements of liberal political theory into his analysis of freedom, Arendt was openly hostile to liberalism's anti-political prejudices.

At the theoretical level, Arendt criticized classical liberalism for its social atomism, its instrumental view of political cooperation, its utilitarian account of the public good, its privileging of private happiness over republican citizenship, its essentially negative conception of freedom, its reduction of human motives to a narrow concern for self-interest and self-preservation.[59]

At the cultural level, she accused liberalism of weakening the bonds of political community. By encouraging limitless acquisition and ruthless business competition, it promoted social disorder and decay. The deep

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[57] The enduring influence of Tocqueville's political thought is truly impressive. His insights and concerns undergird the work of such disparate thinkers as Robert Bellah, Charles, Taylor, William Sullivan, Benjamin Barber, and Hannah Arendt.

[58] H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975) 123-138.

[59] See chapter V, *Origins*; *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking, 1968) 149-150; and chapter VII in *On Revolution.*

social antagonisms fostered by capitalist economic activity prevented the formation of a shared political culture based on common citizenship, a common language and history, and the mutual acceptance of responsibility for a common world.[60]

At the institutional level, the spirit of capitalist economics subverted the liberal commitment to equality under the law and to the consistent protection of individual rights, the core principles of the modern nation state. In its drive for unlimited wealth, the capitalist bourgeoisie played a major role in the emergence of European imperialism. Arendt interpreted the overseas imperialism of the late nineteenth century, "the merry dance of death and trade," (Conrad) as the insertion into the foreign policy of the nation state of the acquisitive and annexationist ethos of capitalism.[61] Early in the century, bourgeois economic practice weakened the social solidarity required by a republican body politic; by the end of the century, the spirit of acquisitive capitalism had subverted the integrity of European politics itself. In our own century, the advertising strategies of consumer capitalism have corrupted the democratic electoral process, and the growing influence of sectarian interest groups has increased contempt for government as such.[62]

For Arendt, the theoretical, cultural and institutional resources of liberalism are manifestly inadequate foundations on which to base a free and humane society. The Arendtian alternative to the classical liberal project is not traditional conservatism (Burke) nor socialism (Marx), but civic republicanism. The civic republican tradition celebrates the singular dignity of citizenship, affirms the intrinsic value of political activity and elevates the self-transcending love of the republic over the liberal attachment to private interest.[63]

Arendt's philosophical contribution to the civic humanist tradition was to clarify the basic elements of political life and to affirm their

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[60] See *Origins*, 135-147.

[61] See *Origins*, 124-134.

[62] See *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972). For the contrast between associations of opinion and associations of interest, see *Crises*, 101. "When no opinions are looked upon as certain, men cling to the mere instincts and material interests of their position, which are naturally more tangible, definite and permanent than any opinions in the world." Tocqueville, *Democracy*, I, 197.

[63] See Chapter 6 "The Revolutionary Tradition and its Lost Treasure," *On Revolution.*

inherent dignity in the face of traditional anti-political prejudices. These elements include action, speech, the public realm, political equality, public liberty, worldly remembrance and immortality.[64] She explicitly rejected the instrumentalist, utilitarian account of political agency as a collective means to essentially private ends. Following classical Greek convictions, Arendt reversed the modern tendency to favor the private over the public realm. She emphasized, though not without qualification, the privative aspects of private life and the opportunity for greatness and excellence afforded by participation in a community of peers.[65]

The clearest way to contrast Arendt's civic republicanism with classical liberalism is to set in opposition their conceptions of liberty, virtue, and happiness. While liberalism emphasizes negative liberty, private happiness, and the bourgeois virtues, Arendt seeks to recover the republican understanding of terms and ideas that date back to classical antiquity. For the classical republican, the decisive freedom is political, the most important happiness is communal, and the virtues that really matter serve the good of the republic.[66]

D. II—The common world and the common good

For Arendt, the raison d'etre of politics is freedom, the manifestation of one's personal excellence in speech and action in the presence of disinterested peers.[67] Arendt critiques liberalism for its defense of enlightened self-interest, insisting that self-interest is very rarely enlightened and is essentially at variance with an authentic public spirit.[68] She also critiques the economic subversion of politics by both capitalist and socialist economic practices; in the face of deeply entrenched modern prejudices, she contends that politics is not meant to serve economic ends. Her critique of liberal egoism complements her spirited defense of public virtue, the secular self-transcendence achieved

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[64] See chapters 2 and 5 in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[65] See *The Human Condition*, 38.

[66] See *Between Past and Future* 5, and chapter 4 "What is Freedom?"; and Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991) 104-109.

[67] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 146-151.

[68] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 227 and *Origins*, 145-147.

by republican citizens in their knowledge, love, and engagement in the common world.[69]

It is important to note that Arendt rarely uses or endorses the language and arguments of the common good tradition. She seems to fear that this classical and Christian idiom implies a commitment to political instrumentalism, that it reduces public freedom, action, and speech to the status of instrumental means to extra-political ends. For Arendt, as a critical follower of Kant, freedom and action lose their dignity when treated as instrumental rather than intrinsic goods.[70] While Arendt ardently embraces public liberty, she keeps a cool distance from the teleology of the common good. This deliberate detachment flows from her rejection of a knowable human nature and telos and from her humanistic embrace of a Periclean politics of glory and greatness.[71] It is on the basis of complex philosophical and political motives, then, that she dispenses with the normative standard of the common good and replaces it with loyalty to the common world.[72]

Sympathetic critics of Arendt, like Michael Walzer and Charles Taylor, are troubled by several aspects of her political humanism: Is she a republican ideologue? Has she turned a legitimate defense of political citizenship into a denigration of non-political activities like work and labor?[73] Has she failed to acknowledge the limited relevance of classical republicanism (modeled on the Greek polis) to the prevailing conditions of modern society? (This parallels Constant's critique of Rousseau and the Jacobins.)[74] The great majority of modern citizens have neither the time, the opportunity, nor the inclination to make political engagement the central activity in their lives. The civic humanist tradition has historically prized the heroic virtues of the warrior and the citizen-

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[69] For the parallel political consequences of capitalism and socialism see *Crisis*, 211-215. For the struggle between *le citoyen et le bourgeois* see *Origins,* 79 and 144-147.

[70] See *The Human Condition*, 34-35 and 155-156.

[71] See *The Human Condition*, 10-11 and 76-78.

[72] See *Between Past and Future*, 218-219.

[73] Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument" in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, 92.

[74] Walzer, "The rule of the demos is in significant ways illusory; the participation of ordinary men and women in the activities of the state (unless they are state employees) is largely vicarious; even the party militants are more likely to argue and complain than actually to decide." Walzer, "Civil Society" 92.

soldier. How appreciative is Arendt of what Charles Taylor calls the affirmation of ordinary life, which played such an important role in the Protestant Reformation and the tradition of Enlightenment Naturalism?[75]

E. I — Communitarian Emphasis

There is a deep affinity between Michael Walzer's critique of contemporary communitarianism and Benjamin Constant's critique of neo-classical republicanism. Walzer faults civic humanists like Arendt as Constant faulted Rousseau for insufficient attention to the fact of historical change. Deeply alienated from modern liberal society, many civic humanists and communitarians are nostalgic for a pre-modern political and social order. But, according to Walzer, these critics fail to recognize the depth, scope, and irreversibility of modern pluralism[76]. Walzer believes that the critics of liberalism, on both the left and the right, hunger for a society that is much less complex and differentiated than the one in which we presently live. But the facts of pluralism pervade modern social existence and cannot be wished away. There is a plurality of intrinsic social goods and principles, a plurality of reasons for associative cooperation and of settings for the good life, and a plurality of spheres of justice and of principles of just distribution.[77]

Walzer is sympathetic to the communitarians, for he understands their discontent as a natural response to the dissociative tendencies in liberal society. But his sympathy is explicitly limited for he insists that the communitarians have no viable remedy for the sources of liberal

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[75] See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 211-213 for the historic tension between the citizen ethic of the civic humanists and the "affirmation of ordinary life."

[76] See Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), "The Civil Society Argument" and "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism" in *Applied Social and Political Philosophy* ed. by Elizabeth Smith and H. Gene Blocker (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1994).

[77] See Walzer, *Spheres,* 3-6. "...This multiplicity of goods is matched by a multiplicity of distributive procedures, agents and criteria." 3. "At its best; the liberal society is the social union of social unions that John Rawls described: a pluralism of groups bonded by shared ideas of tolerance and democracy". "The Communitarian Critique," 29-46.

disorder, no political or legal reforms to propose that are not worse than the problems they are meant to redress.[78]

Walzer's historical analysis of modernity is arresting. For him, what distinguishes modern liberal society from its Western antecedents is not commerce, democracy, or industrial capitalism but unprecedented individual mobility. At root, what liberals defend and communitarians resist or seek to moderate are four interdependent mobilities:[79]

1) geographic mobility—the freedom to move on, to uproot, to abandon the town, city, region or country of one's birth. Geographical mobility leads to a weakened sense of place, a loss of meaningful local community, and the fraying of loyalties to particular natural or historical settings. It is one form of modern rootlessness.[80]

2) social mobility—the freedom to pursue a form of work and a way of life which is fundamentally different from that of one's parents and ancestors. A consequence of social mobility is that the narrative and cultural inheritance transmitted from parents to children is steadily diminished, making it much harder to sustain communities of memory.[81]

3) marital mobility—the freedom to marry when and whom one chooses is correlated with the freedom to separate and divorce when one is no longer happy or satisfied in that marriage. As the ties of family and the generational bonds of kinship weaken, it becomes more difficult to sustain our fiduciary obligations to posterity.[82]

4) political mobility —there is a marked decline in loyalty to existing political parties and traditions and a steady increase in political

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[78] "The Communitarian Critique," 246-247.

[79] "The Communitarian Critique," 244. For the ambiguous political results of mobility see H. Arendt, *Origins* 475-479. "Loneliness, the common ground for terror, the essence of totalitarian government...is closely connected with uprootedness and superfluousness which have been the curse of the modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution." 475.

[80] See Arendt, *Origins*, VII "Under the most diverse conditions and disparate circumstances, we watch the development of the same phenomena—loneliness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth."

[81] For the important concept of communities of memory see Robert Bellah et al. *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) 152-155.

[82] See Taylor, *Sources*, 508. "A society of self-fulfillers whose affiliations are seen more and more as revocable cannot sustain the strong identification with the political community which public freedom demands."

indifference and disengagement, or in attachments to special interest groups with a narrow and sectarian political agenda.[83]

According to Walzer, contemporary liberal theory is defined by its endorsement and justification of the four mobilities. With its emphasis on negative liberty and individual autonomy, liberalism supports the human right to dissociate, to sever both inherited and contractually based connective ties. For Walzer, the traditional weakness of liberal theory has been its exaggerated social atomism, not its strong defense of individual freedom and rights.[84] Historically, liberalism has overstated the voluntary, contractual character of our most important human engagements and neglected the institutional pluralism of civil society. Yet, despite its theoretical prejudices, Walzer insists that the liberal tradition is the most powerful moral and intellectual influence in the modern world; it is the only cultural tradition that deeply informs contemporary life.

> What American communitarians have to realize is that there is no one out there but separated, rights bearing, free speaking individuals committed to the religious and moral neutrality of the democratic state and supportive of the pluralism and tolerance of liberal civil society.[85] (Walzer's reply to MacIntrye and Bellah)

E. II — The dangers of limitless dissociation

Constant was sensitive to the intrinsic dangers of a modern commercial society. Walzer is sensitive to the loss of civility and the weakening of human bonds that result from overreliance on the right to dissociate.[86] While he does not want the democratic state to restrict or curtail that right, he does want the state to support the correlative right to associate, to form and sustain a diverse range of enduring social unions. Walzer licenses the democratic state to reinforce in limited ways

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[83] For the numerous dangers confronting the dignity of contemporary citizenship see Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

[84] Walzer, "Communitarian Critique," 245-246.

[85] Walzer, "Communitarian Critique," 246.

[86] Walzer, "Civil Society," 90. "Publicists and preachers warn us of a steady attenuation of everyday cooperation and civic friendship. And this time, it is possible that they are not, as they usually are, foolishly alarmist...The Hobbesian account of society is more persuasive than it once was."

the associative tendencies of civil society—to give indirect assistance to religious charities, labor unions, and regional and neighborhood support groups, for example.[87]

What the state cannot and should not do is to abandon its secular, tolerant, non-coercive approach to the four mobilities. For Walzer, there is no feasible communitarian alternative to the secular neutrality of the liberal state. At best, the communitarian critique can provide a selective reinforcement of existing liberal values and offer moral encouragement for the associative tendencies within the liberal tradition.[88]

When reading Walzer, one questions whether he has left us an unpleasant choice between false alternatives. His portrait of our public life has three critical elements:

1) the secular, liberal state with its constitutionally restricted powers of coercion, and its limited capacity to support non-governmental institutions and persons,

2) the multiple associations of civil society, both voluntary and non-voluntary, that serve as the primary centers of allegiance for most democratic citizens, and

3) rights bearing individuals with remote and increasingly impersonal connections to the body politic; though constrained by their limited political obligations to the state, they have the right to associate or dissociate from the institutions of civil society as they see fit.

It is useful to compare Walzer's prescriptions for contemporary democratic freedom with that of Tocqueville in the early nineteenth century. Both men celebrated the mediating functions of a differentiated civil society. But while Walzer emphasizes the diversity of human goods attainable within its voluntary social unions, Tocqueville emphasized its political and cultural importance. It was in municipal institutions, the grammar schools of liberty, that the habits of public freedom were formed; it was in voluntary associations with a common purpose that citizens learned to act in concert with their neighbors; it was in religious families and churches that they learned to care for other persons outside the bonds of kinship. For Tocqueville, local government and public institutions were educational forums where the personal and civic

[87] Walzer, "Communitarian Critique," 247.

[88] Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique," 248. " The reinforcement is only temporary because the capacity for dissociation is also strongly internalized and highly valued."

virtues were formed and where citizens became devoted to a common good that transcended their own private happiness.[89]

F.

Tocqueville's ardent commitment to public liberty and republican virtue receives strong endorsement today in the moral and political philosophy of Charles Taylor. Taylor is much less sanguine about the prospects of democratic liberty than either Constant or Walzer. Like Tocqueville, he believes that the most powerful tendencies in modern democratic states do not favor liberty; they tend to disperse individuals, polarize groups, concentrate state power, and increase citizen alienation and impotence.[90]

At the same time Taylor insists that there is no escaping history. We cannot leap out of the market economy, the welfare state, and the culture of utilitarian and expressive individualism. What we presently require is not an escape from modernity, but a nuanced account of its intellectual origins and moral commitments and of its unique combination of greatness and wretchedness.[91]

Taylor's critical defense of modernity is based on a strategy of articulated contrast.[92] There are distinctively modern goods he wants to preserve and promote: authentic individualism, differentiated moral pluralism, qualified civic humanism.[93] But the boosters of modernity have often embraced these goods in an aberrant and illegitimate form.

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[89] See Tocqueville, *Democracy*, for the various ways in which democratic citizens acquire "a taste for freedom and the art of being free." *Democracy, I*, 301. "It is indeed difficult to conceive how men who have entirely given up the habit of self-government should succeed in making a proper choice of those by whom they are governed."

[90] See *Sources*, 502 and several essays in *Philosophical Papers*, Vol II.

[91] See Chapter X "Against Fragmentation" in *The Ethics of Authenticity* and *Sources*, 10. Pascal's rhetorical conjunction of grandeur et misère is an underlying motif in both Tocqueville and Taylor. Tocqueville's explicit political intention was to think and write as a friendly critic of democracy; Taylor's philosophical project, I believe, is to perform the same complex moral function for late modernity—"Men will not receive the truth from their enemies, and it is very seldom offered to them by their friends," Tocqueville, *Democracy*, II, VI.

[92] See *Ethics*, 22-23 and Chapter 3, "Ethics of Inarticulacy" in *Sources*.

[93] For the defense of individualism see *Ethics* 25-92; for the defense of moral pluralism, see "The Diversity of Goods" *Philosophical Papers*, Vol II; for the defense of civic humanism, see "*Cross Purposes*."

The purpose of moral articulation is to distinguish the genuine good from its counterfeit derivations, to reveal the valid moral aspirations of modernity which are often suppressed or distorted by its most passionate defenders and critics. Let us consider three examples of particular interest to Taylor.

There is an authentic form of modern individualism that needs to be carefully distinguished from social atomism and hedonistic relativism. It is committed to an exigent standard of responsible personal freedom and is based on a contextually situated, rationally self-accountable form of dialogical subjectivity.[94]

Differentiated moral pluralism accepts the diversity of moral traditions, ontologies, and commitments that constitute the modern identity. It recognizes the creative tension that arises from this diversity, but distinguishes that cooperative tension from adversarial fragmentation and gridlock. Taylor places great emphasis on the shared set of moral intuitions and standards that provide a framework for democratic cooperation across underlying differences in moral ontologies.[95]

Taylor encourages meaningful political engagement as an important human good; but in modernity, republican liberty is forced to compete with a multiplicity of competing goods that are also genuine: personal freedom and the quest for authenticity; the affirmation of ordinary life, which celebrates marriage, the family, and a broad range of legitimate public callings; the aspiration to universal benevolence; economic wellbeing and the reduction of human suffering; secure individual rights.[96]

Neither of the most influential modern cultural traditions, neither the Enlightenment nor Romanticism, provides an adequate understanding of the richness of the modern identity. The Enlightenment's antipolitical prejudices have tended to dominate our

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[94] See *Ethics*, 66-69 and "*Cross Purposes*," where Taylor sketches an ontological defense of holistic individualism.

[95] See Chapter 25 "The Conflict of Modernity," *Sources*, 495-521.

[96] Although Taylor's emphasis on political participation is much stronger than Walzer's, he does share Walzer's unease with civic humanists, like Bellah and Arendt, who are reluctant to acknowledge the restricted legitimacy of utilitarian and expressive individualism. See *Sources,* 212-213, 510-519, 592 and "The Diversity of Goods," 244-245.

public lives; atomistic utilitarianism, in particular, has reduced the republican notion of the common good to an aggregate of private satisfactions.[97] Romantic expressivist prejudices, with their emphasis on individual emotional fulfillment, are extremely influential in our personal relationships and in the contemporary conception of marriage and the family. When romantic aspirations for personal autonomy surface in the political sphere, they tend to coalesce around the principle of universal and total participation—the direct engagement of all citizens in determining all aspects of their personal and public lives. Anything less than complete engagement is rejected as political heteronomy.[98]

Taylor is masterful in deflating the Enlightenment's political prejudices and the Romantic counter-illusions they tend to provoke, while recognizing the important contribution each of these umbrella traditions has made to the shaping of modern culture. His defense of moral pluralism is accompanied by an explicit critique of totalizing ideologies.

> What should have died along with communism is ideology, the belief that modern societies can be run on a single principle, whether that of the general will (political romanticism) or free market allocation (classical liberalism). Governing a contemporary society is continually recreating a balance between requirements that tend to undercut each other.[99]

These requirements include: market allocations in economics; state planning for recurrent public goods, like security, education, and justice; collective provision for social need; a defense of individual rights and personal freedoms; effective democratic initiatives by an informed and responsible public.[100]

Taylor is explicit that his defense of civic republicanism is not a defense of the classical polis. For many of the reasons Constant and Walzer emphasized, the ancient republics can no longer serve as a

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[97] See *Cross Purposes* for Taylor's critique of collective instrumentality, welfarism and exclusively convergent goods.

[98] See *Ethics*, 28 and 68 and the far more extended critique of the general will tradition in *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[99] Taylor, *Ethics*, 110.

[100] Taylor, *Ethics*, 110.

model for modern societies.[101] What should be critically retrieved from the civic humanist tradition is the important good of republican citizenship, of informed and responsible participation in self-government. While that participation is necessarily partial and selective for most modern citizens, it is an important and intrinsic good and a good which must be deliberately and actively strengthened to offset the democratic individualism Tocqueville properly feared.[102]

Taylor also affirms the republican emphasis on patriotism, the shared love of one's country, its institutions and history that serves to unite the citizens of a free society.[103] Given the religious and moral pluralism of the modern West and the dominant public culture in the Anglo-Saxon world of liberal individualism, the concern for patriotism has lost none of its relevance. Liberal assurances to the contrary, enlightened self-interest is not the animating spirit of a free society. Free societies, far more than their despotic antagonists, require voluntary sacrifice and self-discipline from their citizens, a readiness to put the public good ahead of private happiness. This is particularly true in periods of adversity and economic contraction or when the nation must address long-standing social evils and the complex needs of future generations.[104]

Though public liberty is an intrinsic and important good, it has an ambiguous political significance today. Unless it is complemented by the civic virtues of the common good tradition, a tradition based on a shared sense of justice and collective purpose, its spirited exercise may actually heighten political divisiveness and intensify group fragmentation. To

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[101] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, I, 327 "when I remember all the attempts that are made to judge the modern republics by the aid of those in antiquity, and to infer what will happen in our time from what took place two thousand years ago, I am tempted to burn my books in order to apply none but novel ideas to so novel a condition of society." Yet, Tocqueville also acknowledges that when "the past has ceased to throw its light on the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity." *Democracy*, II, 349.

[102] See Taylor's important distinction in "Cross Purposes" between the narrow and broad versions of the republican thesis. The broad version combines the ancient good of citizen participation with the broad range of civil liberties emphasised by the modern liberal tradition. *Cross Purposes* 171-172.

[103] Taylor, "Cross Purposes" 165-166 and 175. See Tocqueville's ironic observations on the beauty and the utility of virtue, *Democracy*, II, 129-130.

[104] Taylor, "Cross Purposes" 165 and 171. See *Ethics*, 112 for the tendency of market and centralized state operations to weaken effective democratic initiatives.

prevent this unwanted effect, we need to distinguish two opposing models of citizen participation.

The adversarial pressure-group model, centered on partisan loyalties and narrow self-interest, treats political activity as the conduct of war by non-violent means. The dominance of special interest lobbying, negative advertising, and the application of contemporary marketing techniques to electoral campaigns have made United States politics based on this adversarial model a dismal and dispiriting spectacle.[105]

The divisive effects of partisan adversarial politics have clearly weakened an alternative approach to democratic governance, namely the careful attempt to form coalescing majorities around meaningful public programs that address serious and important national issues. The dominance of organized pressure groups from all sectors of the political spectrum has made it increasingly difficult to achieve comprehensive health care reform, environmental protection, defense reconversion, the restoration of American cities, the creation of an effective and compassionate welfare system.

According to Taylor, "the most acute political danger today is that of group fragmentation, of a people increasingly less able to agree on difficult common purposes and to carry them through to completion."[106] This danger cannot be remedied by public liberty alone; in fact, it will be exacerbated by citizen participation based on the adversarial model of politics. The greatest need of modern democratic societies in the late twentieth century is to establish and revitalize meaningful centers of differentiation, identity and political engagement (political parties, intermediate associations, municipal institutions, public-spirited movements) which are committed to the practice of civic cooperation for the common good.[107]

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[105] Taylor, "Cross Purposes," 179 and *Ethics,* 112-121.

[106] Taylor, *Ethics*, 112.

[107] What Taylor is seeking to identify and re-establish are the contemporary equivalents of Tocqueville's primary schools of liberty, "as for true statecraft—that is to say clear perception of the way society is evolving, an awareness of the trends of opinion and an ability to forecast the future—they were as much at sea as any ordinary citizen. For it is only in an atmosphere of freedom that the qualities of mind indispensable to true statesmanship can mature and fructify" Tocqueville, *Ancien Regime*, 144.

G. Historical Consciousness

> When the natural and human sciences are on the move, when the social order is developing, when the everyday dimensions of culture are changing, what is needed is not a dam to block the stream but critical control of the river bed through which the stream must flow.[108] (Bernard Lonergan, *Second Collection*)

Where does Bernard Lonergan stand on the classical goods and traditions we have been examining? In the final section of this paper, I want to sketch a post-classical defense of public liberty and the common good, drawing heavily on Lonergan's categories. In his post-Insight writings (1965-1984), Lonergan emphasized the new cultural and institutional context in which contemporary philosophy and theology were operating. He called it the third stage of cognitive meaning, a stage in which numerous epistemic and cultural practices had achieved relative autonomy and in which the human sciences had become far more attentive to historicity and change.[109]

In the third stage of meaning, it was imperative to shift from a classicist to an historically minded understanding of science and culture. The Aristotelian conception of science as true, certain knowledge of causal necessity no longer did justice to the reality of scientific practice; for Lonergan, modern science had become an unrestricted collaborative quest for empirically verified, explanatory understanding.[110] It was equally important to abandon the classicist conception of culture, which treated the institutional and social arrangements of classical antiquity as a timeless normative standard. When culture was conceived empirically, it became the common meanings and values that inform a shared pattern of institutional life. This empirical conception of culture is inherently pluralistic; it assumes that different beliefs and commitments will shape the historical practices of different places and times. Neither science nor culture is a permanent normative achievement; neither is static, finished, nor finally complete. It is more

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[108] Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection,* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 52.

[109] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 94-99.

[110] Lonergan, *Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 238-240.

accurate to think of them both as concrete, dynamic, self-correcting, collaborative processes.[111]

This historically based conception of culture is critical as well as empirical. Though it accepts cultural pluralism, it insists that we distinguish between historical development and decline. The various cultural practices, including the natural and the human sciences, are responsive to the eros and exigence of the human spirit. They make progress by obeying the transcendental precepts of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility, and they suffer distortion when they transgress these omnipresent and inescapable norms. As Lonergan has written, objectivity in science and culture is the fruit of normative subjectivity, of consistent fidelity to the de facto invariants of our conscious intentionality.[112]

In becoming historically minded, philosophy and theology do not escape controversy, for there are opposing conceptions of historical existence which need to be carefully appraised. Lonergan found three approaches to historical change particularly problematic: the classicist - which canonizes the cultural and political arrangements of antiquity; the liberal—which lacks a critical basis for distinguishing human progress from aberration; the Marxist—which seeks to end historical antagonisms by intensifying the fierceness of the class struggle. Lonergan's dialectical approach to human history patiently distinguished the merits from the limitations of ancient Hellenism, rejected the historical innocence of the liberal ideology of progress, and sought to overcome alienation by transcending its causes rather than deepening the social bitterness it produced. What is needed, he argued, is an empirical and critical treatment of historical change, based on a fully developed account of human intentionality.[113]

While Lonergan was critical of classical liberalism, he did respect the liberal emphasis on human development. At both the personal and cultural level, development proceeded through differentiation and specialization. The institutional and cultural pluralism of modern society was, in general, a sign of progress; modern economic, political and cultural practices had become functionally differentiated, developing

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[111] See Lonergan, *Method*, 302-318.

[112] Lonergan, *Method*, 265.

[113] See the expository account of the dialectic of community in Chapter VII "Common Sense as Object" in Lonergan, *Insight* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

their own languages, methods, and immanent standards of criticism. There is no way to recover the relatively undifferentiated unity of pre-modern societies. The modern quest for cultural unity and synthesis will have to respect the autonomy of existing practices and the integrity of the specific goods internal to each practice. Practical philosophy should not abandon its commitment to a holistic conception of the human good, but it needs to develop a strategy of critical integration that takes full account of the pluralism and dynamic complexity of the contemporary world.[114]

H. Effective Freedom

Lonergan's turn from metaphysics to intentionality analysis brought him into direct contact with major currents in twentieth century continental thought. In the last two decades of his life, he critically appropriated several important themes from the existential and phenomenological traditions. I am thinking, in particular, of his normative treatment of existential and historical authenticity.[115] For Lonergan, existential reflection reaches its climax at the fourth level of intentional analysis, when human beings accept responsibility for their lives as individual moral agents. In existential reflection, I acknowledge that I am responsible for my moral decisions and I recognize that these decisions are constitutive of my personal identity, that they serve to make me who I am.

Historical reflection, the intersubjective counterpart of existential awareness, also reaches its climax at the fourth level of intentionality. In this case, we, as a people, accept our collective responsibility for the world and acknowledge our fiduciary obligations to posterity.[116] In historical reflection we discover that our identity as a people is partly determined by the choices we make together and by the way we share our communal responsibility for the future. Just as a person is an

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[114] "Never has adequately differentiated consciousness been more difficult to achieve. Never has the need to speak to undifferentiated consciousness been greater." Lonergan, *Method*, 99. For a concise account of the cultural differentiations of antiquity and modernity see *Method,* 305-318.

[115] See Lonergan, *Collection*, 227-230; *Second Collection*, 165-170; *Method,* 104-105, 110, 162, 299.

[116] See chapter 11. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" in *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 169-183.

extended and responsible reality over time, so is a people; and just as we inherit the great achievements and blessings of our ancestors, so we also inherit the fruits of their violence and ignorance. The world we inhabit is always a tangled knot of greatness and wretchedness. It is inauthentic to identify ourselves only with its strengths and accomplishments and to insist that the weaknesses and failings of the world are the fault of someone else; it is equally inauthentic to adopt a rigid adversarial posture to the historical cultures and institutions that actually sustain and protect us.[117]

Existential authenticity results from faithful observance of the transcendental precepts; inauthenticity is the result of bias, alienation, the refusal of self-transcendence, sin. As human beings, we are incapable of sustained self-transcendence, so our actual knowing and living are always a complex mixture of good and evil, nobility and baseness. In this sense, we are never effectively free but always aspiring to a freedom that eludes us for both external and internal reasons.[118] In the language of classical humanism, we become free by acquiring the arts and virtues of the citizen and adult; in the language of the later Lonergan, we become free through the self-correcting process of conversion, by acknowledging the many forms of alienation in our lives and by seeking to overcome them through our own efforts, the assistance of other persons and the redemptive power of divine grace.[119]

Historical authenticity also requires fidelity to the transcendental precepts at the four levels of intentional consciousness. It requires that we be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible whenever we co-operate and act in concert. When we jointly accept responsibility for our common world, when we deliberate, decide, and act together, we constitute ourselves as a historical community. Sometimes, in America, we do this well, as when we declared our independence from Great Britain, adopted our federal constitution as an instrument of self-government, and assisted in the defeat of Germany and Japan during the second world war. Often we do it badly, as when we introduced slavery into the new world, violated our treaties with the Native

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[117] See Lonergan's remarks on The Dialectic of History in *Third Collection*, 172-182.

[118] For the notion of effective freedom see *Insight,* 619-633.

[119] See *Method*, 55 and 110.

Americans, and accepted a radical disparity of wealth between rich and poor citizens.

Historical authenticity, sustained communal self-transcendence, is a necessary condition of effective public freedom. But if personal authenticity is always precarious, if it can never be taken for granted, this is even more true at the level of institutional and cultural life. In the conduct of public affairs we are subject to every form of human bias: egoistic, group, general, philosophical, and spiritual.[120] It is hard to act well during peace and prosperity; it is even harder to undo the decline we ourselves have caused or to cure the social evils we have inherited from our ancestors. Our failure to remedy social evil calls even our limited achievements into question and makes sober thinkers sceptical of the concept of collective responsibility. But it is an illusion to think that the exercise of personal responsibility can be effectively detached from concern for the state of the world. The concrete moral choices we face as individuals are inseparable from the worldly context in which we make them. As Lonergan has written:

> In any individual (person), his actual horizon is the fruit of his past development, and his past development in the main is the fruit of his participation in the earlier development of others. Individual originality and creativity are rare and secondary.[121]

To be concretely committed to a human good is also to be committed to the enabling conditions of its occurrence. In his normative ethics, Lonergan is explicitly committed to the good of effective personal freedom.[122] But given the interdependence of existential and historical authenticity, this ethical commitment has, I believe, a clear political correlative. The transcendental precepts apply to both the intentional operations of the individual and the intentional co-operation of an historic community.[123] The threat of bias, the refusal of self-transcendence and the critique of ideology are equally applicable to personal and public decisions. The obligation to be authentic is binding on nations as well as persons. The political response to that obligation is

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[120] For the several forms of bias that obstruct sustained human development see *Insight*, 218-229.

[121] Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, 37.

[122] Lonergan, *Insight*, 619-63.

[123] See Chapters one and eleven in *A Third Collection* and *A Second Collection*, 165-170.

to create a culture of public liberty and a network of republican institutions in which all citizens, to the level of their commitment and ability, can acquire the habits of freedom and exercise their shared responsibility for our common world.

Lonergan's practical philosophy contains the basic elements for an historically minded defense of public liberty, as both an intrinsic and an instrumental good. It is a good in itself, worthy of allegiance, for it constitutes an exceptional level of interpersonal achievement, but it is also a means, though never merely a means, to the more comprehensive political telos our tradition has named the common good.[124]

I. The Common Good

Lonergan's turn to the subject in intentionality analysis allowed him to distinguish two complementary perspectives on the human good. The emphasis in the classical tradition was on the human good as the object or telos of purposive activity. The good was the final cause of human existence, that which we seek to actualize through personal initiative or co-operative agency.[125] In classical political philosophy, when the good as object or terminal value was pursued collectively, it was known as the common good; it was the commonly shared telos of public deliberation and action. The preamble to the federal constitution indicates clearly the range of common goods at which a political association might deliberately aim.

> We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Please note the emphasis on the first person plural in this declaration of national purpose. Liberation from British colonial authority was insufficient to establish a new body politic. The United

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[124] See Taylor's useful distinction between immediate and mediate common goods and their explicit contrast with convergent individual goods in "*Cross Purposes*," 167-170.

[125] For the components that enter into the human good, see Lonergan, *Method*, 27-55.

States did not come into being until its people resolved to create a new form of self-government.[126] They created a federal republic in order to achieve a broad range of common goods: political unity, justice, internal and external peace, individual security, public welfare and prosperity, the blessings of personal and public liberty. The new government was not a collective instrument for individual benefit, but a carefully balanced network of free institutions deliberately designed to secure common goods, goods to which the people were communally committed and for which they assumed shared responsibility.

In Lonergan's later philosophy, there is an acceptance of the common good as the telos of communal action, but the emphasis clearly shifts from the good we collectively aim at achieving to the manner in which we discover and actualize it. There is a new attention to method, to the dynamic, self-correcting, intentional process from which the common good effectively emerges. The good as terminal value is now explicitly connected to the intentional core and sources that bring it into being and to the intentional norms that measure its validity and worth. This intentional perspective on the human good is not altogether new, for in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle had distinguished between what the good person does and the manner in which he or she does it.[127]

But the focus of the classical tradition was clearly on the common good as object. Intentionality analysis shifts that focus to the normative pattern of recurrent and related cooperation that yields progressive and cumulative benefits for communities, both great and small.[128] It is in and though the shared deliberative activity of a people that the common good is discovered, evaluated, decided upon, and enacted. The classical tradition stressed government of and for the people; intentionality analysis directs attention to government by the people. As I argued in the preceding section, there is in the later Lonergan an implicit recognition of public liberty as an important originating value in political life. An originating value is an intelligent and reasonable principle that contributes to the achievement of other authentic goods; public liberty is

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[126] See Arendt's crucial distinction between liberation and constitution, the two correlative moments in establishing republican freedom. *On Revolution*, 40-41, 74-75.

[127] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 4, 1105b5-8, and *A Second Collection*, 79-86.

[128] See *Method in Theology*, 4-25 and "Dialectic of Authority" in *A Third Collection*, 5-12.

clearly such a value in its ongoing contribution to the common good.[129] But public liberty is also a terminal value, an intrinsic human good that we should deliberately aim to actualize in our political life. As Taylor and Walzer have argued persuasively, it is not the only public good to which we as a people should be actively committed, but it is an increasingly important good in our time and place and an essential part of an historically minded, pluralistic and authentic vision of the commonweal.

[129] See *Method*, 50-53.

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CRITICAL AND SYMBOLIC REALISM: LONERGAN AND COLERIDGE

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PREVIEW

WHAT I WANT to do with this paper is to come to an understanding of symbol that would transform the mind, giving us access to the Body and the Blood of truth. To approach this understanding, I examine the thought of Coleridge who, uniquely among his contemporaries, saw the symbol as "the tip of an ontological iceberg," in the happy description of M. Jadwiga Swiatecka, o.p.[1] He reaches this vision because, unlike all his contemporaries, he experienced, and anguished over, the problem of knowledge: do we have access to more than the play of a creative imagination? Is there anything beyond or behind *Kubla Khan*?

But his thought needs liberating from a) unreadability, and this is superbly done by Swiatecka, and b) much more importantly, from a failure adequately to open up our *understanding* to the supreme truth whose expression in us he calls Reason, so that his notion of Reason and Idea and Symbol is in danger of being regarded as the dreaming of a mystagogue. And he was an opium addict.

For this liberation of Coleridge, Lonergan has much to offer. In the process, the thought of Lonergan gains what it most needs: a full deployment into the world of creative feeling.

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[1] *The Idea of the Symbol: Some nineteenth century comparisons with Coleridge*, by M. Jadwiga Swiatecka, OP (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

THE THOUGHT OF COLERIDGE

For this section, I am indebted to the work of Swiatecka. The structure of Coleridge's thought, in so far as I have understood it, is as follows. First, there is understanding. Its role is to find patterns and unities among the data of sense. Far above understanding, by ordinary philosophic standards misleadingly named, is reason. If we think of our experience of reason, placing all our emphasis on the profoundly mysterious nature of its certainties, of our irrefragable conviction of order in the universe, a conviction acted upon by every scientist that ever was whatever he or she might say, we are approaching Coleridge's meaning of the word reason. Unlike the patterns that understanding discovers, the order known by reason has about it an absoluteness and universal sweep that suggests that it reflects the mind of God.

Importantly for our study, understanding looks *both* to the data of sense that it organizes *and* to reason whence it can receive something of the latter's higher wisdom. It is, in Swiatecka's felicitous phrase, Janus-faced. It is, however, only too easy for the face toward reason to become virtually blind, and one of Coleridge's big insights is to see original sin as consisting in this confinement of the mind to the orders it creates out of the data of sense. The stories we tell about ourselves, our society, our world, our politics, are very largely based on what understanding can achieve with the data of sense,[2] though of course they are shot through with memories of the great story–a fact of which Coleridge is perhaps not sufficiently cognisant.

What of reason, big R, our participation in the mind of God? How does it work in us, how show itself? What has it got to show for itself? We are not now considering reason in all its derivatives, its permeation of all that we think and do, but its immediate, white-hot self-presentation? For this, we must look to what Coleridge calls Imagination, big I, and defines memorably as "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[3] Imagination is distinguished from fancy

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[2] "But his contention here is that 'the histories of highest note in the present age' are events as interpreted by understanding *only*: 'the product of an unenlivened generalizing understanding (*Statesman's Manual* p. 436)?' Hence such histories and political economies are no more than abstractions and generalizations." Swiatecka, p.48.

[3] *Biographia Literaria*, 1, xiii, p. 202

by its immediate association with reason. Fancy is correspondingly associated with understanding. It's a neat picture, at least.

Coleridge towers above his contemporaries in the world of literary and biblical criticism in so far as their analysis of a text deals with the cognates understanding and fancy, while his is open to the higher world of reason and imagination. To anticipate, his interpretation of the word symbol differs most markedly from theirs. In the conventional wisdom, symbol refers with all the other words, such as metaphor, allegory, metonomy, synecdoche, to different ways understanding arranges the data of sense, whereas for Coleridge symbol is the very protoplasm of imagination. Imagination, on fire with the primordial light, "throws together" (the etymological meaning of symbol) in a new and compelling way the details that ordinary intelligence assembles in an understandable order. The resulting symbol, as Lonergan says,[4] overwhelms us and reorientates our life. In the common way of understanding symbol, one can refer to something as "only a symbol." As regards symbol in Coleridge's sense, the phrase is meaningless.

Behind the symbol is the Idea, big I, which differs from the common understanding of the term precisely as symbol differs from what *it* means in common parlance. I have only met this supercharged notion of idea in Jaspers, during my short-lived effort to understand him. As an idea, ordinarily understood, organizes a whole set of particulars, the Coleridgean "idea" organizes with the power of God. And its only adequate expression is the symbol, the effective emotional bringer-together of things that we normally think of in separation. When a Forster character implores someone, "Only connect!" she is calling for far more than "seeing the connection" between two things or rather, she is pointing to this seeing as an emotional change in a person. She is wanting someone to stumble, in the course of a humdrum existence, on a transforming symbol.

This is the barest summary of Coleridge's thought. Now I want to suggest how this thought compares and connects with the thought of Lonergan. By way of an appetizer, let me set side by side Coleridge's statement of the problem of knowledge, as clarified by Swiatecka and Lonergan. First, Lonergan:

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[4] In an article on Lonergan and symbol as applied to Mary doctrine, in *New Blackfriars*, still needing to be checked.

> ...unless one breaks the duality in one's knowing, one doubts that understanding correctly is knowing. Under the pressure of that doubt, either one will sink into the bog of a knowing that is without understanding, or else one will cling to understanding but sacrifice knowing on the altar of an immanentism, an idealism, a relativism.[5]

Then, Swiatecka:

> For much, if not all, of Coleridge's intellectual endeavour was directed to the reconciling of two apparent opposites of his own experience: one, that the mind is active and not passive in the act of knowing and perceiving; the other, that what we know are nevertheless *things,* and not only appearances of things. But how could this be if, in our act of knowing–sensory or intellective–the constitutions of our minds and bodies played an inalienable part? This was the problem he tried to solve, and all that he writes is an attempt to arrive at a true realism which would accommodate both convictions.[6]

Like Lonergan, Coleridge is sufficiently introspective, internally sensitive, to feel the friction between knowing as active (in understanding) and as passive: and this is to *feel*, really to understand, the problem of knowledge. Lonergan solves the problem with an intellectual breakthrough that the scholarly world still has to notice: understanding does not *stop*, as Coleridge at least suggests, at ingenuity with the data of sense, but, insight having been fruitful in conceptual organization, goes reflective, asks, "Is it so?" and tries its results *on the data* freshly considered. Thus understanding, at the height of its *creativity*, becomes *passive* to that which is the case. This is the pivotal moment between active and passive, and it is known to understanding. The issue is the acceptance of the virtually unconditioned, and the resulting judgment.

Coleridge's different move does the same job of reconciling the active with the passive. Understanding is active in regard to the data of sense, passive in regard to reason, which embraces the work of understanding. Is this an aesthetic resolution of the critical problem? Since that problem is through and through intellectual, to speak of an aesthetic solution to it might seem to miss the point. Yet in so far as the

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[5] *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan, 1958, p. xxviii.

[6] Swiatecka, p 31.

problem is so very much more than intellectual, Coleridge shows a solution based on thoroughly understanding what is happening when my whole mind and life are changed by a symbol. This is a solution to the critical problem in the important sense of experiencing liberation from the paralysis of the modern mind. One thinks of Levin talking to the peasant toward the end of *Anna Karenina*. In the humble, grateful discourse of the peasant, nature suddenly becomes symbolic of the infinite I AM.

THE ILLUMINATING EFFECT OF LONERGAN'S COGNITIONAL THEORY

What would Lonergan have to say about this way of relating understanding to reason, with understanding rather mundane, reason the voice of God? Surely, that reason, judgment, represents a step into *fuller* consciousness than understanding, *and reveals the latter's intentionality*. This is how Lonergan sees Aquinas' advance on both Plato and Aristotle, from essence (however derived, whether platonically or empirically) to "what is, recognized," to Augustine's "veritas" which is affirmed in judgment, not perceived. I would suggest that Lonergan can give a much firmer base for Coleridge's high doctrine of reason in terms of reason as fuller self-appropriation; and that Coleridge, thus reformulated in Lonergan's terms, can make a great contribution through his idea of symbol. Symbol for Coleridge is central and crucial. It is the fullness of truth found in reason, flowing back, as it were, onto privileged objects which become in consequence translucent. The very powerful things Lonergan says about symbols as "overwhelming" and transforming can be greatly enhanced by the ample treatment they receive from Coleridge. Coleridge as aesthetic and literary critic par excellence can help to mediate the realism of Lonergan into the world of art and poetry.

In a magnificent recent paper, Glenn Hughes finds these sensible epiphanies to be the key moments in Ezra Pound's Cantos. Hughes sees in the Cantos an untidy poetic expression of Voegelin's key idea, that, since we are in the Metaxy between finite and infinite, any valid social order has to let in the ground of being in precisely symbolic form. Here

we touch the inalienable bond, severed at our peril, of the political with the mystical.

We can easily get out of the whole weakness of faculty psychology in Coleridge's setting-up of understanding and reason as contrasting faculties. Understanding is not a faculty but a moment in the development of the search for truth. And so, instead of being the captive zone of the Godless mind, let us think of understanding as the moment when I understand and so have to choose between insisting on my idea so that it becomes an ideology and a tyranny, or subjecting it to evidential criteria leading to judgment and truth. For Coleridge rightly, and brilliantly, the first of these choices is the essence of sin, a pervasive secularism of mind and the key to modernity. But it *is* sin precisely because it goes against what understanding really wants, namely truth. Coleridge needs to be freed from faculty psychology into an intentional, developmental theory of knowledge.

AUGUSTINE'S MOMENT

What is the goal of the fully awakened mind? Let us watch Augustine as he comes within sight of it. The hunger of *understanding* for the truth of *reason* is the desire that would heal Coleridge's split between understanding and reason. The Augustine moment is described in the famous passage in the *Confessions* that I have instructed students to locate with the following mnemonic: 7 (sacraments) 10 (commandments) 16 (early adolescence):

> By the Platonic books I was admonished to return into myself. With you as my guide I entered into my innermost citadel, and was given power to do so because you had become my helper. I entered and with my soul's eye, such as it was, saw above that same eye of my soul the immutable light higher than my mind—not the light of every day, obvious to anyone, nor a larger version of the same kind which would, as it were, have given out a much brighter light and filled everything with its magnitude. It was not that light. It transcended my mind, not in the way that oil floats on water, nor as heaven is above earth. It was superior because it made me, and I was inferior because I was made by it. The person who knows the truth knows it, and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it. Eternal truth and true love and beloved eternity: you are my God. To you I sigh 'day and night.' When I

> first came to know you, you raised me up to make me see that what I saw is Being, and that I who saw am not yet Being. And you gave a shock to the weakness of my sight by the strong radiance of your rays, and I trembled with love and awe. And I found myself far from you 'in the region of dissimilarity,' and heard as it were your voice from on high: 'I am the food of the fully grown; grow and you will feed on me. And you will not change me into you like the food your flesh eats, but you will be changed into me.' And I recognized that 'because of iniquity you discipline man' and 'cause my soul to waste away like a spider's web,' and I said: 'Surely truth cannot be nothing, for all that it is not diffused through space, either finite or infinite?' And you cried from far away: 'Now, I am who I am.' I heard in the way one hears within the heart, and all doubt left me. I would have found it easier to doubt whether I was myself alive than that there is truth 'understood from the things that are made.'

Augustine's great philosophical moment is itself revolutionary, inviting us to think of God as truth overcoming the mind, and not as a hypothetical being. Augustine's mind is in tension: on the one hand, if God is real, he must be somehow out there, diffused in space, because that is what "real" means. But Augustine is trying to *understand* God, and understanding heads toward *truth*, which is *not* "out there" or diffused in space. The tension going on between these two things in Augustine's head is resolved, and naive realism cured, by a light that blinds understanding. The fascinating thing is that understanding prevails over naive realism *in being blinded* by the ultimate light. Understanding dissipates sensism *in* surrendering to the prima veritas. This enacts Lonergan's point when he says that the halfway house between naive and critical realism is idealism. Augustine is mercilessly rushed through the halfway house into the reality. He stands there for us today, for whom God, if we are honest, is only an idea: an idea that, if we can find the silence in this honesty, might say, "I am."

This moment in the halfway house is clearly caught by the Latin text, and missed by Chadwick's translation. It is the moment when naive realism and critical realism come into collision, the reign of death with the reign of God. Chadwick has, "Surely truth cannot be nothing, *when* it is not diffused through space." "When" is fatally weak as the connective, and does not render the "quoniam," as the French does perfectly: "Est-ce donc que la vérité n'est rien, *pour n'être répandue...*"

etc.[7] I suppose Chadwick is not Lonergan-sensitized! He doesn't catch the crucial moment when the two realisms that fight for the Western soul come into conflict, and God acts as the referee. If I may be permitted a little doggerel at this point:

> The way through understanding to the real
> Easily gets off course—to the ideal.
> Augustine took it, and God caught him where
> He tried to see as real what is not there.

Lonergan was fond of pointing out that it took the huge genius of Augustine many years to get beyond naive realism. Still, to know that the real is not the visible and tangible, is not yet to know God. But one can come to know that the real is not the visible *in the movement of the mind's search for truth*, for *the* truth, and *then* the difference between real and extended in space has a new definitiveness, a new peacefulness, a new absoluteness about it. The mind in search of ultimate truth is seeking its own source as mind, and so the moment of discovery that Augustine is seeking to describe will be a moment, for the mind, of self-realization in its essence as knowing beyond sensing. Alas, my mentor Illtlyd Trethowan was sadly mistaken here in seeing the knowing-sensing difference as a scholastic departure from the Augustine moment. Yet it is at the heart of this moment. Naive realism, which can be the final obstacle to the affirmation of God, is also a mistake about everything else. But there is something entirely special about the way this illusion vanishes when the truth on which all depends discloses itself. Then, a quiet, peaceful differentiation occurs at the depths of the spirit, about the truth of which, as Augustine says, it is harder to doubt than to doubt that one exists. It becomes easier for him to doubt his own existence than to doubt what he now knows, *because* what he now knows, as he has just said, is above him *as making him*. For a long time I thought that Augustine was fudging here, importing the doctrine of creation into his description of the experience of cognitional breakthrough, but I don't think so now. I think he is experiencing *that* non-sensed character of the real which is understood in the becoming-real of truth as God. The becoming-concrete, personal, of "truth,"

[7] Bibliotheque Augustinienne, vol. 13.

otherwise the widest of all abstractions, brings the mind into its peace, and doubt is gone forever. It is easier to doubt me than to doubt what makes me me.

But the limit of language remains, and shows itself in the oddness of talking about "a light that I am made by." And yet the mind in search of truth *is* in search of how it comes to be mind at all.

The exciting moment is when understanding, sensing this new light, returns to itself and rehearses its lifelong problem, "Is truth then nothing for not being out there?" And then, as from far away, he *hears,* "I am who I am." Truth, bafflingly not nothing though not there, *speaks for itself.* The *full* move from naive to critical realism that takes place in the self-disclosure of truth is a move all the way from "truth" as the most abstract of notions, to truth as person. The *total* shift from perception to judgment as criterion for the real, happens in the self-disclosure of truth in person speaking his Word to love. This dissipation of naive realism *in* the self-disclosure of truth, in truth as self, is the heart of the Augustine moment.

To rehearse it once more—and, of course, take it a little further. (This is why my dissertation was a disaster. It grew in the telling.) If God is, then truth, that widest ranging abstraction, the answer to every question about everything, is, subsists; but, as so subsisting, it is utterly beyond the mind that has come this far: it can only be itself on its own terms, in the first person, speaking for itself. In its own terms, speaking for itself, truth is the total opposite of that "nothing" that "truth" must be if to be is to be in space. Thus the self-uttering of truth, the word of truth, is the most powerful dissipation of the illusion of naive realism. Moreover, as incarnate and crucified, it will overcome the reign of death which is the basis of that realism.

This orientation of understanding in the moment of the appropriation of reason is the ground for Aquinas' advance on Plato and Aristotle from essence to existence and for Augustine's blinding identification of truth with reality. Augustine, says Lonergan, speaks of "veritas" where we, if we still spoke Latin, might speak of "realitas," and wobble back into naive realism, the real being what's *there,* whereas the real is what *is*. I have suddenly felt the connection between naive realism and the reign of death. What's there in front of you is the real! The difficult idea of being, that Lonergan stumbled upon and was "dazed at first", is the beginning of the idea of God. The real is what is, and only

God fully is, as Augustine discovered in the passage shortly to be examined.

THE SHIFT FROM PERCEPTION TO JUDGMENT

Coleridge rendered the shift from perception to judgment as criterion dramatically in terms of the Imagination as a shift from seeing to hearing. Aquinas made much of this shift in relation to the Eucharist. "Visus, tactus, gustus, in te fallitur, Sed auditu solo tuto creditur." And of course the identity of the heard as the Word, that is the Son, is entirely felicitous. Augustine's account is also dramatic. It is the drama of the intellectual overcoming of the naive realism of the reign of death under the higher power that alone overcomes that reign. There is relief and delight as the mind comes into its own. Abbot Chapman writes somewhere of the ease with which Teresa and mystics generally know the difference between intellect and sensation. There is an inner differentiation worked by the Spirit. Is truth then nothing for not being out there? Ah no! I know. Religious and intellectual conversion coincide in the Augustine moment. Intellectual conversion unmasks naive realism, but naive realism's roots are in the reign of death, that only God in Christ overcomes.

In Coleridge's terms, the point about the Augustine moment is that understanding as attempting God and being beaten back by the Beloved is quite different from understanding regarded as a lower, secular, this-worldly faculty, which as Coleridge sometimes implies has no business with the higher world of Logos.

Once Augustine's discovery is appropriated, we see just how right Coleridge is: when he affirms the incompetence of understanding in respect of the ground of being, he creates the space for his wonderful sense of the revelatory nature of reason's self-disclosure. Still, to understand understanding, as Lonergan does, as profoundly *wanting* this consummation is to realize that it sets the stage for it by putting up its own pathetic ideal of an intelligible universe, thus engaging in a foreplay that the act of love will show up as beautifully gauche. In Augustine's words, "When I first came to know you, you raised me up to make me see that what I saw is Being, and that I who saw am not yet Being. And

you gave a shock to the weakness of my sight by the strong radiance of your rays, and I trembled with love and awe."

So thoroughly invaded is Augustine in this moment by God as truth, as what simply is, that he is able to see himself as "not yet being." This hints a revolution in religious self-understanding. The problem of knowledge, so central and crucial to Coleridge and Lonergan, attains its solution for Augustine in an understanding of being as truth, as what is the case, to use a frequent phrase of Wittgenstein's, only when it is seen to rest in the ultimate truth. Being is truth, but only God can *be* truth. Were I to experience my existence as essentially derivative and participatory in an infinite I AM, I would for that moment be cured of the fundamental human illusion of making sense by myself, the illusion to the dissipation of which both Lonergan and Coleridge—and, incidentally, Buddhism—are addressed.

In this Augustinian mysticism of thought, intellect in all its power is laid low by God and not by a finger-wagging theologian, even the congenial Coleridge. And as Fred Crowe points out, it is in the massively deployed intellectual genius of Aquinas that one realizes at new depth the intransigent mysteriousness of God. The famous remark about all his work being as straw compared with the mystical experience he had after mass is nearly always misunderstood. Hunger for the truth made it appear as straw. Its essential dynamic, the truth made straw of the Summa just as it "beat back" the mind of Augustine. Aquinas' statement is often improperly used to rank "intuition" over "discursive reason." It is most disheartening to hear of God's transcending of understanding when the speaker gives no evidence that understanding is even trying! It is in another ball-park altogether, where people hunger and thirst intellectually for the first truth, and are prepared to pay the price of this hunger. Augustine found that understanding has a bash, and is abashed.

It is of crucial importance for the whole theological enterprise that the surrender to God be understood as taking place where the mind really does reach its final limit, which is not in the forming of images or the elaborating of concepts, but in its climactic moment where what is in question is not intelligence but truth itself and my commitment to it and my willingness to be enraptured, converted and made a disciple. The cost of discipleship, made famous by Bonhoeffer, is paid where all that is in us comes to a head and is beaten back by the blinding light. Until this

is understood, the difference between a religious and a scientific or a political commitment will not be correctly stated. A religious commitment goes further *in the same direction* than those others. It distinguishes illicit bypassing dictated by enthusiasm from faith in the crucified and risen one. Glenn Hughes' exposition of Pound in relation to Voegelin finds Pound not adequately positioned in the human condition between finitude and the infinite, and so "he wants the gods that appear, but not the God who does not."[8] But Hughes will surely agree that Pound's mistrust of those who *uphold* the transcendence of God is well-grounded. "When I fed the poor," said Helder Camara, "they called me a Christian. When I asked why they were poor, they called me a communist." How one is sickened by calls for a change of heart where what is needed is indoor plumbing!

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

We might distinguish, then, between an authentic notion of transcendence, whose model is the great Augustine moment where transcendent truth comes upon the mind at full stretch, and an armchair or slumber-party or a pious notion. Where the authentic notion is missing and only a vague sense of awe is the controlling principle, an inauthentic model of transcendence, apart from the whole process of intellectual and moral opening of the mind, dominates most preconciliar Roman Catholic theology. A good example of this would be the standard discussion of the act of faith as "commanded by the will in the intellect." Instead of surrendering to the light when reaching its own limit, intellect is thought to submit to "the will." The transcendence of faith over intelligence is expressed by means of a clumsy faculty psychology. Instead, the transcendence of faith over intelligence is experienced when the ultimate truth overcomes or overwhelms intelligence at its frontier, so that intelligence surrenders to the blinding light, and there is no need for the picture of grace moving the will, which then turns to the intellect and orders it to believe. This reminds one of the differential of an IC engine, which turns vertical motion (of the will)

[8] "Ezra Pound and the Balance of Consciousness," Glenn Hughes (unpublished).

into circular motion (of the intellect) "You better believe, you better believe" becomes "I believe I believe I believe."

The image of faith as "overwhelming" invokes the whole theory of the symbol. The Augustine model of intelligence at the very shores where the sea of faith beats upon it, discloses the ordinary coming of a person into faith. The suddenly overwhelming and unaccountably definitive significance of some detail of life or worship dictates belief. Think of Claudel's moment before the Madonna in Notre Dame, commemorated by one of the paving stones that simply bears his name.

WHAT CATHOLIC THEOLOGY HAS LOST

Here Coleridge shows us his full strength. His idea of the symbol illuminates that overwhelming by primary truth. Insight enriches sense data by enabling it to show a general pattern of relations, but when the whole soul is faced with the whole learning truth, the truth invades or permeates the whole process and catches up the data of sense into a new intensity of luminosity. Coleridge calls this a translucence. The sensible detail becomes a burning bush: a call totally to change one's life.

Compare Coleridge's presidence of Reason as Logos, which bursts forth in the symbol, with Augustine's truth in itself, which is the sun into which the mind, as it were, melts as its propositional truth tries to push beyond meaning the truth *in* what I say about something into being the truth itself. Coleridge has to *posit* Reason as equated with Logos, the very mind of God; and understanding as so tied to ordering this world that it has to be "put in its place" by a higher wisdom. In Augustine, understanding has a bash, and is put in its place by the proper authority, truth itself.

Once the epistemological decks are cleared, Coleridge's magnificent idea of the symbol comes into its own. To understand is to connect. "Only connect!" as Forster implores. A pattern is discovered among certain data of sense. Science is born. But sometime, in the special circumstances created by a great religious awakening, the truth *toward* which the discovery of pattern is oriented supervenes upon, or perhaps flows back upon, the original sense data and *throws together* (symbolizes) what have been elegantly coordinated, and enacts the enormous reality of truth itself in the world of sense. The resultant symbol does not

"stand for" the truth: it partakes of it; it *is* it for us; receiving it, we are overwhelmed. There is sensible epiphany. So John can write: "We have seen Eternal Life and we are his witnesses, and we are telling you of him."[9] What on earth is John talking about, unless our idea of symbol allows us to speak of handling eternal life? Coleridge's idea of symbol allows us to take the Gospel of John seriously.

THE SYMBOL PAR EXCELLENCE: EUCHARIST

The whole truth of Jesus' teaching, living, awakening the sin that crucifies—crucified, risen and all-forgiving—becomes (to use Coleridge's word) the translucence of bread and wine as the Body and the Blood of Jesus. The fundamental symbol throws together "the saving death of him who is victim *because he is free,* thus changing the meaning of victimhood," and "the convivium of the saved." Jesus, the scapegoat who breaks the immemorial rule of vengeance postponed from generation to generation by being returned to us as the forgiving victim, IS, in his victim state, the convivium that ends a religion of violent sacrifice. The huge truth that the free victim envelopes victimizers and victimage in love becomes the translucence of bread and wine as the crucified body and the poured-out blood. This equation is overwhelming. It is truth inundating the world of sense. It is the terrifyingly simple statement, in the very stuff of our physical survival as bodies on this earth, of a love that has meant physical death. Couldn't we define a symbol as that which is not understood correctly until it can be predicated correctly of the Eucharist as the basis of eucharistic realism?

In fact, eucharistic theology stands to gain enormously by Coleridge's grasp of the power of symbols. According to the provocative thesis of Brian Byron,[10] Aquinas asked the wrong question about the Eucharist: how is Christ present in the bread and wine? His enormously intelligent handling of the wrong question led him to a paradoxical answer that Christ is present in the elements *non-locally*—not at all what the pope had in mind when he instituted the Feast of Corpus

[9] 1 John 1, 2.

[10] Brian Francis Byron, *Sacrifice and Symbol: A New Theology of the Eucharist for Catholic and Ecumenical Consideration* (Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1991).

Christi and made Aquinas its expositor and librettist! The right question is: how do we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood? How is he food and drink for us? This nest of questions lands us in the middle of the world of symbol, of things as infinitely more than themselves under the pressure of the imagination in its repetition of the infinite I AM. The poetry of Jesus would at last be getting the sort of mediation it calls for in the discourse of Coleridge. Jesus says: My body hung on a cross, yielding its lifeblood, is my eros consummated in your world of sin and death. In this you are to find yourselves as a community of the New Human Being, so that I, crucified, am your convivium. This lyrical language will translate into Coleridge's system, in which imagination has the "idea" that cannot be expressed save in a symbol. An overwhelming symbol of unity is, for all its overwhelmingness and irreplaceability, a symbol *of unity,* which is an idea. Thus, Christ's body and Christ's blood, made symbol as food and drink, expresses our oneness in him. This is exactly what Aquinas says when he is not fussing about the real presence. The "res" of this sacrament, he says, the basic reality, is "unitas ecclesiastica."

Thus the question of eucharistic realism, "Is Christ present really or only symbolically?" is now a piddling question. The question becomes whether the ultimate reality mediated for us is a symbol that, if we will, overwhelms and transforms us? Do we complicated and confused beings eat and drink a crucified God?

The trouble is that this Coleridgean understanding of the symbol is as alien to modern culture as Catholic eucharistic realism. Between recovering a way of thinking, painfully revealing itself as indispensable for social sanity, and holding on to a pre-scientific sacramental realism, there is little to choose. When more and more Catholics in the States are saying that for them the Eucharist is "only a symbol," they are making a correct statement and voiding it at the same time through that word "only" which shows that they do not know what a symbol is. To say that the bread and wine are the body and the blood of Jesus as in a symbol is to proclaim the effulgence of the love of God in a world that, to our cost and peril, we culturally and habitually dissociate from God. Between the increasingly abortive imposition by Church authority of pre-scientific eucharistic realism and updated-Aquinas-Lonergan-Voegelin-Coleridge,

how is the faith to be served in our time?[11] To opt for Lonergan-Coleridge is to tell the story of Jesus in all its depth, so that must be the way to go. Perhaps the first step will be to get children used to the enormous difference between a family meal and a fast-food fix out of the fridge. To recover *our* end, *our* part, of what God has joined together, is an important step to being "overwhelmed" by this joining.

I am haunted by the story of Flannery O'Connor, perhaps the greatest American Catholic novelist, at a dinner party in New York with a few literary celebrities. They were talking about the Eucharist as a symbol, and she was notably silent. Eventually someone turned to her and said, "Flannery, you're a Catholic. What do *you* say?" Flannery's reply was: "If it's a symbol, the hell with it!" Of course a theologian would hope she had put in that little word "only." But I don't think she did. Hers was the dramatic response, in a secularist and talkative culture, of a believer too sensitive to how language is used, to react in any other way.

THE PRESENCE OF REASON AS ABSOLUTE PROPOSITION OR AS SYMBOL

Lonergan says that explanation does not give man a home. (*Insight* p.547) Coleridge's use of the word Reason is powerful. Husserl spent a lifetime, without success, seeking an intuitive axiom that was innate, universal, and the basis of all thinking. Coleridge's "Reason" speaks to that need, but not in a way that could have satisfied Husserl. To begin with, Reason does not yield an absolute axiom such as Husserl hoped to find. It is both more exalted and less clear philosophically. It refers to whatever there must be *in the mind* if the mind is cast in the image of God. It expresses that *sense* of the absolute in the mind which, once articulate, I simply have to recognize. Such a sense of the absolute in the mind there must be if Voegelin is right about human existence "in the Metaxy" between the infinite and the finite, having a sense of the all-grounding infinite. Coleridge's reason also has *less* in philosophic clarity than Husserl hoped for in that it shows itself not in an axiom but in the

[11] "Tough choice!" as the new curate said when the incumbent introduced him to the parish clunker in the garage with the words, "It was this or nothing!" But this can't be right.

fire of imagination and, most importantly, in the symbol. For Coleridge it is only because there *is* reason that the working of "understanding" depends on the presence of reason. "Without this latent presence of the 'I am' all modes of existence in the external world would flit before us as colored shadows."[12]

Lonergan's achievement was to show that the absolute's operation in the mind is not through innate ideas but through mind-process as a whole, in its irreformable structure. Coleridge's concept of reason does not contradict this; it locates the absolute not in innate ideas, but in the imagination. To make sense of the statement that imagination is "the repetition of the infinite I Am" is perhaps poetic. The philosopher may find the absolute only in the totality of mind-process, while the poet-philosopher may find it in the imagination as meant by Coleridge, in which the whole knowing and engaged person comes to self-expression.

The problem of knowledge for Coleridge parallels exactly Lonergan's famous presentation in the introduction to *Insight* of the horns of a dilemma: understanding that never reaches knowing versus knowing without understanding. "Startling strangeness" is experienced by anyone who finds the answer in judgment, arrived at reasonably out of the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. Now according to Swiatecka, Coleridge's solution is to see knowing as both subjective and objective through participating in the infinite I Am, and this is not a solution. As Lonergan once pointed out to me, "only God can be an idealist." He saw that once you take that word "intellectus" out of its jewelled medieval casket (where it is pored over by learned Dominicans) and identify it with what we know as understanding, you are in the thick of the critical problem, which Coleridge evades. But we cannot leave the matter there. Coleridge's answer is not so much philosophical as aesthetic and existential. In understanding what I am doing in responding to a symbol, in being overwhelmed by truth in this form and assenting to God in faith, I am not *solving* the critical problem, but living its solution, enjoying in God a knowing that is at once subjective and objective. To regard this enjoyment as solving the critical problem is cheating, illicitly borrowing from God the privilege of being an idealist.

The relevant difference between Lonergan and Coleridge, I think, is that Lonergan gives us an intellectual world, quite recovered from its

[12] Swiatecka p. 39.

Enlightenment crippling, in which the symbol can be all that it is and has to be for religious belief to be healthy, while Coleridge starts from the experienced authenticity of the symbol. His account of the intellectual framework in which this authenticity can be grounded is Hegelian, and thus vulnerable to Lonergan's analysis; but that framework is a very different animal when offered as a philosophical account instead of a comment on an understanding of imagination that only a first-class poet can have. All we need to do is to insert "It is as if" in Coleridge's famous description of imagination. (Maurice Wiles silently prefaces his recital of the Creed, "It is as if..." —and that won't do at all!) That Coleridge understood the matter this way is shown indirectly. Enraptured by Kant's subjectifying of time, as poets and mystics are prone to be, he described Kant as "a wretched psychologist," almost saying that Kant does not understand how much he is doing for me as an artist by his idea of time. This is exactly the way a poet thinks. Similarly, Eliot selected that bit of Heraclitus as epigraph to *Burnt Norton* "for its emotional quality." It was a matter of the feeling Eliot got as he read that "the logos is common to all, yet each one behaves as if he had a private logos of his own."

We can see Coleridge's order as the reverse of Lonergan's in the insistence that art is the revealing, "not of *natura naturata*, but of *natura naturans*." Through our participation in the divine mind, we know the world of nature from the point of view of its maker; however, such knowing we can have only in the privileged form of imagination (big I) that is "a repetition in the finite mind of the infinite I Am." The product of imagination, the symbol, partakes of the divine idea of which it is the "educt" or effulgence. The world is shown to reason that, through imagination, presents it to understanding. In place of Lonergan's "experience–understanding–reason–love and the mystical," we have "reason–imagination (symbol)–understanding."

There is a fascinating example of this reverse thinking in Coleridge's treatment of geometry. For Lonergan–at the beginning of *Insight*, we go from the circle on the page to the perfect circle that is invisible and only diagrammatically representable. But Coleridge has it thus:

> "If there be aught that can be said to be purely in the human mind, it is surely those acts of its own imagination which the mathematician alone avails himself of, for I need not I am sure

> tell you that a line upon a slate is but a picture of that act of imagination which the mathematician alone consults. That it is the picture only is evident, for never could we learn the art of the imagination, or form an idea of a line in the mathematical sense, from that picture of it which we draw beforehand. Otherwise how could we draw it without depth or breadth: It becomes, evidently too, an act of the imagination. Out of these simple acts the mind still proceeding, raises that wonderful superstructure of geometry.[13]

Where the reversal is not so happy is on the matter of desire. "For Coleridge's analysis of sin is that it is the will (the manhood in man) succumbing to desire (the woman in man) itself actuated by the Understanding (the ineffective principle man has in common with the higher animals) acting without the light of Reason (conscience, and the light of God in man) and hence transgressing the commands of Reason (conscience, and the laws of God)."[14] Thus desire makes its first appearance for Coleridge as helping to account for original sin. In sharp contrast with Lonergan's desire which, as desire to know, is the start of our whole becoming as human beings, Coleridge's desire figures as a spanner in the works, as reinforcing the tendency to confine understanding to the data of sense. And the situation is not improved when, in his account of the Fall, desire is equated with the woman, who drags man down to the fatefully limited perspective of sin. This misconception is the original sin of the Church, and Coleridge falls plop into it.

And if we start with Reason in its most exalted sense as participant in natura naturans, we are necessarily committed to a doctrine of intuition. For this presence to consciousness of that which can find expression only in symbol, this excess, this abundance awaiting this expression, is something "you either get or you don't." It cannot be argued toward, it can only be pointed to, as Illtyd Trethowan was saying ever more frequently toward the end of his life. This is the language of people who are "into" intuition. Now in Lonergan circles, intuition is a dirty word, a sort of mystical cuckoo in the philosophical nest. But there are thinkers who are temperamentally inclined to appeal to intuition, and I am certainly among them.

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[13] Swiatecka p. 46.

[14] Swiatecka p. 49.

To such thinkers, I would say, "Coleridge is your man," not for opposing Lonergan but for complementing him. For as I have already suggested, Coleridge offers an intellectual legitimation of the high act of imagination. His is the philosophy–and, because he is profoundly and sacramentally Christian, the theology–of literary criticism. Thus the inadequacy of intuition as a basis is part of a *poet's* way of thinking. But one may be deficient in understanding Lonergan himself if one is not ready to embrace a poet's way of thinking, not just a poet's poetizing. Lonergan developed his work into the world of feeling, where the language of intuition is imaginally appropriate. To outlaw it here would be as absurd as to question the irrational language of a good teacher of the violin.

Coleridge is that rare thing–indeed, a one-off,–a major poet preoccupied all his life with the problem of how we can know anything objectively. Under the pressure of the poetic and the philosophical vectors, he created the metaphysics of his poetic imagination, through the idea of the symbol. Response to a symbol is "a fusion of subjective and objective," in Swietecka's fine phrase.[15] Lonergan was able to define objectivity as the perfection of subjectivity, a fact well-known to the good counsellor–and to a poet such as Coleridge who experienced precisely that in the act of creating, or letting-through, a symbol: objectivity perfecting subjectivity. I am all of myself in recognizing that which, independently of me, is. I am then myself beyond the customary limits of my family and culture.

Not one of Coleridge's contemporaries–including Newman–found in the symbol the existential resolution of the problem of knowing, although perhaps this is the only basis for a sacramental theology. Since the problem of knowing arises out of the naive realism of the reign of death–the real is what is out there–the suspicion that this problem is insoluble is the unseen obstacle to religious belief, as Augustine knew very well. Our obsession with morality leads us to regard sex as his only barrier, but Lonergan–and, incidentally, that hardened campaigner for the Catholic Evidence Guild, F. J. Sheed–was always clear that Augustine's inability to conceive of the spiritual as real was a perhaps more serious obstacle to his conversion. Thus if it is only in response to a symbol that I experience the resolution of this crippling problem, I must see the

[15] Swiatecka p. 71.

failure of all Coleridge's peers to account fully for this fact as a failure on their part fully to address the spiritual anguish of modern people.

Lonergan starts at the *beginning* of our knowing and follows it through to its crisis where the two realisms come into their critical conflict the resolution of which is a coherent theory of judgment as this grows out of understanding, while Coleridge starts at the *end,* where the poet simply experiences objectivity as the perfection of subjectivity, and tries to develop a metaphysic that shall uphold that experience. That metaphysic is made problematic by an inadequate account of understanding in relation to reason. But Coleridge's down-grading of understanding counters the common *reaction* to the luminosity of idea in symbol by an understanding habituated to its scientific realm. The poet's impatience with scientific scruple is not a radical account of the order between science and poetry. Understanding is, for Coleridge, Janus-faced, and we only need to hear more of the face that is turned toward reason.

THE IDEA OF SELF AND THE TERROR OF HISTORY

A good way to arouse the modern sceptic in oneself is to say, as I said to a boy the other night to see how he would react, "After all, God is only an idea!" The naive realists' down-grading of ideas attracting to themselves the word "only" amounts to the same intellectual mood that Margaret Thatcher expressed when she said, "There's no such thing as society."

The next move in this therapy will be to see that an idea lies behind the horror that was Auschwitz.

Then we might ask: "How might this idea we call God be real for people?" and thus confront the ambiguous history of religion.

Then I must ask: What could this idea do *to me?* The shelving definition of God as the object of religion, is shelving because it doesn't begin to ask what God might be "like," or to beat on the door marked "Noumenal" and locked by Kant. Then we would be facing Augustine's question about how God can be real for a mind for which real and body mean the same thing. It would be a good shock therapy for a person to be confronted with the statement: With your mind the way it almost certainly is, God cannot be real for you!

So we begin to take God seriously, to wonder what God as the truth about everything, an infinite act of understanding is like. Here a fatal confusion suggests itself. We may take the fact that we don't know what an infinite act of understanding is like to support the quite other unknowing that Kant teaches, thus slipping from an implicit definition of God as an infinite act of understanding into a definition of God as the object of worship. Isn't this precisely what is happening when people say that Lonergan rejected chapter 19 of *Insight*? He did nothing of the sort. He said that the chapter was seriously incomplete in that it left out religious experience. In other words, he had failed to say, *of* the infinite act of understanding, that the only way to open to it and find it meaningful is prayer. He didn't abandon a rigorously worked-out theism in favour of the wooliness of a culture that for centuries simply has not taken God seriously and is content to *define* him as the object of worship.

I presented a variant of Lonergan's thinking in a paper to the workshop years ago and that Lonergan told me he "loved." I claimed that God is the only idea of me that there is. Each person's conscious existence is a microcosm of the essential incompleteness-for-understanding of the idea of being, of which God is the complete understanding. The concept of being has this incompleteness that leads some philosophers to dismiss it as confused. Lonergan uses fascinatingly strange language about being. He says, we are always using, presupposing, a notion (the notion of being) that is a desire (the desire to know). The strangeness, the dazing quality, of the concept of being, is due to its being known only as object of desire. The complete fulfillment of the desire to know is the vision of God. The person is a self-aware microcosm of the incompleteness of being. Prayer is the desire of being for its completeness, the only true idea of me that there is, God in Christ as the perfection of the human. If there were not Christ, the tension between this idea of the self and the terror of history would be unbearable. Most philosophers today just cannot bring themselves to talk this way. Lonergan could, because he prayed—which is really the answer to the contention that he abandoned chapter 19. He forgot that he prayed!

Then, in the beginning of an act of supernatural faith, we might ask: What is the opposite of the "shelved" God, the God put intellectually on hold in our culture? Clearly this is the God who speaks for himself, Augustine's voice from a distance, "I am who I am." And yet if God is a

person, and a person only makes sense in a relation of equality with a person, how could this work for God? And we're into the Trinity. The Trinitarian knowledge of God is "'warm," a becoming-really-interesting, a thawing-out knowing, a knowledge with a glow about it, as opposed to an abstract concept bandied about in heartless debate.

I know nothing of Coleridge's religious development, except that he moved from a unitarian to a trinitarian understanding of religion. This may be a sign of real and sustained concern for the status of religious experience as the encounter with that which most truly is. I mean, he really wanted to know God, as opposed to just knowing what people say about God and joining in the inconclusive conversation.

POSTSCRIPT
SYMBOL AS PARTAKING OF MYSTERY

I have been suggesting an organic connection between critical realism and a high conception of the symbol. This is dramatically realized as Augustine, overwhelmed by the symbol of light, finds himself compelled to "make quite sure" of the critical-realist position, that truth is not nothing for being non-extended. As his conversion was at the doors, were the imagined voices of sexual lovers asking, "How will you do without us?" As for the organic connection, the key issue is: if I am not comfortable with the *image* as that which allows insight and consequent mind-process culminating in verification of sense data to make the judgment of contingent fact, how can I have a valid notion of the *symbol* as partaking of the infinite mystery in which we live? "If you do not understand when I speak of earthly things, how will you understand when I speak of heavenly things?" (John 3, 12)

According to Lonergan Scotus *denied* insight into the image upon which all knowing, poetic and scientific, builds. "There is abundant evidence in the writings of St. Thomas that the act of understanding, *intelligere,* regards not only the inner word but also the phantasm. Scotus denies the possibility of that. What understanding would see in the phantasm either is universal or it is particular. If it is particular, then we have not understanding, but sense, for sense knows the particular. If it is universal, then understanding is suffering from an

illusion, because there is no universal in the phantasm."[16] I haven't had access to the text in Scotus, to which Lonergan refers without citation. The piece of reasoning that Lonergan paraphrases is a perfect example of using logic where only a direct appeal to experience will serve. Scotus, however, certainly was not alone in not invoking any experience of this crucial moment when all knowing is born. So far as I know–and I've asked around in the right quarters–no medieval author but Aquinas does. He gives the example of teaching by images, and it was Lonergan's drawing attention to this that changed my intellectual life. The last question that Illtyd Trethowan, who only knew the caricature of the Aristotle-Aquinas theory that results from not treating the matter experientially, murmured to me was, "What about Maria Montessori?" He died that night.

The notion that images are not intelligible is refuted by all learning experience; that they are intelligible is the basis of Maria Montessori's educational method. Denied its roots in sense and image, understanding is perforce confined to its *concepts*, and the problem of knowing *things* becomes insoluble: the stage is set for Kant. The main casualty of this conceptualism is the symbol as able to partake of the transcendent reality symbolized. For underlying the *symbol's* capacity to mediate the transcendent, is the *image's* capacity to bubble up into insight.[17]

The eternal ambiguity of Jung on God may be rooted here, in Scotus-Kant. The dream in which Jung could not bow his head to touch the ground in his "chapel perilous" found its rationalized interpretation in the philosophy of Kant, which kept him from answering the question, "Is the God I 'do not believe, but know,' is this God more than the God-idea?" and allowed him to shelve it as "a matter for theologians"!

At last I understand the penetrating reply that a friend of mine, who as a young man wrote to von Hügel for help in Comparative Religion studies, received the reply from the Baron: "Gain, if you can, a continuous and universal critical Realism. I am more and more sure that by far the most adequate and appropriate general outlook for and

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[16] *Topics in Education,* Volume 10 of Collected Works, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1993, p. 109.

[17] The nearest I have been able to come to a reference is the following, a footnote to Gilson's *Jean Duns Scot*, p. 507 "En tout cas, il est clair que, pour Duns Scot, la modification requise pour l'intellection n'a pas lieu dans le phantasme: 'Sed illa non est in phantasmate, patet.'" In Metaph. 1, VII, q. 18, n. 9.

around Religion is such a Realism, and it is the absence of such Realism, almost universally, in all the Modernists everywhere, that I more and more feel to be one of their arch-weaknesses. "[18] What, I wondered, has critical realism to do with the study of religion, whose concern is images of transcendence? The answer is that symbols or images of transcendence only *are* images of transcendence because they admit insight into the contingent. If critical realism is on the further side of idealism, so is a valid idea of symbols.

Would it be true to say then that only a tradition of supernatural faith in search of understanding could have hit upon a question to which the correct answer is the key to the whole enterprise of mind, poetic, artistic, scientific, philosophical, theological? That question is—are images intelligible? The logical answer—"no, only concepts are" is the shortest requiem for the human mind conceivable.

The light of agent intellect brought to bear on the image by questions enables me to pick out certain features such as head, torso, arms, and legs, so that what I see is a man or woman. In this light abstraction takes place. This process works all the way from the child's first steps in recognition to the dreaming-up of the Double Helix. Now the baffling question is, how this *account* of coming to understand, which so clearly is reporting the *experience* of coming to understand, was universally understood only as *accounting* for its resultant concepts. "There *must* be a 'light' falling on a 'phantasm' making abstraction possible." Generations of hapless seminarians mugged this up, and no one said, "It's obvious isn't it? When did you last hear of 'seeing the matter in a new light'?" That phrase "in a new light" is fascinating. Where does the "new" come from? Not from the observed world on which all imagery is based. The light either is on or it isn't, light is just light. The word "new," attached to "light" comes *from intelligence itself speaking*, creating its own meaning for that word light. When intelligence speaks for itself it is the source of all theories.

When the exhausted pedagogue drops into a chair in the Common Room saying, "At last, Johnny got the point!" he doesn't expect to hear from a colleague, "I see you are an Aristotelian!" The theory of knowledge starts with the fact that you sometimes see things in a new light and change your ideas is unique, a theory that cannot be revised. Of

[18] Edward Charles Rich, *Seeking the City*, (Burns Oates, 1959) p. 54.

no other theory can this be said, and this at least should warn us that "theory" is being used in a very peculiar sense. The very word theory means an explanation that may or may not be verified. A theory with its own inbuilt verification is a unique exception to the class of theories, and as such is misleadingly called a theory. Misleadingly indeed: construed as a theory in the ordinary sense, it has misled everyone into self-forgetfulness, to look at themselves unknowingly in the glass of quaint terms. If the teacher had said, "Agent intellect had a field-day with Johnny today!" he might have drawn the comment about being an Aristotelian.

Once we are onto this curious swallowing of the experience of intelligence in a theory we get the insight into the forgetting of insight. To track down the relevant place in Scotus, I took out Gilson's seven-hundred page *Duns Scot*, and looked up "phantasm" in the copious index. Not there! In a long chapter on theory of knowledge, no need was felt to itemise where it all happens, the image in which intelligence engages the real. It was only through a stroke of luck that I found that little quote at the end of an enormous footnote: Sed illa (that is, the illumination of intelligible terms and nexus that is required for understanding) non est in phantasmate, patet. The grasp of terms and nexus is not *in* the phantasm! And of course in a sense it isn't. When the visitor suddenly realises that the hostess is having an affair with one of the other guests, the husband's image doesn't sprout horns for him. But he certainly sees him differently, interprets his behaviour differently. How can Scotus, an extraordinarily intelligent man, so disastrously miss the point and lead us all into the dark? This can only be because he is thinking of physical light falling on an object, he's not thinking of the funny "light" that sometimes goes on in the head. When you come into a room and put the light on, nothing changes in the furniture, you simply see it. But when the head light goes on, what we're thinking about does change profoundly, lets us see it as we never did before. When, at "the end of all our exploring we arrive where we started and know the place for the first time," Scotus is saying that nothing is happening in the image in our mind! Come on!

With intelligence no longer allowed to realize how it speaks for itself in an irreformable theory, we became fixated on its concepts which, as a result, could only be problematically related to the real. This tenuous relationship between universal concepts and the singular being

perceived was systematized by Kant who became, in the phrase of Hannah Arendt, the uncrowned king of the modern mind. And when we hear of symbols, we flounder and reach for the OED. If we're not even sure of knowing the world we live in, how can it mediate for us the world beyond death? Conversely, there is a positive intellectual synergy between getting our cognitional theory right and understanding what symbols of transcendence do. Perhaps it is no accident that the thinker who made the fantastic breakthrough of recovering Thomas Aquinas's theory of knowledge from the welter of misconceptions and confusions was a man in love with God as self-disclosed in the Catholic Christian tradition. Life feels for life. Supernatural life feels for natural life. Natural life, allowed to be articulate, feels for life beyond life.

DELIVER

My paper has sought to explain how a symbol mediates transcendent mystery so as to transform us. Now I offer some examples of this mediation through poetry. But the importance of Coleridge is that a lifelong concern with the problem of knowledge affects his poetry. In it there is a consciousness of mediating the infinite through the finite, an extra bit of self-awareness in the moment of creation that ensures that the words shall *mediate* the mystery, have the mystery in them rather than transport us into another world. Swiatecka has some good observations about the profound difference between Coleridge's theory of mediation and Plato's cave. The symbol is not a pale reflection of a noetic heaven: it *is* heaven among us, God with us, incarnate transcendent meaning:

Here is the conclusion of the deeply reflective *Frost at Midnight.*

> But *thou,* my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
> Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
> And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who from eternity doth teach

Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

"...by giving make it ask." It is the desire to know, rather than innate ideas, that is the implant of God in the intelligent creature. This central tenet of Lonergan appears in Coleridge's lines. The following is from the *Dejection Ode.*

I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth–
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

The special need to mediate the transcendent felt by Coleridge has been felt by a modern American poet, the extreme elusiveness of whose work indicates by how much the counter-mediation of the culture has

grown in the meantime. The difference shows in the irony and muscularity of the verse of Wallace Stevens:

> It is possible, possible, possible. It must
> Be possible. It must be that in time
> The real will from its crude compoundings come,
>
> Seeming, at first, a beast disgorged, unlike,
> Warmed by a desperate milk. To find the real,
> To be stripped of every fiction except one,
>
> The fiction of an absolute—Angel,
> Be silent in your luminous cloud and hear
> The luminous melody of proper sound.
>
> What am I to believe? If the angel in his cloud,
> Serenely gazing at the violent abyss,
> Plucks on his strings to pluck abysmal glory,
>
> Leaps downward through evening's revelations, and
> On his spredden wings, needs nothing but deep space,
> Forgets the gold centre, the golden destiny,
>
> Grows warm in the motionless motion of his flight,
> Am I that imagine this angel less satisfied?
> Are the wings his, the lapis-haunted air?
>
> Is it he or is it I that experience this?
> Is it I then that keep saying there is an hour
> Filled with expressible bliss, in which I have
>
> No need, am happy, forget need's golden hand,
> Am satisfied without solacing majesty,
> And if there is an hour there is a day,
>
> There is a month, a year, there is a time
> In which majesty is a mirror of the self:
> I have not but I am and as I am, I am.

This is from the long poem, *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*, which is divided according to three stipulations: "It must be abstract. It must change. It must give pleasure." The poem also has this piece of serious fun:

> They will get it straight one day at the Sorbonne.
> We shall return at twilight from the lecture
> Pleased that the irrational is rational,
>
> Until flicked by feeling, in a gildered street,
> I call you by name, my green, my fluent mundo.
> You will have stopped revolving except in crystal.

Sunday Morning explores the theme of mediation. Here the Christian mystery is overtly present, and with it, the modern emotion that the mystery evokes, wonderfully enigmatic, about itself.

> Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
> Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
> And the green freedom of a cockatoo
> Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
> The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
> She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
> Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
> As a calm darkens among water-lights.
> The pungent oranges and bright, green wings
> Seem things in some procession of the dead,
> Winding across wide water, without sound.
> The day is like wide water, without sound,
> Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
> Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
> Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

The final stanza I find quite stunning:

> She hears, upon that water without sound,
> A voice that cries, "'The tomb in Palestine

Is not the porch of spirits lingering.
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

Stevens ended in the Catholic Church. For all its corruptions and absurdities, the Catholic Church is a sustained act of faith in the union of imagination with reality. Indeed the corruptions and the absurdities result precisely from a lazy reliance on that union which is paid for in blood, the blood of Christ, the risking of all. The intellectual laziness of this reliance appalls. Seven centuries of intellectual coma were vexed to nightmare by the rocking cradle of Vatican II. But still, the poet finds his way to the so much betrayed luminous center–Stevens, Rexroth.

Finally, here is a piece of "do it yourself"!

The blood that cleanses is the blood of God
Who has been from the start our envied one
In victim after victim as we plod
Through blood of history till we come to the Son.

Jesus you know them all, the games we play
To keep our own, even where you have been:
The strategy that puts you on display
Sees to it that its workings are unseen.

Will you let go in me what brings you forth
In all this darkness of our time's collapse
Unable to conceive of divine wrath,
Caught each of us in isolated traps.

Too simple and too complex for me You
Find, O find in me where you will ring true!

This paper has been thoroughly reworked in collaboration with my friend, Paul Marcoux. He has suggested the section headings to keep the reader on course, and put the relentless questions that led to a radical reshaping of the thought.

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AFFINITIES OF LONERGAN AND VOEGELIN

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I PROPOSE TO emphasize in these reflections what I regard as significant affinities of Eric Voegelin and Bernard Lonergan, and to do so from a rather high altitude of surveillance. But this will be observation after the fact of my having become more or less convinced, by my own resonance with the two, of the adequacy of their philosophies.

I have five preliminary points to make about my approach and reflections. First, rapid descent into detailed comparison inevitably pushes broad affinities to the outer margins of apprehension. I have deliberately resisted the pull to descend, and so my treatments of both thinkers will lack detail. Second, the current climate of philosophical opinion is, in my own opinion, more deformative than formative, more declinatory than progressive; it is of social and historical importance, therefore, for those formative philosophical traditions which remain vibrant to defy the expectation of perpetual dogmatomachy by objectifying and symbolizing broad affinities rather than focussing always on differences of detail. Third, while I have long been a searcher of the search in Lonergan's works, my encounter with Voegelin is more recent. Detailed comparison, therefore, while motivated and warranted I believe by the broad affinities, is best left to others with long familiarity with both philosophers. Fourth, just as descent to details results in the marginalization of broad affinities, so high altitude observation entails the blurring of differences in details. My use of terms from the distinct vocabularies of Lonergan and Voegelin in the discussion to follow, and especially my intermingling of those terms, are very likely to grate against specialist understanding. But my present aim, paradoxically, makes some friction unavoidable. My technical imprecision may be

annoying to specialists; but, if we agree at the outset that a discussion of broad affinities is worth while, then we need not be derailed by it. Finally, the affinities of the two thinkers which I take to be especially significant cannot be separated, I find, from my own affinity with the two of them. Accordingly, my account of the broad affinities of the two thinkers emerges within the context of reflection upon my own resonance with their philosophies, which I regard as validating the adequacy of both philosophies as symbolizations of our ultimately mysterious human situation.

Let me begin by noting that Lonergan and Voegelin are both comprehensive thinkers. Each has developed a comprehensive philosophic symbolism.[1] To explore their broad affinities involves bringing two highly-differentiated languages into some measure of intelligible relation. Such an undertaking as this—despite its generality, or even, in a way, because of it—poses, in its first phase, the risk of misinterpretation; and in its second phase, the risk of compounding interpretative errors by systematic distortion; and in its third, and present, communicative phase, the risk of accelerating the decline of intellectual culture; and in the projected fourth and final phase, where what may have been misunderstood is to be transposed to concrete philosophic praxis, the risk of contributing, in Voegelin's language, to a contraction of the experience of the truth of existence which engenders disorder or, in Lonergan's language, to dramatic, individual, group, and general bias which foster decline.

But the risks associated with the search for the broad affinities of these two noetic giants are, I think, worth taking nevertheless, in view of the current climate of philosophical opinion, as long as reflective measures are invoked to minimize those risks. It should be kept in mind, first, that the fourth and final phase of transposition to concrete philosophic praxis should not begin in earnest before the more serious lapses in technical precision have been corrected.[2] And the dangers attendant upon the earlier phases may be reduced, if not eliminated, by

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[1] I employ the term 'symbolism' in this essay in a manner consistent with Voegelin's usage, referring not only to 'symbols' in the more familiar sense but also to philosophical articulations of experience.

[2] My concern here is with the methodical implementation of conclusions rather than with spontaneous applications which cannot be postponed.

deliberately adopting a hermeneutic stance which would be acceptable to both thinkers.

Both Voegelin and Lonergan advise their readers throughout their writings—often enough, it seems to me, that only the most thoroughly entrenched scotosis or oblivious deformation could prevent one's taking heed—to read them with *sympathy*. Here I am deliberately employing the language of another philosophic symbolism, that of Max Scheler, and so interrupting temporarily the inevitable intermingling of languages required by my present purpose. Whether this appeal to a third symbolism is really necessary remains to be seen. For the moment, it is best to exercise such caution, even if it turns out in the end to have been unnecessary; for the perils of 'cross-reading,' even in pursuit of broad affinities, are legion. While detailed differences between the two thinkers are not my present concern, still I do not wish to obscure them by overpowering inadvertently the language of one thinker by wielding recklessly the language of the other. But there is a second motive behind my appeal to Scheler's notion of sympathy.[3] It is my desire to bring to the foreground, for reasons which will become apparent, the intermingling of cognition and affectivity, the involvement of 'head' and 'heart', in the interpretative process.

Lonergan and Voegelin would agree, I think, that correct interpretation requires *sympathy*, a joining in the performance of the author's acts, whether they are the acts symbolized by Voegelin as the intentionality and luminosity of consciousness,[4] meditative exegesis,[5] reflective distancing,[6] and openness to the truth of reality, or the acts objectified by Lonergan as the operations of conscious intentionality,[7] the intellectual pattern of experience,[8] self-appropriative advertence and

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[3] See his *The Nature of Sympathy,* trans. Peter Heath (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954).

[4] See *The Beginning and the Beyond*, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 49-57.

[5] See *Order and History, Volume Five:In Search of Order* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 100 ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 44 ff.

[7] *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), Chapter I.

[8] *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding,* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3, ed. by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 209 ff.

objectification,[9] ongoing conversion,[10] and real self-transcendence.[11] And I think they would also agree that to characterize any of the acts I've listed as *merely cognitive* or *merely affective* is to misdescribe the concrete experience of performing them.

As I read Lonergan and Voegelin sympathetically, I respond both cognitively and affectively. Both thinkers speak to my 'head' *and* to my 'heart'. My sympathetic reading has become a deep and validating resonance with the two philosophies. I resonate with Voegelin's masterful mediation of the awareness of the truth of existence and its willing acceptance as the *condicio humana,* through the meditative exegesis of symbolisms of the mysteriously open structure of existence.[12] I resonate with Lonergan's equally skillful mediation of awareness of one's own intelligent desire, the notion of being,[13] its mysterious implications,[14] and appropriation of the truth in genuineness,[15] through appropriative re-enactment of the development of human self-knowledge. I resonate with their accounts of the tension of limitation and transcendence[16] and the 'known unknown,'[17] of the Metaxic complex[18] and the It-reality,[19] of being having to be divided from within and the luminosity of consciousness,[20] of the normativity of

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[9] *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on INSIGHT*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 5: eds. Elizabeth A Morelli and Mark D. Morelli. Revised and augmented by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 14 ff.

[10] *Method in Theology*, pp. 237-244.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

[12] *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12: Published Essays 1966-1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 49.

[13] *Insight*, Chapter 12.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 569 ff.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 581 ff.; 499-503.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 501-502.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 569-571.

[18] *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12,* pp. 186-187.

[19] *Order and History, Volume 5: In Search of Order,* p. 16.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16. On the similarity between Voegelin's "luminosity of consciousness" and Lonergan's "notion of being," see F. Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order'," in *The Beginning and the Beyond,* p. 62. See also *Insight*, p. 401.

tensional symbolism[21] and the law of limitation and transcendence.[22] This is not to say, of course, that because I resonate with these thinkers I believe myself to be anywhere close to mastery of either body of work. I wouldn't make such a claim with regard to Lonergan, and I've been reading his words fairly consistently for twenty-five years; I'm even less inclined to claim to have understood Voegelin well after a much shorter period of serious study. I mean rather that I believe I have more deliberately and thoroughly adopted, as a result of my validating resonance, an *existential perspective and orientation,*[23] which I'm inclined now to associate with Eric Voegelin as its masterful mediator, to join with and complement a *standpoint of interiority* which I have for a longer time associated with the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan.[24]

Both the resonance I experience with the existential perspective and orientation, on the one hand, and the resonance I experience with the standpoint of interiority, on the other, compel me, with slightly different distributions of compelling forces, to affirm the *comparable adequacy* of the two philosophic articulations of the human situation. By Voegelin, I think, we are invited, through meditation on formative symbols of the experience of the truth of existence, to make our own a massively affective and, by its very nature, diffuse apprehension of the human situation; we are invited to adopt a comprehensive attitude which binds us to and moves us along the normative path of human searching; we are invited to adopt a normative common sense, as it were, of the *condicio humana*, whose 'here' is the Metaxy and whose 'now' is human history, whose pragmatic motive is pacified and moderated by openness to the truth of reality and existence, whose practical inclination to thingly thinking is counter-balanced by the contemplative comprehensiveness of the luminosity of consciousness. By Lonergan, I would say, we are invited to appropriate, through self-attentive re-enactment of intellectually patterned inquiry and discovery, a detached and disinterested intelligent desire, the unrestricted,

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[21] *Order and History, Volume 5: In Search of Order*, pp. 91 ff.

[22] *Insight*, pp. 497-499.

[23] See *In Search of Order*, pp. 54-55, on the contrast between the Hegelian quest for system and the "experience of existential consciousness."

[24] See *Method in Theology*, pp. 259-262, where the standpoint of interiority is compared and contrasted with the standpoints of common sense and theory.

spontaneous, all-pervasive notion of being; we are invited to appropriate the normatively-structured intellectual orientation.

The comparison I've just made, if broadly accurate, suggests not only the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies but also contrasts. The contrasts pose no threat, though, to my affirmation of the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies, because they are only differences in emphasis. Both thinkers' philosophical dwelling-places have rooms ready, even if furnished only with cots, card tables and folding chairs, for the other to move into. Lonergan, for example, despite the high profile he gives to the objectification of inquiring natural science, mediates an affective apprehension of and comprehensive attitude towards the human condition, calls urgently for a reorientation of common sense and explains why it's needed;[25] and, albeit somewhat belatedly, with insufficient time remaining, and so perhaps with excessively heuristic articulation, he explores the symbol-incited existence of affect-guided *Existenz*.[26] And Voegelin, despite an overriding concern with the motivating, formative, and deformative significance of myths, symbolisms, and their relation to order in history, has not a little to say about the Question with a capital Q, the constant in the many modes of existence, and its self-differentiation.[27] Again borrowing another's language, this time that of Alfred Schutz, I'm inclined to describe both thinkers as providing comparably adequate, complementary versions of a General Theory of Relevance.[28]

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[25] *Insight,* Chapter Seven, and pp. 423-426.

[26] *Method in Theology,* Chapter Two.

[27] *Order and History, Volume IV: The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), pp. 316 ff.

[28] See Alfred Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance.* ed. by Richard M. Zaner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970). In the Introduction Zaner writes: 'What is at stake, indeed, is *a principle of structurization of the lifeworld* itself, a principle that is also determinative for my various interests and plans within the lifeworld in the sense that it is what accounts for "why" I turn to "this" rather than to "that" at "this" time in my life, in the course of "this" action' (xix-xx). See also Helmut R. Wagner, "Agreement in Discord: Alfred Schutz and Eric Voegelin," in *The Philosophy of Order: Essays on History, Consciousness and Politics,* eds, Peter J. Opitz and Gregor Sebba (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1981), pp. 80-83, on the differences between Schutz and Voegelin specifically regarding the general theory of relevance and Voegelin's linkage to it of a philosophical anthropology. David Levy has argued that this philosophical anthropology is fundamentally Schelerian. See

In an effort to convey some sense of the validating resonance I experience in reading both thinkers, I have begun to intermingle and so to correlate their two languages. This intermingling has brought to light a contrast in emphases on the level of philosophic symbolisms. But I don't find these differences in emphasis sufficient to undermine my affirmation of the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies. On the contrary, the contrasts apparent in the philosophic symbolisms seem to me to reflect fairly accurately, if only indirectly, differences in the distribution of affirmation-compelling forces in a fundamentally identical experience of validating resonance with the two philosophies. I've already alerted you to my long familiarity with Lonergan and my brief experience with Voegelin. Let me add, then, that the very horizon of interiority mediated in me by my sympathetic reading of Lonergan, to the limited extent I've made it my own, has prepared me both to sympathize and to resonate with Voegelin in a way I suppose the deformed and oblivious ideologue, the magnetic drifter, and the gnostic magician would not and effectively could not resonate. In my "cross-reading" of the two, I momentarily experience myself as the field in which, so to speak, the converted recognize one another as not only similar but complementary.

I try to read Lonergan and Voegelin, then, as each advises me to do—as self-attentively, as meditatively, as I can. And I find that my prior self-attentive efforts with Lonergan facilitate my meditative efforts with Voegelin, and that my efforts with Voegelin, in turn, help me understand Lonergan better and more deeply. But, more than that, I also now think both Lonergan and Voegelin have succeeded in symbolizing adequately—not *finally* but *adequately,* i.e., within the limits imposed by the varying historical conditions of all verbal mimesis or objectification of the experience of existence—the truth of existence and reality. Why do I think this? Because of the validating resonance I experience in my reading of Voegelin and Lonergan. This is quite a claim to make in the current skeptical and relativistic climate of opinion, and a brief consideration of a major source of contemporary astonishment at such a claim may help not only to reveal further the broad affinities of

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The Measure of Man: Incursions in Philosophical and Political Anthropology (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), Chapter 2.

Lonergan and Voegelin but also to illuminate more clearly the character of the validating resonance, and the distribution within it of its compelling forces, which grounds my affirmation of the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies.

In the worst-case scenario, I am simply wrong about the adequacy of Lonergan's philosophy, wrong about the adequacy of Voegelin's philosophy, and so also wrong about their being comparably adequate symbolizations of the truth of existence. In actuality, perhaps, neither Lonergan's nor Voegelin's philosophy adequately symbolizes the truth of reality and existence. Perhaps, moreover, Voegelin's and Lonergan's philosophies are not only both wrong, but are fundamentally different, large-scale philosophic misrepresentations of the truth of reality and existence with fundamentally different, alienating and disordering personal, political and historical consequences. Voegelin's 'fundamental structure of the truth of existence'[29] which he invites us to comprehend may be something entirely different from and incompatible with the 'invariant and normative dynamic structure of conscious intentionality'[30] which Lonergan asks us to appropriate, and similarly for other putative equivalences of symbolization. This is certainly possible. But I don't think it's so, and my final court of appeal is my experience of resonance which validates, through its differently distributed yet complementary compelling forces, my affirmation of the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies.

All right, says my suspicious antagonist, but your deep resonance might be nothing more than Lockean enthusiasm. You must provide an analysis of this resonance, unveil the compelling forces which constitute it. And whose symbolism will you use in your analysis of this crucial validating experience of resonance, an experience which motivates you to claim that Voegelin and Lonergan have both succeeded in symbolizing adequately the experience of the truth of existence, an experience which makes the intermingling of their languages virtually irresistible to you—Lonergan's or Voegelin's, or some third? This is, in the current climate of philosophic opinion, regarded as a serious problem. There is no *final* symbolism or objectification of the truth of reality I can take up and

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[29] *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12*, p. 49.

[30] *Method in Theology*, Chapter One.

employ in my analysis; if there were, and I knew it well enough to take it up and employ it, I'd have *no need* to employ it in the present case. The issue of an *adequate* symbolism of the truth of existence would be settled by the possession of the *final* one, and the question of its validation would be moot. Right, says my antagonist, so you're stuck with the symbolisms at hand.

Will I be more successful in my analysis of the validating significance of resonance, then, if I use the Lonerganian symbolism of 'self-appropriation'—of 'turning the acts as intentional on the acts as conscious,'[31] and of 'unrevisable reviser'[32]—or will success be more likely if I use the Voegelinian symbolism of 'luminosity' and 'symbolic equivalence'?[33] My success now depends, it begins to appear, upon the adequacy, yet to be established, of either the symbolism of 'advertence to the interior flow of consciousness of the tense unity of the subject-as-subject,' or the symbolism of 'openness to the experience of the tensional structure of existence.' I seem to be trapped.

But this is not a trap but a derailment. We have just witnessed in the preceding fragment of imagined dialogue a presumptuous transmutation of a resolvable difficulty into an insoluble dilemma, and my rapid seduction by that presumptuous mentality. In a matter of moments, my experience of validating resonance was effectively occluded, and I was required to begin detaching terms and phrases, drawn from the two symbolisms, from their engendering experiences by enclosing them in single quotation marks. My dynamically constant historical existence in a fundamentally-structured field of experiences and symbols, in a world mediated and constituted by meaning and motivated by values, was suddenly eclipsed, and I found myself hopping, like a birling lumberjack, from wobbly proposition to wobbly proposition. My imaginary antagonist is right, at least in one respect: there are indeed good reasons to be skeptically suspicious rather than credulously sympathetic. My entrapment was due to my *too sympathetic* adoption of the contracted experience of existence, the conceptualist subjectivity, of the current climate of philosophic opinion. I began to conform to the

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[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Insight,* pp. 359 ff.

[33] See "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12.*

deformed situation and so to deform myself. My experience of validating resonance was virtually eclipsed by the symbolism of deformation; the reigning philosophic scotosis began to isolate me from my own experience and to leave me drifting with the flow, seeking balance on fragments of floating symbolic systems.

The issue of validating resonance must not be formulated in terms derived from a view of philosophy as ideally a closed system of propositions, as though Lonergan's and Voegelin's symbolisms of existence were systems of that sort. While Lonergan and Voegelin would formulate their objections to this conception of philosophy differently, I believe they would agree in their estimation of its dangerous limitations. Voegelin seems to emphasize the dangerous attraction of contracted experience to thingly thinking about experiences which are not experiences of things, to autonomously true propositions, to doctrines and dogmas, and ultimately to stop-history systems and Second Realities.[34] Lonergan seems to focus on the distorting intrusion of extroversion in subjectivity which is cut off from its experience of itself, the consequent inclination to nominalism, conceptualism, closed system, and obscurantist rationalizations of alienation in ideologies.[35] Voegelin proclaims the folly of seeking proofs;[36] Lonergan compares the logician to the mortician and proclaims the end of the age of argument.[37] Both thinkers, finally, recognize and resist the occlusion of mystery consequent on the ideal of closed system, and so neither pursues the ideal of philosophy as a closed system of propositions. As Lonergan aims at normative objectification of the transcendental notions pursuing and pursued by a known unknown, and describes the resulting expression of the unending human search as system-on-the-move; so Voegelin pursues meditative exegesis of the open structure of the Metaxic complex seeking and appealed to by the Beyond, and offers the resulting philosophic expression as an adequate web of symbolism of the unending human search. It is fair, I think, to describe both of these philosophies

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[34] See "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme: A Meditation," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12.*

[35] See *The Subject* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968).

[36] See "Quod Deus Dicitur," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12.*

[37] See *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd,1973), pp. 47 ff.

as *grand heuristic structures*, mimetic linguistic structures imitative of the structured openness of human striving.[38]

Accordingly, the difficulties which plague attempts to intermingle the languages of two closed systems should not arise in the effort to interrelate the languages of two heuristic philosophic symbolisms. In dealing with closed systems, we are inevitably driven back, if we are exigent thinkers, to conflicting sets of propositions taken to be self-evident, into confrontation with unconquerable incommensurability. If we do not at that point lapse into skepticism and relativism but persist in the effort of intermingling, either we create an eclectic mish-mash or we go off in search of extra-systematic points of intersection—a strange notion to arise in a strictly logical world—by appealing to our own sense of what is intuitively obvious or obviously counter-intuitive in the competing sets of putatively self-evident propositions; and then the erection of another closed system begins. This self-assertive patterning of the search of the search, of philosophical activity, it seems to me, has been the bane of a good portion of contemporary philosophizing, and has made it vulnerable to charges of irrelevance to life, on the one hand, and of insidiously unreflective, even ideological, defense of the relatively taken-for-granted climate of the times, on the other.

The unproductive procedure just described may be regarded, I think, as a mock version of what should occur in the effort to validate and intermingle two heuristic symbolisms which are known to be heuristic symbolisms. While we may still drive downward in the symbolisms to their fundamental propositions, we must do so authentically, in openness to the experience of the truth of existence. This means that the propositions are not to be regarded as self-evident truths but as objectifications, or products of meditative exegesis, which, as such, are not the precise loci of systematic closure truncated philosophizing takes them to be, but rather the precise loci in the heuristic symbolisms of those philosophies' intrinsic openness to the experiential evidence which would validate or invalidate their claims to symbolic adequacy.

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[38] On verbal mimesis, see *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12,* p. 389; on heuristic structures, see Lonergan's *Insight,* p. 417.

Accordingly, the frustration of a confrontation with incommensurability should not arise to generate either the incoherent demand for alchemical translations across logically-uncrossable boundaries or the impulse to appeal to an intuitively obvious or taken-for-granted symbolism different from those being evaluated. In other words, the sets of fundamental propositions are *fundamental*, not in the sense that they are the self-evident starting-points and ending-points of the logical unfolding of closed systematic structures, but in the sense that they are the symbolic objectifications at closest proximity to the most crucial of the experiences which engendered the heuristic symbolisms. Again, they are the precise loci of the intrinsic openness of the heuristic symbolisms, the portals, as it were, to the experience of existence which will validate or invalidate claims to adequacy of and by the heuristic symbolisms. In this respect, heuristic symbolisms deliberately point beyond themselves as symbolisms to their engendering grounds in experience of existence. By their very nature, heuristic symbolisms of the truth of existence not only *express* but also *aim to evoke* their engendering experiences. The deep resonance I feel with Voegelin's and Lonergan's philosophies validates their philosophies in that my resonance is my experience of existence passing easily across their thresholds into articulation in their fundamental propositions.

I have recovered my experience of deep resonance from momentary occlusion. But my recovery from the derailment of the original question is a not a resolution of the issue but only its reinstatement as an issue. The issue arose because I affirmed the comparable adequacy of Lonergan's and Voegelin's philosophic expressions of the truth of reality and existence. But if the issue has not been resolved, it has been reinstated with a difference. I now find myself free to speak about my experience of validating resonance in the philosophic language of either heuristic symbolism, Voegelin's or Lonergan's, or even in a language of my own; moreover, self-attentive intermingling of the two languages, far from being the unconsciously arbitrary assembly of a mere aggregate of meanings yanked from incommensurable systems, becomes itself an exercise in cumulative validation or invalidation of my claim of comparable adequacy.

Still, my course is not entirely free of obstacles, as the rapid contraction and re-opening of my experience just a moment ago attests. My appeal is to the resonance of *my* experience of existence with the truth of existence symbolized by the two philosophies, and to the equivalence of the two symbolisms which supervenes on and is grounded in the resonance, again, of *my* experience with the two symbolisms. I may resonate, but it may well be the tinny or dull resonance of bias with bias; of deformation with deformation; of distorted existence with distorted existence; of subjects similarly mutilated; of contracted experiential fields similarly defended by obscurantism, or similarly narrowed down by totalitarian practicality. In other words, the unconverted also recognize one another, even though their mutual recognition normally is imbedded in competitive caution rather than in collaborative care. Conceptualist resonates with conceptualist, naive realist with naive realist, empiricist with empiricist, positivist with positivist, counterposition with counterposition. Mock phronesis resonates with mock phronesis, mock sophrosyne with mock sophrosyne, gnostic with gnostic; the Callicles of Plato's *Gorgias* resonates with Machiavelli; and so on.

The dangers here loom larger the more one thinks about them, and both Lonergan and Voegelin regard them with high seriousness. Indeed, both are similarly motivated by the modern crisis of mutually validating deformations. Lonergan sought a common ground on which men and women of intelligence might meet, and objectified the normative dynamic structure of conscious intentionality, in order to address a modern crisis of cognitive self-ignorance; Voegelin sought a common context in which men and women of intelligence might live, and symbolized the normative, tensional structure of existence open to appeal from the Beyond, in order to address a modern crisis of existential disorientation.

But, again, this is just half the story, if that. If Lonergan was moved by the scandal of perpetually disputed questions in philosophy and theology to philosophize out of the engendering experience of cognitive openness,[39] he was also sensitive to the horrors perpetrated by

[39] See, for example, his remarks in his *Lectures on Existentialism* (Typescript, The Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto), p. 32.

a humanism in revolt and the hybris which banishes mystery.[40] If Lonergan is emphatic that Cosmopolis, which is to meet the distortions of the general bias of common sense, is a 'higher viewpoint in the mind,'[41] he also makes it abundantly clear that the concrete possibility of this higher viewpoint is a consequence of a higher, transforming integration of human living by faith, hope, and love.[42] And if Voegelin was most strongly influenced to philosophize out of the engendering experience of existential openness by his sensitivity towards murder, the practical problem of mass murder in the 20th Century, 'murder through inspired idiocy' and the relation of experience to social structures,[43] his rigorous noetic analyses of cosmological, noetic, and pneumatic symbolisms of the truth of existence belie the suggestion that a higher integration of human living could get along nicely without a higher viewpoint in the mind. If Voegelin is emphatic that the rational compulsion of intellectual argumentation is no match for the moral compulsion of affect-laden transcendent symbolism in the historical search for formative existential order, he also produces a theory of consciousness, a critique of thingly thinking and the supposedly autonomous truth of propositions, of dogmatomachy and the persistence of the subject-object dichotomy in cognitional theory.

One could say, perhaps, that both thinkers are equally troubled by our times, but that Lonergan's passion to articulate a General Theory of Relevance was **more effectively** aroused by encounters with darkened minds, with the counterpositions on knowledge, objectivity, and being; whereas Voegelin's passion was aroused by encounters with hardened hearts.[44] Lonergan's passion is aroused by the intellectual or noetic self-

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[40] See *Insight,* p. 557; 552.

[41] *Insight,* p. 266.

[42] *Ibid.,* pp. 712-715.

[43] See *The Beginning and the Beyond*, pp. 116-117.

[44] A distinction may be drawn between two "principles of structurization of the lifeworld": (1) the Principle of Existential In-Betweenness and (2) the Principle of Intellectual In-Betweenness. Each involves its own Postulate of Balance. The latter, it appears, may be sublated by the former in an ideal case, but it need not be, as simultaneous emergence in 20th Century philosophy of existential concern and skepticism and cognitive relativism attests. In the case where the Principle of Intellectual In-Betweenness is not sublated by a General Theory of Relevance, the General Theory will lack explicitly grounded accounts of relevance-determining and

ignorance, for example, of a Dewart out to dehellenize dogma, and it rises clearly to the surface only occasionally in his writings.[45] Voegelin's passion seems to permeate his writings; but I can imagine him being especially provoked, for example, by the image, drawn by Karl Jaspers, of Heidegger's affective response to Hitler's 'wonderful hands' while, in the same breath, dismissing as unimportant Hitler's philosophic ignorance.[46]

So there is a problem. I resonate with the two philosophies; in virtue of that resonance I affirm a fundamental equivalence of the two symbolisms; but Bertrand Russell resonates with the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*; and Heidegger, apparently, resonates with Hitler through Hitler's 'wonderful hands'. If the two philosophies find their validation, then, in their resonance with my experience of existence, my experience of existence also finds its validation in its resonance with the two philosophies. I seem once again to be trapped, but this time in my suspect experience of existence rather than in suspect symbolisms of existence.

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relevance-constituting notions of Knowledge, Objectivity, and Being and consequently will founder in its attempt to explain intellectually-constituted relevance. Similarly, a General Theory of Relevance grounded in the Principle of Intellectual In-Betweenness alone will lack an explicitly grounded account of the notion of the Good and Value and will founder when it attempts to explain existentially-constituted relevance. A complete General Theory would seem to require employment of both principles in their relationship of sublated principle to sublating principle. Further, it seems the Principle of Existential In-Betweenness is on its face more proximately pertinent to the understanding of political orders (structures of the human good) and is only remotely pertinent to the understanding of what Schutz calls the 'traffic among subworlds" (e.g., scientific, commonsense, religious, philosophic, artistic, etc.) within the larger lifeworld; whereas the Principle of Intellectual In-Betweenness is more proximately pertinent to the understanding of "traffic among subworlds" (and the accompanying problems posed by apparently multiple 'knowings,' 'objectivities,' and 'realities') and is more remotely pertinent to the understanding of political orders.

[45] See "The Dehellenization of Dogma," in *A Second Collection,* ed. by William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 11-32.

[46] I haven't been able to locate the source of this account. However, numerous reflections by Jaspers on Heidegger may be found in *Karl Jaspers: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Edith Ehrlich, Leonard H. Ehrlich, George B. Pepper (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp. 494 ff.

But having already been seduced earlier by contemporary deformation into contracting my experience, I'm a bit more cautious in this case. While I recognize the problem of mutually-validating deformations and acknowledge its horrible consequences for humanity, I no longer sympathize so readily with the presumptuous philosophic mentality which totalizes the normativity of logic, idealizes closed system, isolates experience of existence from its objectifications, and consequently can speak only of 'validating' resonance. Again, this is not a trap but a derailment. The insidiously presumptuous mentality of deformed philosophy is attempting now to exploit my dialectical sensitivity, a sensitivity authentically engendered by heightened awareness of the temporal dimension of unrestricted human inquiry and the tensional structure of human searching, in an effort to validate its own contracted experience of existence.

The incoherence of the effort is manifest. The real problem of mutually-validating deformations can only be exploited successfully to invalidate validating resonance if it is itself recognized as a valid problem; but the validation of the problem of mutually-validating deformations requires authentic validation of a distinction between deformatively and normatively validating resonance. So, again, my deformed antagonist is right, at least in one sector of his incoherent field: there are indeed normative forces at work at the level of our experience of existence, in the very openness of the structure of existence, which compel us to recognize and formulate the problem of mutually-validating deformations. But my antagonist is wrong, in another sector of his incoherent field, to regard as wrong what he also regards as right. In this incoherent field of symbolization a quiet struggle is occurring between crystallized objectifications of contracted experience and irrepressible expressions of the truth of existence.

The compelling forces constitutive of experience of validating resonance, then, are the imposition of normative limitations by the open structure of the search itself. The supposed resonance of deformed experience with deformed symbolization is never simply that. Besides the apparently validating force exerted in the resonance of symbolic deformations with contracted experience of existence, there persists inevitably the normative pressure of the truth of existence as an undertone in the resonance of bias with the symbolism of bias.

Consequently, the defense of deformed philosophies which objectify contracted experience requires measures to enforce contraction, the brushing aside of relevant questions, the eclipsing of sectors of the experience of existence, the proclamation of an end to searching, and the stopping of history; it requires obscurantism.[47] Contracted experience of existence, as such, does not exert *normative* compelling force to affirm the adequacy of its equivalently deformed objectification, but only engenders an *arbitrary* predisposition to exercise a decisionistic option in favor of that deformed objectification. The defense of adequate, heuristic symbolizations of the truth of existence, of the experience of existence in its normatively structured openness, on the other hand, takes the form of an open invitation to verify their fundamental propositions in the open-structured historical field of existence and symbolization. Openness to the truth of existence as such, in virtue of its open structure, does exert normative compelling force to affirm its adequate objectification; when reflectively adverted to, when meditatively analyzed, this force easily overwhelms the arbitrarily compelling force behind the exercise of decisionistic options, to constitute the experience of validating resonance.

With that obstacle out of the way, I can proceed. My experience of validating resonance is with the gateway or portal propositions of the two heuristic symbolisms of the truth of existence. Recall that I am now free to speak meaningfully, with Lonergan, of advertence to the interior flow of consciousness and, with Voegelin, of openness to the experience of the truth of existence, having overcome my earlier derailment. In the case of Lonergan, then, in advertence to the interior flow of consciousness, I experience validating resonance with the propositions in his philosophy which objectify a normative standpoint of interiority as both the normative structure of cognitive process and a genuine appropriation of that structure as the truth of existence. In the case of Voegelin, in meditative openness to the experience of the truth of existence, I experience validating resonance with the symbols in his philosophy which express a normative existential perspective and

[47] See Voegelin's discussion of "deculturation" in "The Gospel and Culture" in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 12*: "The search imposes its form even when its substance is rejected." (p. 178). Also, see Lonergan on "the principle of limiting structures" in *Insight*, p. 575.

orientation as both the fundamental structure of the Metaxic complex and the willing acceptance of that structure as the human condition.

In both cases, it is my own experience of the search which supplies the validating evidence, that is, the occurrence of the search—in its cognitive and existential dimensions—validates in both cases the objectifications or symbolizations of the structure of the search. *My* validating resonance with Lonergan's fundamental propositions is precisely the emergence of *the* self-justifying standpoint of interiority. *My* validating resonance with Voegelin's fundamental propositions is precisely the emergence of *the* self-justifying existential perspective and orientation. And as that standpoint of interiority is not merely an intellectual grasp of the normative heuristic structure of cognition but opens unrestrictedly within and into the larger context of the fundamentally open structure of existence in genuine appropriation of the truth, it is also the self-justifying existential perspective and orientation. And as that existential perspective and orientation is not merely an affect-laden, diffuse awareness of the fundamentally open structure of existence and willing acceptance of that structure as the human condition but the ultimate relevance-structure of all human inquiry, it is also the self-justifying standpoint of interiority.

Earlier I alluded to a difference in the distribution of compelling forces in my experience of validating resonance with the two philosophies. That difference has now come to the fore, and in reflection on that difference, I believe, we discover the fundamental affinity of Lonergan and Voegelin. I'll conclude this reflection, then, by attempting to describe the distribution of normatively compelling forces in my experience of validating resonance.

The compelling forces are exerted by the structure of the truth of existence itself. But the different emphases in the two philosophies of the same truth of existence lead to a difference in their effective evocation of normatively compelling forces. In the case of Lonergan, my experience of validating resonance is marked especially by the compelling force of the normative limitations of self-attentively objectified cognitive structure; whereas, in the case of Voegelin, my experience of validating resonance is marked especially by the compelling force of the normative limitations of luminously symbolized existential structure. My experience of resonance with Lonergan's

philosophy, then, is more heady; with Voegelin's, it is more heartfelt. My experience of resonance with Lonergan is a cornering cognition of the limiting structure of cognition in its depth, height, and breadth; of the transcendental structure of cognitive process in its unrestrictedness; of the web woven by the tensional relations in which I seek knowledge of myself and the world. My experience of resonance with Voegelin is an expansive, affect-laden, formative vision of the limiting human condition in its depth, height, and breadth; of the fundamental structure of human existence in its openness to the Beyond; of the web woven by the tensional relations in which I seek direction in the flow of life. In this convergence of normatively compelling forces, the normatively limiting structures symbolized by the two philosophies are experienced, their equivalence discovered, and the comparable adequacy of the two philosophies as symbolisms of the truth of existence grasped.

I have identified what I take to be the radical philosophic affinity of Lonergan and Voegelin. In that affinity I would locate the fundamental *topoi* to be appealed to in the philosophic praxis of resistance against the deformed climate of our times. By appealing to these *topoi* the philosopher aims to evoke a normative resonance with adequate heuristic expressions of the truth of existence. But, just as the normatively compelling forces are differently distributed in my resonance with Lonergan and Voegelin, so the Lonerganian philosopher, as such, may be inclined to rely more heavily on the limiting structure of cognitive performance; and the Voegelinian philosopher, as such, may be inclined to rely more heavily on the limiting structure of existential orientation. That is to say, the Lonerganian might attempt to join forces with the normatively compelling forces of an interlocutor's cognitive performance; whereas the Voegelinian might attempt to join forces with the normatively compelling forces of an interlocutor's Metaxic existence. So, despite the radical affinity of Lonergan and Voegelin which I have identified, the rhetorical strategies issuing from their philosophies might differ in their topical reliance.

I would note, finally, two implications of this difference in topical emphasis. The first regards the misinterpretations to which philosophic praxis is likely to be subjected by alienated interlocutors in the current intellectual climate. The second regards the infiltration by this same

intellectual climate of the ongoing dialogue of Lonerganians and Voegelinians.

First, the likely misinterpretations of philosophic praxis. In the Lonerganian case, the evocation of the standpoint of interiority will involve what may appear to be dogmatomachic argumentation, when in fact it involves intellectual expression transformed by interior differentiation. In the Voegelinian case, the evocation of the existential perspective and orientation will involve what may appear to be propagandistic manipulation of symbols, when in fact it involves the symbolic expression of *Existenz*.

Second, the difference in topical emphasis has implications for the Lonergan-Voegelin dialogue as well, where the signficant issue is not mediation of normative reformation but the ongoing development of complementary understanding and commitment from a ground in a radical affinity. We must beware of being seduced by our deformed times into the incoherent presumptions that the passionate appeal to the normative openness of intelligence must really be a dogmatomachic quest for closed system, and that the passionate appeal to the normative openness of existence must really be a libidinous quest for totalitarian control.

My own experience of resonance with these two philosophers—Eric Voegelin and Bernard Lonergan—suggests to me that in our philosophic praxis—whether in resistance to deformation or in formative dialogue—we would be well-advised to adopt both rhetorical strategies. That is not to say, of course, that the combined appeal to the 'head' and 'heart' of the wrong-headed and hard-hearted will be at all successful, but it will be doing what we can as well as we can. Nor should we expect it to bring about, in the formative Lonergan-Voegelin dialogue, the sudden disappearance of all differences; but it will help raise to explicit awareness on both sides the concrete intellectual and existential conditions of their successful resolution.[48]

[48] Michael P. Morrissey has provided a convenient outline of the major comparisons and contrasts to be drawn between Lonergan and Voegelin in *Consciousness and Transcendence: The Theology of Eric Voegelin* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), pp. 223-225.

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VOEGELIN, RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

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INTRODUCTION

I'M GLAD TO see that this year's Lonergan Workshop is including a consideration of the work of Eric Voegelin, whose thought complements that of Lonergan's in many ways. The theme of this workshop is "In Tune with the Divine Ground: Cultural and Social Conditions of Political Order." This very phrase captures the essence of Voegelin's life-long achievement: the search for the order of human existence in history and society. As Voegelin conceived it this search must necessarily be a philosophical and theoretical endeavor. Now ten years after his death we continue to reap the fruits of Voegelin's philosophical search for order in an age of disorder as we look ahead not just to the turn of another century but to another millennium.

As a philosopher and political scientist Voegelin sought to answer the fundamental political questions: What is the source of order in history and society? From what do we take our bearings in fashioning our human existence? To what do we turn in our seeking the right way to live? For Voegelin the answer to these questions is as simple as it is profound: religious experience. That is to say, the fundamental source of order in human existence is rooted in experiences of transcendence, in the attunement to divine reality, in our getting in tune with God. This is the wisdom of the ages that Voegelin has recovered and proclaimed for us in our own time of political and spiritual crisis.

This morning I shall attempt to unpack the profundity of this simple assertion that lies at the heart of Voegelin's thought. But I must

warn you that one is hard pressed to find anything simple in Voegelin's very dense and complex works. If only he were a dogmatist or propogandist or sophist, it would be a lot easier to understand his works and to present his thought in a lecture. But alas, Voegelin is not a dogmatic thinker; he is a philosopher and thus his works are much more exacting of his reader. One cannot simply extract Voegelinian truths from his writings, because he is not a dispenser of teachings or opinions but rather a lover of wisdom. And so it is a long and arduous task to reach up to the mind of Voegelin the philosopher. I know many of us here are not Voegelinians and may not be familiar with his difficult writings, and so I will try to represent his thinking on this matter as clearly and precisely as possible, trying to be as faithful to Voegelin's thought as Voegelin himself was faithful to the task of philosophy itself.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AS THE GROUND OF POLITICAL ORDER

What exactly does this proclamation mean, that religious experience is the ground of order.[1] First of all, according to Voegelin's analysis, it clearly means that the ultimate foundation of political and social order is

[1] "Religious experience" is not a technical term of Voegelin. He does not use the term religion because it is too vague and deforms the nature of real experiences with the problems of dogma and doctrine. See Voegelin's *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed., Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) p. 51. Voegelin instead uses the language of spiritual outburst, revelation, philosophy, theophany, experiences of transcendence, and in his later work, noetic and pneumatic differentiations of consciousness. The experiences in question refer to the foundational events in human history that ordered the lives of a particular people and which occurred in the context of the clash of ethnic societies in the ecumenic age of empires (600 BC--600 AD). The "axis-age" of Jaspers defines this period of world history when these great foundational events occurred. However, Voegelin expands on Jaspers' parameters of the axial period because it is too limiting. To include the whole sweep of spiritual outbursts, which occurred alongside the events of "exodus" in world history, Voegelin suggests a period from the thirteenth century BC to the tenth century AD. The major outbursts Voegelin identifies are philosophy in Hellas, prophetism in Israel, Buddhism in India, Confucianism and Taoism in China, and Zoroastrianism in Persia. The first two locate the settings of the most differentiated religious experiences. See Eric Voegelin, "Configurations of History" in *Published Essays: 1966-1985*, Collected Works 12, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) pp. 100-101.

not found where most people expect to find it today, such as in ideal political regimes like democratic government or constitutionalism; nor is it found in developing economic structures that maintain social stability through material production or full employment or a viable standard of living; nor is it found in fulfilling the promises of political leaders and their "contracts," like the recent "contract with America" (or as some would have it, the "contract on America"); nor is it found in peaceful international relations or a balance of military and economic power among nations; nor is it found in any institutions, even the institutions of civil law or family or even "religion" itself. Rather Voegelin takes his bearings from the Platonic insight that "the city is the soul writ large." This means that the substance of a society is *psyche*, that social order depends on the order of the individual soul. Therefore, the diagnosis of the health and disease in the soul is at the same time a diagnosis of order and disorder in society, for a society's order ultimately rests on the ordered souls of its citizens, on their intellectual, moral and spiritual virtues, or character.

Since Voegelin bases his scholarly studies on this fundamental principle of classical political philosophy, that perceives the isomorphism of soul and society, he has not written texts for foreign-policy or domestic-policy decision-makers. He is not concerned with "politics" in the topical sense. He is not even concerned with "family values" or school systems or churches and their structure and function. One cannot extract a list of Voegelinian doctrines or propositional truths from his work upon which one could devise pragmatic policies to implement in any of these spheres of contemporary life (to the regret of many of his readers). As a philosopher and a political scientist in the Platonic sense, Voegelin analyzes the problems of political order at a much deeper level of reality. He boldly proclaims that the fundamental condition of political order in any culture and in any society is quite simply the attunement of its citizens' souls to the divine ground of their existence. This is the heart of the matter.

But what exactly does this mean for us today? It means that however we choose to live our lives, however we choose to govern our institutions, we must ultimately take our bearings on the ordering of the personal soul to divine Mystery that has been experienced in a normative way by the great prophets, sages, saints, mystics and philosophers of the past. It means we must hear anew the authoritative

words of these individuals who have gone before us, who in expressing their experience of the divine discovered the truth about the order of reality and about their participation in the unfolding drama of history. Such experience is "religious," and as Voegelin teaches us, it occurs in either one of two ways: by reason, through one's noetic search for the divine, or by revelation, through the divine pull on one's soul. In other words, human order, as personal, social and political, depends on human beings' existence in immediacy under God, which necessitates the continuous recovery, on the level of experience, of the great discoveries and the great revelations of God in history. These foundational events are what Voegelin names the "spiritual outbursts," the "theophanies," the "leaps in being," the noetic and pneumatic differentiations of consciousness. In a characteristically Augustinian vein Voegelin sees the ordered existence of humans, created in the image of God, as dependent on one's *amor Dei*, while resisting the disordering forces of *amor sui*. To remove the love of God as the ordering force of the soul, as Thomas Hobbes and his epigones did, is to fall into spiritual anarchy. And as the modern age has testified all too well, social and political anarchy will inevitably follow.[2]

The truth of the matter is this: all humans are called by natural inclination as well as by divine grace to partake in this attunement. Moreover, a society's political order depends upon the living of human life in cooperation with God taking shape in the souls of its people. Following the classical philosophers, this attunement, for Voegelin, is primarily dependent on the life of transcendent reason becoming a dominant force in the formation of individuals in a society. Politically speaking the core religious experience at the heart of social order is participation in the divine Logos by way of the divine Nous that dwells within us. It is an experience given to all humans insofar as they are human. As Aristotle proclaimed in the opening line of his *Metaphysics*, humans share equally in the life of self-transcending reason, for "all men by nature desire to know." But of course this equality is only potential. We know that humans are empirically unequal in the application or fulfillment of their potentiality.[3] Thus, Voegelin adopts the tenet of classical politics that

[2] On the Augustinian ordering of the soul and the Hobbesian revolt see Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) pp. 184-87.

[3] The truncation of the unrestricted desire to know is a result of cultural conditioning, egoism, bias, ideology and scotosis. For Lonergan's discussion of these

the good society is one that makes the life of transcendent reason possible in at least a minority of its members who become a creative force in that society. Such living attunement to the ground is apparently not given to all after all. Why is this? In many societies, restrictions of size and wealth make the life of reason unobtainable, not to speak of the psychic tension that for most people makes the noetic life nearly unbearable.[4] But civilizational order requires that the life of reason and virtue be lived by a select few. In Aristotle's *Politics* these few, mature, virtuous souls are called the *spoudaioi* without whose influence the *plethos*, the masses who are ruled by intemperate passion, come to predominate, leading to social breakdown and political disintegration.

For Voegelin what is needed, then, for social and political order, is an authentic grounding in religious experience, at least by a significant few who live the mature, spiritual life from whom others in a society can take their bearings. The problem, however, is this: in spite of the host of fervent practitioners of "religion" in all its forms all around us (seen today for example in the rampant spread of evangelical Christianity around the world), even in spite of a plethora of people having "religious experiences" (and a great variety of them according to William James in his classic study of the phenomenon almost a century ago), the experiences that Voegelin talks about, and their truth, are generally lost to the modern world. Why, we must ask. The reason is that the real content of a definite class of religious experiences which reveal the true meaning of existence has been lost. The normative experiences of transcendence in history have largely been eclipsed by dogmatic beliefs, by mere excitations of religious feeling, by mindless imitations of the

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forces see Lonergan, *Insight: An Essay in Human Understanding* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) pp. 191-92; 218-42. Lonergan states that "if everyone has some acquaintance with the spirit of inquiry and reflection, few think of making it the effective centre of their lives; and of the few, still fewer make sufficient progress to be able to withstand other attractions and persevere in their high purpose" (p. 225).

[4] See Voegelin's essay "Industrial Society in Search of Reason" in *World Technology and Human Destiny*, ed. Raymond Aron (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963) pp. 31-46, at 34-36. Though Voegelin was by profession a political scientist throughout his life his later work curiously prescinds from any discussion of the optimal governmental regimes or constitutional forms a society might take, suggesting perhaps that the only true requirement for sound political order is the personal order of the individual soul to divine reality that a society must both reflect and serve. On this see Ellis Sandoz's comment in his Introduction to *Published Essays*, p. xxi.

purveyors of "religion," by hypostatized concepts and ideas, by nominalism, or on the other hand, by the cultured despisers of religion, the enlightened secularists who have turned the hermeneutics of suspicion into a creed. The essential problem today, according to Voegelin, given the preponderance of these secondary, derivative mediations of religious meaning, and the atheist revolt against them, is that people have largely lost contact with reality. The symbols that gave life to the ancients no longer speak their truth to moderns. And there are too few people alive today who can imaginatively reenact the original experiences of transcendence in their own consciousness. And here lies the great irony. The fashionable view of modernity is that it is largely constructed on the return to human experience behind dogmatism, as seen for example in the great modern thinkers: Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Locke, James, Bergson and Jaspers, as well as in the rise of empiricism, phenomenology, existentialism and pragmatism (the sweeping movement in modern thought that Lonergan called "the turn to the subject"). But for Voegelin, the recovery of experience behind dogmatism has actually been accomplished only, and in a rather "backhanded manner," by way of the historical sciences.[5] We moderns have by and large not recovered in any personal, experiential way the originating experiences of religion and philosophy that lie at the origins of Western Civilization. We have lost the immediate encounter with the transcendent, what Voegelin calls "the truth of existence." The weight of Enlightenment secularism and scientism and its instrumental rationality, as well as the ideological undercurrents that pervade the modern mind, have taken their toll, producing the age of "the closed soul." The recovery of the great texts and revelatory events of the past that has been accomplished has for the most part not penetrated to the engendering experiences behind the symbols that mediate their meaning. Accordingly, in the attempt to retrieve an immediate grasp of reality behind dogmatism, the divine ground of existence has been lost. An example of this can be seen in William James' own great work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James obeyed the fundamental principle of American pragmatism, from which Voegelin learned a great deal in his youth, that ideas must be grounded in experiences. But in spite of his illuminating inquiry into a

[5] "Immortality: Experience and Symbol," in *Published Essays*, p.57.

wide variety of mystical experiences, James prescinds from the classical and Christian formulations of religious experience that established the order of history and society in the West since antiquity. The same can be said for Max Weber's sociology of religion. A major symptom of Weber's value-free science was his exclusion of the foundational experiences of order in classical philosophy and early Christianity.[6] We might call this avoidance the modern conceit, the prohibition of the divine ground as actually experienced in history, against which Voegelin rebelled and worked to overcome in his early years.

In short, Voegelin is in search of a reality no longer alive, because, in his judgment, we have lost the experiential core of reality. So the fundamental task of his entire life work has been to restore the experiences that led to the founding of the great philosophies, religions, and cultures in history, to make radiant once again the opaque symbols of the human-divine relation. As a philosopher Voegelin was determined to return not just to the original experiences but also to the original analytical vocabulary that first embodied their insights. As he once remarked to Gregor Sebba in 1933, we must return to the source because that is where the water is clearest.[7] In this sense there is nothing "original" in Voegelin who believed that lack of originality was a characteristic of authentic philosophizing. What appear to be obscure neologisms in Voegelin's writings are actually restored ancient symbols. They are the result of a rescue mission, a return to simplicity, a recovery of lost insights as originally formulated. The most important of these rescued symbols is the *metaxy*. In fact the heart of Voegelin's restoration project is his articulation of life in the In-Between, the "middle" state of human existence that shapes all our experiences, especially our religious experiences. The *metaxy* became the chief emblem of Voegelin's philosophizing during the last twenty years of his life. It is a very simple idea, but its truth is perhaps the most difficult thing to fully comprehend in Voegelin. It is even more difficult to live.

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[6] See Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, p. 12. On Weber's value-free science see *The New Science of Politics*, pp. 13-22.

[7] Gregor Sebba, "Prelude and Variations on the Theme of Eric Voegelin," *Southern Review* **13** (1977): 658n.

THE METAXY

The *metaxy* is Plato's symbol for the "in-between" plane of human existence denoting the "place" of human participation in reality and the domain of human knowledge. For Voegelin, the discovery of the *metaxy* is a differentiating event in history, an epochal event that divides history into two periods, giving it a Before-and-After structure. The occasion of this historical breakthrough is the experience of the divine in the *psyche* of Plato, an experience that was more differentiated than that of the compact myths that Plato inherited in fifth century Hellas. With the emergence of the noetic consciousness of the *metaxy* in Plato's soul the age of the people's myth had to yield to the authoritative force of the philosopher. In the wake of this historic event there is no going back, for a marked progression has occurred whereby, argues Voegelin, the process of history has now become luminous for its meaning.[8]

The most resonant expression of the *metaxy* occurs in the *Symposium*, Plato's literary masterpiece on the topic of love.[9] Specifically it occurs in the course of Socrates' climactic speech on Eros delivered to Agathon and others attending the drinking party. Actually, you remember, Socrates' speech is not a "speech" presented in direct discourse, but the report of a dialogue that he had with Diotima whereby Socrates lets the truth on love unfold dialectically. Because the truth about Eros is revealed to Socrates from the prophetess Diotima and concerns the quest for immortality, the mythic tale about love that he relates is to be regarded as a revealed truth about salvation, that is, a saving tale that originally appeared noetically in the *metaxy* of Plato's own erotic consciousness. For this reason alone one might justify the great significance Voegelin gives this symbol of the *metaxy* in his work, unlike most interpreters of Plato who fail to recognize its revelatory

[8] Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* IV, *The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956) p. 187.

[9] But see also *Philebus* (16c-17a) where Plato symbolizes the mystery of being as existence between the One and the Apeiron, denoting the In-Between status of things. See *The Ecumenic Age*, pp. 184-85.

import due to its lack of prominence in the whole of Plato's dialogues.[10] The experiential insight of the symbol has suffered the death of a thousand oversights. We might say that Voegelin has saved the chief symbol of this saving tale, and its revelatory truth, from its own death in the philosophical tradition.[11]

Socrates' speech begins with the proclamation that Eros is not a god, as the previous speakers presupposed, but "a great daimon" that plays the role of mediator between mortals and immortals. In other words, love is not divine but exists between the human and the divine. Socrates then relates the myth of Eros' birth. Eros is the son of Poros (wealth, resource) and Penia (poverty, want) conceived when Penia seduces Poros in his state of intoxication while celebrating the birth of Aphrodite. Thus, love is conceived on the day the goddess of beauty is born. And as the child of need and fullness Eros partakes in both while serving divine beauty in all things. For Voegelin the myth of Eros's descent (by way of the sad-loving quest for fullness or perfection, and the penetration of wealth into poverty) reveals Plato's own personal experience which is universal, for everyone whose soul enters into the philosophical "activities of love" experiences the quest for fullness, or completion, or perfection, or true goodness and true wisdom, which inevitably follows upon the prior awareness of one's state of ignorance and need.[12] In other words what one ultimately desires is immortality, for love seeks to possess forever what it does not possess: divine Beauty and Goodness. According to Diotima's tale, immortality is experienced through the procreation of body and soul to which the higher virtue brings the pregnant soul, for the highest activity of love is the conversation of souls, and not the mere coupling and procreation of bodies, for souls possess a higher beauty more in accord with divine Beauty. Socrates' speech ends with the famous climb up "the ladder of love" where one comes to know divine Beauty itself beyond all beautiful

[10] For a rare exception see Steven Shankman, *In Search of the Classic* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994) pp. 21-26.

[11] Voegelin first introduced and analyzed this symbol in his 1964 essay "Eternal Being in Time," in *Anamnesis*, trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978) pp. 116-146. His treatment of it in its Platonic context appears in Section II: "Philosophy as a Constituent of History." Voegelin continued his exegesis of the *Symposium* in *The Ecumenic Age*, pp. 185-87. There he discussed further in a very trenchant analysis the truth of the *metaxy* as revelatory.

[12] *Anamnesis*, p. 128.

bodies and souls in this world. This sublime ending of his speech is an image of the human quest for immortality where one ultimately comes to be with that which is eternal. In this specific context of Socrates' speech on love in Plato's *Symposium* we can understand what the *metaxy* is ultimately about for Voegelin. It is about "the philosophical experience as the tension between wisdom (fullness) and ignorance (penury)."[13] It is about "the right relation of man to the divine ground of being; the philosophical tension between time and eternity (that) is recognized as the right order of the soul, which implies the claim of fulfillment for all."[14] And so an explanation of the *metaxy* must now necessarily turn to an analysis of the experience of immortality which makes the truth of existence in the In-Between truly luminous for its meaning.

IMMORTALITY

As an event of participation in reality human consciousness is structured by experiences in the tensions between birth and death, ignorance and wisdom, immanence and transcendence, imperfection and perfection, time and eternity, mortality and immortality, apeirontic depth and noetic height, creation and salvation, the One and the Many, the Beginning and the Beyond.[15] Life is lived in the tension between all these polar opposites. The place of human experience is in the middle, between them, and nowhere else. For purposes of illustrating the nature of Voegelin's whole project of restoring life in the *metaxy* I will focus on the set of poles named mortality and immortality, which of course is intrinsically related to all the other sets of poles. The greatest clarity about the structure of human religious experience may come by considering the erotic tension toward the divine ground that issues in immortality. Immortality is what love desires. Of all human experiences we might designate "religious," the quest for immortality is the one most significant for it designates a peak of spiritual sensitivity toward one's life and death. It is what the Christian doctrine of salvation is ultimately

[13] Ibid, p. 129.

[14] Ibid, p. 130.

[15] The fullest catalog of the tensions in existence is found in "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in *Published Essays*, pp. 119-20.

about. Of course it has parallels in every major religious tradition, for the human desire to partake in the eternal divine life is a constant in history and can be traced back as far as the records go, textually at least as far back as the Gilgamesh epic of the late third millennium B.C.,[16] or in our own Judeo-Christian tradition to the story of the Garden of Eden, from which Adam and Eve are banished lest they reach out and eat of the tree of immortality, too—what they really want!).[17] No doubt the quest for eternal divine life is real and universal. However, Voegelin would argue that the popular doctrinaire conception of immortality today, shorn of its experiential ground, is a fantasy, the existence of which one may believe or not believe as an autonomous reality called "afterlife."[18] The legitimate mythopoetic images of "afterlife" are the product of speculative imagination inspired by the faith and hope of living toward a perfection beyond the imperfection of this world, that is, in the unknowable mode of divine existence.[19] Inspired by mythic images of salvation, codified by theological doctrine, many people believe, and mostly on the passions of alienation, piety and fear, in the realm of immortal deliverance beyond this world granted by God at death. But they do not themselves participate in the living experiences of an immortalizing life. When such belief becomes hypostatized as an

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[16] The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is not a text that Voegelin analyzes anywhere. Rather an anonymous Egyptian text, circa 2000 B.C., called "Dispute of a Man, Who Contemplates Suicide, With His Soul" serves his analysis of an early historical experience of life, death, alienation, and immortality that has been a constant in consciousness ever since. See "Immortality," in *Published Essays*, pp. 58-64.

[17] For a penetrating interpretation of the story of the Garden of Eden, not as a story of a Fall but rather as a quest for immortality, see James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[18] I use this word in quotation marks to remind the reader that it is not a term used by Voegelin most likely because he saw it as a hypostatized concept of the immortal beyond.

[19] I take the following statement of Voegelin to suggest that images and symbols of a personal or collective "afterlife" are not themselves unbalancing of consciousness, but only become so when they are divorced from the experiences of the beyond that they symbolize and refer to an immanentized reality: "All 'eristic phantasies' which try to convert the limits of the Metaxy, be it the noetic height or the apeirontic depth, into a phenomenon within the Metaxy are to be excluded as false. This rule does not affect genuine eschatological or apocalyptic symbolisms which imaginatively express the experience of a movement within reality toward a Beyond of the Metaxy, such as the experiences of mortality and immortality" ("Reason the Classic Experience" in *Published Essays*, p. 290).

objective realm of existence beyond the existence of this world, that is, existence in another world beyond the created world of Genesis 1, the result is a cosmic dualism, as well as the spiritual hardening and deadening of the *psyche*.

Voegelin argues that such doctrine, in whatever culture it is found, is largely derived from the compact symbols of cosmological myth (be they ancient Hellenic, Egyptian or Israelite, or even Plato's philosophical myths of salvation,[20] or Dante's very vivid Christian images of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise), and not in the living process of what Aristotle called *athanatizein*, immortalization, or the engendering experience that yields such imaginative depictions of "afterlife" in the first place. This is why in his great 1965 essay on "Immortality"[21] Voegelin never discusses the imaginative symbols of "afterlife," though at its conclusion he anticipates the disheartened response of his readers who inevitably feel let down by his analysis and want something more than the "anemic immortality" he offers. But Voegelin is not forthcoming. To give his readers something more would be to submit to Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness," of erecting symbols into entities and then discoursing on the entities divorced from their experiential ground. To embark on such speculative constructions would be to repudiate the philosophical anthropology that Voegelin learned from Schelling: "Anthropology is now systematically made the key to speculation; nothing must enter into the content of speculation that cannot be found in human nature, in its depth and as well as in its heights, in the limitations of its existence as well as in its openness toward transcendent reality."[22] As always Voegelin never strays from the

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[20] Such as to be found in the *Phaedrus, Gorgias*, and the *Republic*. For Voegelin's last reflections on the *Phaedrus* myth of the immortal soul, see "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What Is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, Collected Works 28, eds., Thomas Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) pp. 212-17; and "Quod Deus Dicitur," in *Published Essays*, p. 384.

[21] This was the Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality, delivered at Harvard Divinity School on January 14, 1965. See "Immortality: Experience and Symbol," in *Published Essays*, pp. 52-94.

[22] Voegelin, "Last Orientation," unpublished ms., pp. 179-80; quoted from Jürgen Gebhardt, "Toward the Process of Universal Mankind: The Formation of Voegelin's Philosophy of History," in *Eric Voegelin's Thought, A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982) p. 68.

ground. We might say that he is well attuned! And his analysis never departs from the *metaxy* to discuss the pre- or post-existence of an immaterial soul in eternity beyond the *metaxy*. The soul (*psyche*) is simply the name of that place in experience where humanity has an experience of eternal being; it is the sensorium of transcendence, of the movements and countermovements in the tensions of being. It is not a subject about which one can give predications in philosophical propositions. Nor is the soul an object of sense experience, but a reality that becomes noetically illuminated by the one who suffers its movement toward the transcendent Beyond in his or her consciousness.

To put it simply, according to Voegelin, "there is no 'transcendent reality' other than the Beyond experienced in the 'rise' (of the soul). If it is torn out of the experiential context, it suffers the intentionalist reduction to an object in whose existence one can believe or not; the experienced *fides*, we may say leaves a fideistic belief as its sediment."[23] The problem occurs in our use of language that separates "the transcendent" from the experience of transcendence and transforms it into a fideistic object that exists apart from the soul's movement toward its goal in the *metaxy*. No doubt because Plato was aware of this problem, too, i.e., the penchant to hypostatize, to abolish the *metaxy* by hauling the Beyond into this world, he has Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* end on an ambiguous note. Just like Voegelin's essay on "Immortality," it too appears "anemic" to those who wish for something more. But Socrates' only resolve about the one who has successfully climbed "the ladder of love" is that "by giving birth to true virtue and nourishing it, he would be able to become a friend of the gods, and if any human being could become immortal, he would" (*Symposium* 212a). The matter is entirely provisional; no doctrinaire belief in immortality as an objective state of existence in an "afterlife" is proposed. After hearing this speech one is left not in a state of certain knowledge about the matter, but in a state of faith concerning "the activities of love" which promise a mysterious union with divine Wisdom at the end of the erotic quest in the In-Between. Eros is that great spirit (*daimon*) which mediates the human-divine relation and initiates the movement. Whoever is possessed by Eros grows above the status of a mortal and

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[23] "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 218.

becomes a "spiritual being" (*daimonios aner*).[24] The real truth of the matter is revealed in the experience of love; to separate the symbols from the experience they illuminate is to deform and falsify them. We must return again and again to the in-between state of experience, to the movement of love itself in order to understand the truth of immortality as well as the order of human existence in society and history. I might say in passing here that Voegelin, in his later years, would sometimes speak of the "order of love" as the foundation of political order.[25] Through Plato he saw the philosophical experience of the order of reality as an experience of the order of love. The love of the divinity beyond the cosmos is the formative principle of the cosmos. The *parousia* of that divinity maintains the soul in order (*kosmos*). When that love is not present in reality there is disorder (*akosmia*).[26]

But we must be careful not to misconstrue Voegelin here. His seemingly iconoclastic skepticism about "afterlife" does not mean that he advocates discarding its popular mythic images and beliefs. However, as a philosopher he does seek to avoid, what he called in his last work, "imaginative oblivion," the willful forgetting of the structure of existence in tension toward the Beyond by allowing the imagination to imagine the unimaginable.[27] When the imagination through its creative powers transforms a non-thing reality into an imaginable thing it destroys the metaleptic tension of human participation in reality. The attempt to gain power over reality by imaginatively creating its image is the initial human vice that leads to the deformation of consciousness, to the projection psychologies, to the inversion of consciousness into unconsciousness, all contributing to the history of disorder. In our quest to know reality and to believe in its truth, we easily forget that we humans reside in the *metaxy*, not beyond it. We do not create the world; we participate in it. This is also why in his last work Voegelin spoke of "reflective distance" as a third structure in consciousness (in addition to

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[24] See "Eternal Being in Time," in *Anamnesis*, p. 128.

[25] See for example, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, p. 335.

[26] See Voegelin, *Order and History* III, *Plato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957) p. 36.

[27] On the role of imagination and its deformation see Voegelin, *Order and History* V, *In Search of Order* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956) pp. 37-41; 61-62.

intentionality and luminosity) that must be maintained at all costs if the *metaxy* is to be restored. When the reflective distance between the image of reality and the reality imagined collapses and the two become indistinguishable, consciousness slips into oblivion, which is not the mystic's dark night of the soul but more like the chaotic abyss, the primordial darkness of Genesis 1:2. As a result the image of the world becomes the world itself, or as Voegelin put it, "the distance inherent in the metaleptic tension can be obscured by letting the reality that reveals itself in imaginative truth imaginatively dissolve into a truth that reveals reality."[28]

Nevertheless, following Plato (in his *Epinomis*) Voegelin argues that the traditional myth and its images should not be simply abandoned under the differentiating pressures of a more adequate experience and symbolization, for then people whose faith in the myth has been debunked will become spiritually disoriented and fall into a worse chaos, since they are not inclined to become philosophers able to explore the truth of the matter on the level of noetic reflection.[29] The simple fact is there has never been a society whose self-constitution was noetic.[30] Every known society in history has expressed its experience of order through symbols that are mythical, revelatory, apocalyptic, gnostic, theocratic, or ideological, but not exclusively noetic, for noetic truth once it emerges cannot simply replace non-noetic truth. It can only serve as a corrective or addition alongside less differentiated symbolisms which provide a sense of order for most people, everywhere, most of the time.[31] The persistence of non-noetic interpretations of reality, even after the rise of noetic ones, is what causes the fundamental tension in the field of political reality. The clash between noetic and non-noetic knowledge of social order is what leads to the fate

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[28] Ibid., p. 38.

[29] "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, p. 93. Elsewhere, speaking on how the nature of faith in the "exodus" journey toward "the heavenly Jerusalem" gets objectified by the various escapes from history (gnostic and apocalyptic), Voegelin remarks on this very problem: "People do not ordinarily live with this tension yet they still want to immigrate into the kingdom of God. This pole of the tension will be objectified by various imageries into a kingdom of God, depicted in very definite colors and incidents" ("Configurations of History" in *Published Essays*, p. 106).

[30] See "What is Political Reality," in *Anamnesis*, pp. 144, 185.

[31] Ibid, p. 145.

of philosophers who are punished or exiled or even killed. The same phenomenon occurs with prophetism when the one who speaks the pneumatic word of God is slandered, mocked and put to death for being an iconoclastic subverter of the political-religious status quo. As Plato's famous parable tells us, the ascent from the darkness of the cave to the light of truth is liberating, but the descent from the light back down to the cave is fraught with peril and persecution. Of course, this was Socrates' own fate, and we all know what happened to Jesus.

Voegelin reminds us that the symbols of immortality are not informative; they are evocative. They are not descriptive but exegetic, for they refer not to entities in the external word but rather to the movement of the soul within the *metaxy*. They are not concepts with an external referent but indices of language arising from the religious experience of the eternal as consciousness becomes aware of its movement toward the ground. Their meaning can only be understood if they evoke in the listener or reader the corresponding movement of participatory consciousness as experienced by their original author, that is, in the experience of the loving quest for the divine Beyond.[32] But as I have said, Voegelin argues that this religious experience of immortality, or more properly speaking (to use Aristotle's language) the practice of immortalizing, is largely lost to believers and nonbelievers alike, to those of us who have inherited the hypostatized symbols of "afterlife" mistakenly thought to refer to a spatio-temporal object or place. Or worse, it has been completely deformed by the utopian dreamers who offer an imaginary immortality by promising salvation in this world, primarily on the order of a Nietzschean project of self-salvation, or the enlightened activist and progressivist projects of political mass movements fomented by the mood of anxiety and alienation that constitutes the modern age. In either case there is the escapist refusal to accept the tension of existence between imperfection and perfection. One way of escape is simply to deny the tension and to withdraw into

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[32] "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, p. 344. Elsewhere in discussing his method of "reflective inquiry" Voegelin says "while the original symbols contain a rational structure that can be further articulated through reflection, the reflective acts of cognition can be true only if they participate in the divine reality that participated in the emergence of the symbols. The reflection, thus, assumes a reality engaged in becoming cognitively luminous" ("The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 189).

one own's self-suffering, as Nietzsche did a century ago, by glorifying it by the inflated ego playing the games of the will-to-power. The more insidious escape attempts to overcome the tension through activist revolt, through the transfiguring of imperfect existence into an immanent state of perfection, by way of what Voegelin calls "magical politics," the stuff of modern gnosticism which bears the brunt of his critique.[33] In either case there ensues "the existential deformation that becomes manifest in the God-is-dead syndrome, together with the major misconstructions of reality it entails."[34] In this respect we can perhaps begin to understand just what Voegelin means by what he calls "the postulate of balance" that must always be maintained, for once achieved it is never permanent.[35] Once the balance of consciousness is lost it leads to the extreme of madness, like the magician's dream that moved Shakespeare, in his Sonnet 129, reflecting on the disturbance of reality he experienced by the erotic passion in his own soul, to conclude that

> All this the world well knows yet none knows well,
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.[36]

The seeking of heaven can lead to the establishment of hell once balance in the *metaxy* is lost, as it is lost, beyond the personal sphere of the erotic in the social sphere of the political by the violent mass movements of our time, or in any bowing to the spell of magical language in political propaganda, in sophistic intellectual trickery (such as deconstuctionism today[37]), in religious fundamentalism and sectarian movements, in apocalyptic pronouncements of the New Age. All of these are powerful social forces in every age, not just our own. As our century has revealed by way of the insidious *ersatz* religions, the death of God is only a prelude to the death of humans, which the magical constructions of the superman and the will to power have actually brought about,

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[33] On the utopian dream of perfection see the first part of Voegelin's essay, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, pp. 316-26.

[34] "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 190.

[35] On the balance of consciousness see *The Ecumenic Age*, pp. 227-38.

[36] See "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, pp. 328-29.

[37] Shankman's *In Search of the Classic, op. cit.*, is a penetrating Voegelinian critique of post-modernism by a philosophically trained literary critic.

culminating in what Voegelin calls "the murderous grotesque of our time."[38]

The balance of consciousness is first lost when hypostatized concepts replace the truth of experiential insight, which happens, for example, when the doctrinaire conception of immortality assumes an objective life of its own whenever it is severed from its experiential ground. The deformation of symbols into hardened doctrines emerges from a state of alienation from reality. If we are to regain the truth of existence we must recapture the ground of truth in experience for the struggle for truth, Voegelin claims; this cannot be achieved by pitting doctrine against doctrine.[39] The nominalism of a dogma, whether theological or ideological, has, since the sixteenth century, become the stuff of warfare. Social and political disorder is rooted in the doctrinal unbalancing of consciousness. For Voegelin, the balance of consciousness requires the turning around, Plato's *periagoge*, not from false to true doctrines, but from deformative opinions and actions to formative response to life in the *metaxy* (which I think parallels what Lonergan means by intellectual, moral, and religious conversion). In other words the balance requires faith, and the stuff of faith lies beyond its symbols and images "in the substance of things hoped for and the proof of things unseen" (Hebrews 11:1). Such faith is rooted in the experiences of the open soul in erotic tension toward the divine ground. A grounded faith would recognize that images of immortality are eschatological symbols that arise from mythic imagination when consciousness becomes luminous of itself participating in the eternity of the ground. In the end the source of order in human beings that maintains the balance of consciousness becomes, for Voegelin, the Christian theological virtues of faith, hope and love, which he argues were the ordering forces of the soul that Heraclitus first articulated long before St. Paul.[40]

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[38] On the "grotesque" see, for example, *Anamnesis*, pp. 161-62ff.

[39] On the relation between ideas, doctrinalization and the state of alienation, all rooted in Stoic philosophy (*allotriosis*) see *Autobiographical Reflections*, pp. 63-64, 100-101.

[40] See *Anamnesis*, p. 184. See also "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 187. For Voegelin's most trenchant articulations of the nature of faith see "Anxiety and Reason," in Ibid, pp. 69-70; and *The New Science of Politics*, p. 122.

What are the classical and Christian roots of a balanced consciousness and a balanced symbolism? For Aristotle the ground of immortality was the virtue of developing the highest, most divine element within human nature, the immortal Nous, promising the fulfillment of human nature in the direction of transcendence.[41] But here lies the problem, for however the fulfillment of human nature is to be understood, one cannot objectify transcendence or transcendent fulfillment, which our consciousness, which intends things even when it seeks to know something that is not a thing, tends to do. Our very language in discussing this issue is disorienting because humans are neither "mortal" nor "immortal," since these terms describe in a pre-differentiated sense the "objects" of cosmological existence (in the compact Homeric sense of mortal humans and immortal gods).[42] It is better to say, as Voegelin does, that consciousness exists in the *metaxy* between the "mortal" and "immortal" poles of existence. What we can say is that life lived in the *metaxy* is spiritual life, the mutual participation of the human in the divine and the divine in the human. For Aristotle the very employment of reason (philosophy) is the practice of death that will let the soul, in death, arrive at some immortal, divine truth. Thus, following Aristotle, Voegelin says, "the unfolding of noetic consciousness is experienced as a process of immortalizing"; one "is immortal in his present existence inasmuch as by his noetic psyche he participates in the Beyond."[43] Thus the noetic quest is a process of transfiguration. The psyche's own self-reflective action is a response to the appeal from the Beyond whereby it discovers its own "theomorphic nature."[44] With this discovery the classic philosophers understood human being to be more than mortal Homeric being, moving to a perfection of life in death. The life to be gained is not a given; it requires

[41] "Such a life, however, is more than merely human; it cannot be lived by man qua man but only by virtue of the divine that is in him....If then the Nous is divine compared with man, so is the noetic life divine compared with human life" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1177 b27).

[42] On the deforming split of the *metaxy* into "mortal" and "immortal," and Plato's comprehensive vision of the Whole, see "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, pp. 358-65.

[43] "Reason: The Classic Experience," in *Published Essays*, p. 279; "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 225.

[44] Ibid, p. 226.

human cooperation with the source of immortal life. Personal attunement with the revelation of divine presence is a prerequisite.

For Plato immortality comes by way of cultivating a love of knowledge and true wisdom, as in the *Timaeus* (90a-c); or by engaging in erotic friendship, as in the *Phaedrus* (256a-c); or by "the activities of love" (*eros*) by which one climbs "the ladder of love," as in the *Symposium* (201d); or by conversion of the prisoner in the Cave who is forced to turn around (*periagoge*) by the mysterious spark of divine grace and ascend to the divine Agathon, as in the *Republic* (514c-e); or finally by "the practice of death" (*thanatos*) that will let the soul in death arrive at its divine, immortal status in truth, as in the *Phaedo* (81a). With his frequent citations of these Platonic texts, Voegelin reminds us that there is no Transcendent Beyond lying around somewhere to be included as part of someone's system of belief, as long as there is no experience of its immortalizing presence, such as in a philosopher's act of meditation or reflection.[45]

In Christianity the experience of immortality, though equivalent to the Greek experience, takes a different turn. As symbolized in the New Testament the human relation to the immortalizing presence of God is less noetic and more pneumatic.[46] The stress falls not on the structure of the movement in the *metaxy* but on the movement itself, not on the immortalizing search for the divine but on the assurance of transfiguration through the overwhelming irruption of divine presence in the soul. In Paul's experience the focus is on the process of transfiguration in the life of those who, like himself, behold and believe in the vision of the resurrected Christ. It is the personal experience of moving toward an *eschaton* and thus is an experience revealing the eschatological direction of history.[47] In the spiritual vision of resurrected life, Voegelin says, "the accent shifts from man's participation in divine immortality to God's participation in human mortality."[48] From this analysis Voegelin argues that Christ is neither a man, nor a god (that is, a mortal or immortal), but the historical event of the fullness of divine presence in a man, revealing the suffering presence of God in everyone

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[45] Ibid, p. 221.

[46] Under the Christian orbit the symbolism equivalent to immortality is of course resurrection.

[47] "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *Published Essays*, p. 369.

[48] Ibid.

drawing them to divine, immortal life.[49] Christ represents the pleromatic *metaxy* in history, the fullness of the mutual participation. Therefore, the gospel is a saving tale that saves to the degree it invites the reader or listener, by the power of its revelatory word about the life, death and resurrection of the Christ, to partake in a similar movement of transfiguration, just as Jesus invited his disciples into the same saving love of God by his full mediation of that love. In other words, to put it simply (but profoundly), Jesus saves because Jesus was really in tune. He was in tune with the Father drawing his disciples into the same, though not complete, attunement with the divine ground of their existence. This truth is best seen in Matthew 16 (the story of Peter's confession), which Voegelin calls "the perfect analysis of the existential tendency in relation to God, just as the fullness of Christ is."[50]

The same metaxic truth is also captured in Augustine's restless soul seeking ultimate rest in the love of God, a movement which reaches a noetic peak in his neo-Platonic vision of God in *Confessions*, Book VII. It is seen in Anselm's noetic quest for God in the *Proslogion*. Anselm's *fides quarens intellectum*, the meditative and prayerful search for the God of his Christian faith, reaches the equivalent experience of illumination as Augustine's. The soul's movement toward the divine light meets the light of divine perfection which falls into the soul, revealing human existence as a state of imperfection seeking perfection. In this Anselmian experience, says Voegelin, is contained the promise of perfection and fulfillment, "for in order to express the experience of illumination he (Anselm) quotes John 16:24: 'Ask and you will receive, that your joy man be full.' The Johannine words of Christ, and the Spirit that counsels in his name," says Voegelin, "express the divine movement to which Anselm responds with the joyful countermovement of his quest."[51] So, we may conclude, whether by a philosopher, a theologian, or a political scientist, in the end the quest for order turns out to be the quest for God.

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[49] Ibid.

[50] "Philosophies of History: An Interview with Eric Voegelin," *New Orleans Review* **2** (1973): 135-39 at 137. This text from Matthew, like Plato's *opsis* in the *Republic* and *Laws*, illustrates Voegelin's distinction between revelation and information.

[51] "Quod Deus Dicitur," in *Published Essays*, pp. 383-84. One should be mindful of the fact that these words of Voegelin come from his deathbed meditation.

The disturbing fact for many who forget these classical and Christian insights, and in various ways seek to transcend death, is that there is no direct experience of immortality per se, nor can there be, since there is no escape from the *metaxy*. There is no immortality in this world, only the movement toward immortality (i.e., *anathanizein*, or Christian sanctification). Because human existence is structured by birth and death, coming into being and going out of being, there is only the movement toward a life that transcends death, toward "the joy that is full." After all, humans are indeed mortal, living a life structured by birth and death. But that of course is certainly not the whole story as we have seen. Again, spiritual existence in this mortal world is structured by the movement between time and the timeless. In experiences of transcendence the eternal does not become an object in time, nor is our temporal existence ever transposed into eternity.[52] Humans exist in the "in-between" in a flow of experiences where the eternal becomes present. The sad fact is our participation in divine life does not eliminate the reality of death, but it is nonetheless a movement in the tension of existence in the In-Between of the human-divine *metaxy*. Indeed life is more than that structured by birth and death. We participate in timeless meaning insofar as our life is lived in the flow of presence that is more than human.[53] And so there is hope. But once the poles of the tension are hypostatized as independent entities then reality is lost and our humanity deformed, and hope becomes a fantasy. The partners to the encounter must not be torn asunder and converted into subjects and objects of experience that exist apart from their experiential relation. The existential tension of consciousness is the center of human order. Once the poles of the tension (the human, the divine ground, the world) are detached from the experience of participation in reality by turning the poles of the experience into propositions about them, the result is spiritual disorder.[54] Faith and hope in a mystery beyond this world become knowledge of objects within the world.

This then is the existential core of political and social order according to Voegelin's analysis: the movement of the soul in religious experience best seen in the tale of immortality. It is no accident that

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[52] See "Eternal Being in Time," in *Anamnesis*, p. 133.

[53] "Immortality: Experience and Symbol," in *Published Essays*, p. 91.

[54] See "What is Political Reality?," in *Anamnesis*, p. 173; and "The Beginning and the Beyond," in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, p. 230.

Plato ends the *Republic*, his greatest dialogue on political order, with the myth of immortality, the myth of Er. It is the tale saved from death that Socrates makes the true word of persuasion, the saving tale that if accepted will truly save by preserving us from "all extremes of good and evil" and by making us "beloved to ourselves and to the gods" (*Republic* 621c).

In conclusion, taking his philosophical bearings from the *Republic*, Plato's greatest myth of order, Voegelin proposes a transpolitical solution to the problems of political society: the core of political and social order in history is found in theomorphic humanity, richly and succinctly expressed in the following summary statement:

> Man thus can be the model of paradigmatic order in society only when he himself has been ordered by divine being, when as a consequence he partakes of divine substance, when he has become theomorphic. The theomorphism of the soul, we may say, is the supreme principle of the conception of order that originates in the experience of transcendence and leads to the discovery of history.[55]

To the extent that persons and nations continue to violate the First Commandment, from which all the others flow, by remaining in rebellion against God, as well as against theomorphic human nature lived in the *metaxy*, the politics of disorder will continue into the next century and beyond. It is incumbent upon us then to heed the clarion call of Voegelin whose work has shown us how order can be restored first and fundamentally by our "attunement to the ground," by our experiencing the ordering love of God.

THREE EXIGENCIES FOR THEOLOGY

Three exigencies for theologians result from Voegelin's recovery and analysis of experience in the *metaxy*:

1. Expansion of the historical and spiritual horizon:

A first expansion occurred during the ecumenic age. Today a further expansion is called for. The experience of *fides* is not confined to

[55] "Anxiety and Reason," in ibid, p. 22.

the Christian; the data of theological inquiry must include all human experience. Voegelin's vision of divine presence in history is truly catholic, a universal horizon. The Spirit listeth where it will. Voegelin states that the expansion is necessary given "the enormous enlargement of the historical horizon, spatially covering the global ecumene and temporally extending into the archaeological millennia, that has occurred in the present century."[56] Philosophy and theology has today only begun to attend to the realm of phenomena to be explored in its global breadth and its temporal depth. The theoretical activity of the scholar must be based on all relevant empirical data, which today is so vast as to be virtually undigestible. But if theology is be a true science, no relevant data can be dismissed wherever it appears.

2. Christology:

The process of theophanic incarnation cannot be confined to Jesus or the Christian orbit; it is the universal presence of the divine in the human, of the word of God in the word of humans. Though the presence of Christ in Jesus may be the most fully differentiated and fully embodied presence of God in human history, it is not the only; the divine is revealed in a process of history with nodal points, not once and for all at any one point. Nonetheless, Voegelin sees in the Christian visions (particularly Paul's vision of the resurrected) a "pleromatic *metaxy*" which locates in the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection the fullness of divine presence. "Christ is history written large."[57] As Thomas Altizer has observed, reflecting on this most poignant of utterances, for Voegelin there can be no ultimacy or finality of any particular historical event. There can never be an absolute sacredness for a particular or contingent event.[58] History is open, not closed. To identify an ultimate truth in history would abolish the tension of existence and lead to the metastasis of humanity.[59]

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[56] "Remembrance of Things Past," in *Published Essays*, p. 309.

[57] "Immortality," in Ibid., p. 78.

[58] Thomas J. J. Altizer, "The Theological Conflict Between Strauss and Voegelin," in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence Between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964*, trans. and eds., Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) p. 275.

[59] See "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in *Published Essays*, p. 129.

3. Myth:

Voegelin often cited Aristotle's return to the myth in his old age because, like Aristotle, he was a "philomyther" as well as a philosopher.[60] Voegelin did the same in his return to the cosmogonic myth in Plato's *Timaeus*, saying as early as 1957 that "the soul as the creator of the myth, and the myth as the symbolism of the soul, is the center of the philosophy of order. That center, the philosophy of the myth, is reached by Plato in *Timaeus*."[61] This is a major reason why Voegelin returned to this very myth in his last days, as seen in the last pages of his last volume *In Search of Order*.

But it wasn't merely his love of myths that Voegelin discovered late in life. He saw that there can be no escape from the myth. Myth has always been and will always continue to be the principle vehicle by which societies develop and maintain their collective identity. The mythic vision is what establishes order in a sea of chaos. This is as true for Christians with their saving tale of the gospel as it was for ancient Babylonians, Egyptians and Israelites in their mythic constructions of human and divine order. Given the persistence of cosmological symbolism in the ordering of such societies, myth can never be eliminated. In spite of the differentiating events that are the spiritual outbursts in history the cosmos still remains. Since the primordial experience of the cosmos still remains, so cosmogonic myths, which tell the story of the divine-cosmic beginnings, must remain too.[62] There is no differentiating advance in history beyond the myth as the symbolic form

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[60] For example, in "What is Political Reality?," in *Anamnesis*, p. 158; *The Ecumenic Age*, pp. 191-92; "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in *Published Essays*, p. 126; and *Autobiographical Reflections*, p. 108.

[61] *Plato and Aristotle*, p. 170.

[62] See *The Ecumenic Age*, p. 10. In his personal correspondence Voegelin once said in response to the question of the two intentionalities of consciousness--one in the direction of revelation and the other in the direction of the external world (or what he later came to call luminosity and intentionality)--that "one must consider it possible, therefore, that the unity of the two intentions is not [to] be found on the level of differentiated consciousness at all, but rather in the cosmological myth, in the imaginative tale of a reality that still includes the divine" (Eric Voegelin to David Walsh, December 21, 1974, in Box 40, Folder 2, Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University).

of cosmic order, not even with the scientific advances of modern physics and cosmology.[63]

Myth preserves the luminosity of consciousness over against the intentional mode of consciousness whose purview is the world of things. But the beyond of things is the transcendent realm of divinity, the source of order, or what Voegelin in his last writings called the It-reality. The It-reality is the comprehensive reality that comprehends all things within reality. It is what is lasting in reality. The loss of myth is the loss of the It-reality. Myth serves as the vehicle of attunement to what is lasting in being.

CONCLUSION

Finally, in keeping with Voegelin's love of myth and symbol, I would like to end with a poem. In a marvelous poem Thomas Hardy captured the spiritual vacuum sweeping over Europe at the close of the last century. Like Nietzsche before him, but without his heroic atheism, Hardy gave expression to the ever darkening eclipse of the presence of God in human consciousness. Shortly after Nietzsche's death Hardy wrote "The Darkling Thrush." In fact he composed it on the last day of the nineteenth century, the same week Eric Voegelin was born, to give expression to the death of spirit that led to a world of desolation. Listen carefully:

I leant upon a coppice gate
  When Frost was spectre-grey
And Winter's dregs made desolate
  The weakening eye of day.
The tangled pine-stems scored the sky

[63] See Voegelin's essay "The Moving Soul" in *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, pp. 163-72. In this "thought experiment" Voegelin argues that the image of a physical cosmos cannot be constructed by way of theoretical physics. The construct of a spatio-temporal universe of modern physics is a modern mytho-speculative "symbolism" of the cosmos as an intelligible whole. Thus it is equivalent to a demythologized cosmological myth based on the primary experience of the cosmos, such as the "look at the Heaven" of Xenophanes that is a constant, pragmatic human experience in history (pp. xxv, 170-72).

Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.[64]

As we come to the end of another century, one of more untold darkness than the last, we might take Hardy's poem to heart and reflect on how the work of Eric Voegelin may continue to serve us in the next

[64] Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush," quoted from Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1993) pp. 398-99.

century, and into the next millennium, like Hardy's aged and frail songbird who flings himself upon "the growing gloom," giving voice to an air of hope by which we may seek a new fervor of life in the spirit.

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UNIVERSAL VIEWPOINT AND UNIVERSAL HUMANITY: ATTUNEMENT OR DISCORD IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF VOEGELIN AND LONERGAN?

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INTRODUCTION

OUR CENTURY MAY be remembered as the century prophesied by Nietzsche, devastated by 'wars of the spirit' which have cost some 200 million lives, not to mention the ongoing horror of legalized genocide of the preborn and the aged or infirm. Few have sketched what the epoch looked like more sharply than Anna Akhmatova when she wrote in *Requiem*:

> There I learned how faces fell apart,
> How terror darts from under eyelids,
> How suffering traces lines
> Of stiff cuneiform on cheeks.[1]

But that suffering and terror also led to deep excavations of the human spirit:

> My life has become an uninterrupted dialogue with you, my God, a great dialogue. When I stand in a corner of the camp, my feet planted on your earth, my face lifted to your sky, then sometimes

[1] Anna Akhmatova, *The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*, trans. Judith Hemschemeyer, ed., Roberta Reeder. (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1992) 392.

> tears run down that face, born from inner emotion and thankfulness seeking expression.[2]

What Etty Hillesum was expressing in this letter from the Dutch concentration camp at Westerbork before she was transported to extermination in Auschwitz in November, 1943, was her intense experience of the intrinsic You-wardness of the human person. Her diary and letters are a paradigmatic instance of a profound recovery of the significance of human existence in face of a massive ideological attempt to eclipse it by instrumentalizing it in the service of an ideological empire.

Not only existentially, but also intellectually, the last century has stretched the human spirit. Because of the tremendous development of the historical sciences, philosophical anthropology is faced with an enormously lengthened time-line reaching back at least 40,000 years into the paleolithic past. And due to modern travel and communications, for the first time in history we are confronted with the huge expansion of the spatial horizon to include the whole range of contemporary Western, Oriental, African, and archaic Australasian and native American cultures.

Firstly, we will take a look at how Voegelin tried to develop a notion of universal humanity within which every genuine instance of personal and social self-interpretation could be located. Secondly, we can draw on Lonergan's understanding of what he called at various times universal viewpoint, basic context, and dialectic, which, I believe, help clarify some of the issues Voegelin was struggling with. Thirdly, we will try to find a framework implicit in both writers, which will allow a specifically interpersonal context for dealing with the issue of universal humanity.

ERIC VOEGELIN'S ARTICULATION OF UNIVERSAL HUMANITY

I. The drama of humanity.
II. Aristotle on the drama of humanity.

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[2] Etty Hillesum, *Het denkende hart van de barak:Brieven van Etty Hillesum,* ed. J.G. Gaarlandt. (Haarlem: De Haan, 1982) 85. ET: Etty Hillesum, *Letters from Westerbork,* trans. A.J.Pomerans (New York:Pantheon Books, 1986) 116.

III. Voegelin's own articulation of the drama of humanity:
- **a)** the nature of humanity in terms of consciousness/reality/language
- **b)** the equivalent unfoldings of that nature in terms of the different forms of experience/ symbolization of MPRI & PIM.

IV. Universal humanity as constituted by the metaxic tension of consciousness/reality/language through the full set of its equivalent unfoldings.

I. The Drama of Humanity

In 1967, Voegelin gave the Walter Turner Candler Lectures at Emory University, which he named "The Drama of Humanity." In the introductory part of his first lecture, he explained the Lectures' title:

> Humanity means then, man in a mode of understanding himself in his relation to God, world and society, and those modes change. And history then would be the drama, if a meaning in it can be found, of humanity, of this self-understanding of man.[3]

Perhaps in these unedited remarks of Voegelin, we can trace the outline of an investigation of what is **different** throughout human history in terms of its **drama**, and of what is held **in common** by all the characters of that drama in terms of **humanity**.

The meaning which the word 'drama' acquired in Greek tragedy had to do with action entered into as concrete participation in the order of *Dike*, or Justice.[4] Not every moment that we live is equally illuminating for an understanding of the human mystery. However, there can be times when we act in the height of our consciousness of our responsibility not to let the false inexorability of the less than human overcome ourselves and our community. Then our tragic action lifts up our deed in tawdry time away into the essential timelessness of truth, justice, the good. The message of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides is that each individual, each society, and each historical epoch will be confronted with this drama of tragic action or tragic inaction.

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[3] Voegelin, *The Drama of Humanity*, p.12.

[4] Cf. Bruno Snell, "Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama," *Philologus*, Suppl. **20**, I,1928, esp. 1-33.

II. Aristotle on the Drama of Humanity

Voegelin discusses one of the first and still finest attempts to deal with the issue both of what is common to humanity and the differing stages of its unfolding drama, in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Book A.[5]

As we all know, Aristotle opens his *Metaphysics* with the programmatic: "All men by nature reach out for knowledge," conventionally translated more blandly as "All men by nature desire to know." Let's look at the second part of this statement, regarding what all men do, first: *tou eidemi oregontai*, which seems to deserve the more active "reach out for knowledge" than the more usual "desire to know." (Cf. 982a32, where Aristotle uses 'pursue' or 'seize' with regard to knowledge.) In 981a13-982a20 the knowledge turns out to be questioning, from minor matters to the ground of the cosmos.

In 982b12f, we're told that philosophy begins in wonder, and in 983a14f, he speaks of "a wondering why things should be as they are." So, *thaumazein*, wondering, implies the quest for the ground, a quest undertaken because of his consciousness of ignorance, *agnoein*, 982b18. Consequently, Voegelin suggests paraphrasing the first line of the *Metaphysics* as: "All men are by nature in quest of the ground."

Let's turn now to that first part of the opening sentence, 'All men are by nature . . . .' Aristotle identifies two styles of truth, philosophy and myth. He characterizes what both styles have in common: wonder about the ground of being. So he can write, in 982b18f, the *philomythos* (lover of myth) is in a sense a *philosophos* (lover of wisdom), for myth is composed of wonders.

And we know that he could identify with the lover of myth from a letter written in his old age, 'the more solitary and isolated I am, the more of a lover of myth (*philomythoteros*) I am becoming.'[6]

What is relevant for us is that Aristotle had come to a grasp of what was in common to the two cultural forms he was acquainted with, myth and philosophy, which was that both were symbolizations of the

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[5] Cf. The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin,Vol.28: *What is History? and other late Unpublished Writings*, eds. Thomas A.Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 103ff.

[6] Cf. Jaeger, *Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

quest for the ground, which remains an impenetrable mystery. Voegelin would thus see that Aristotle had grasped the key principle of equivalence, that is to say, "the recognizable identity of the reality experienced and symbolized on the various levels of differentiation."[7]

Equivalence refers to this awareness, that in historical reality, each person and each society's quest for the ground is their exegesis of their experience of participation in that ground. However compactly and incompletely they may articulate that experience, and however much in need of further revision their experience and symbolization of reality may be, it has its dignity as a real person's or society's image of the mystery of reality surrounding and embracing them.[8]

III. Voegelin's Articulation

Let's focus first on the hermeneutic side of his investigation of humanity. For Voegelin, interpretation must begin with the concrete consciousness of concrete human beings situated in the concrete universe.[9] And the structure of human consciousness, which he devotes much of his last book, *In Search of Order*, to articulating, he sees in terms of the interrelated triad of consciousness-reality-language. The reality of which consciousness is in search is primarily the mysterious ground of existence under its aspects of what Voegelin, drawing on Genesis and Plato respectively, calls the Beginning and the Beyond. Nor is that divine ground of existence an absolutely inert reality. Rather, the very quest by which the bearers of human consciousness first reached out explicitly to the Beginning or the Beyond was itself experienced as their response to being moved by the divine ground of existence in the sense of the Beginning of Genesis or the Beyond of the *Republic*. Since human consciousness participates in the reality of the beyond, both it and the language through which it expresses in time this experience of timelessness, pertain in some way to the mode of existence of the Beyond.[10]

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[7] Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) 108.

[8] Voegelin, *Published Essays, 1966-1985*, The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, vol.12, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 225.

[9] Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, 333; *Anamnesis*, p.11; and *In Search of Order*, 15.

[10] Voegelin, "Immortality: Experience and Symbol," in *Published Essays 1966-1985*, 52-54.

But that hermeneutic anticipation must humble itself in the face of the noematic reality is only an articulation of what constitutes the data to be interpreted. As Voegelin puts it in his *Autobiographical Reflections*, *"The reality of experience is self-interpretive.* The men who have the experiences express themselves through symbols; and the symbols are the key to understanding the experience expressed."[11]

And because he came to understand the relation between the constant structure of consciousness and its historic expressions, he remarked in 1960,

> I have hit on something like a theory of relativity for the field of symbolic forms, and the discovery of the theoretical formula that will cover all forms to whatever civilization they belong has made possible an abbreviation of the whole presentation.[12]

The noematic side of his hermeneutic can be rather briefly conveyed by enlarging Voegelin's own matrices at the level of the cosmological myth in *The Ecumenic Age*,[13] to express some of the ways in which man has tried, in Voegelin's phrase, to express his understanding of himself in relation to World, Society, and God. The type of experience engendered by the quest, mythic (M); classic philosophic (P); revelational: Old Testament (R1); revelational: New Testament (R2); ideological (I); and post-ideological modernity (PIM), stands as index of each matrix:

M Cosmogony	**P** Physics	**R1** Creation
Anthropogony	Ethics	Man as image of God
Historiogenesis	Politics	Chosen People
Theogony	Theology	I AM WHO I AM

[11] *Autobiographical Reflections*, 80. Cf. *The New Science of Politics*, 27: 'Political science is suffering from a difficulty that originates in its very nature as a science of man in historical existence. For man does not wait for science to have his life explained to him, and when the theorist approaches social reality he finds the field pre-empted by what may be called the self-interpretation of society....The self-illumination of society through symbols is an integral part of social reality.'

[12] *What is History? and other late Unpublished Writings*, xiii.

[13] *The Ecumenic Age*, 62.

R2 Creation	**I** Scientism	**PIM** Attempt at
Incarnation and Grace	Psychology	recovering **M, P, R1, R2**
Church and Empire/State	Sociology	from restricted enclaves
God as Love/Trinity	Matter, Race, Class, etc.	of **I**-experiences

The matrices are equivalent to one another as attempts by man to situate himself within the whole of reality and orient himself towards its divine ground. All of the non-philosophical aggregates are equivalent to the philosophy of being constituted by the P-matrix.[14] They are not self-contained units, but are historically related to one another, in the case of M to P, R1and R2, as compact to differentiated. In the case of R1 to R2 (from the Christian viewpoint), the relationship is that of prophecy to fulfillment. Between P and both R1 and R2, what is occurring, from time to time, is assimilation between differentiations. Between I and M/P/R1/R2, there is as at least partial deformation of compact or differentiated and/or mutually assimilated matrices. Finally, the relationship between PIM and I, is an attempt to recover M/P/R1/R2 from under the rubble of I, to develop historically-grounded modernity, purified of its anthropocentric hubris.

While we have mentioned the post-ideological matrix as the attempt at overcoming an experienced deformation of earlier matrices, the fact is that none of the matrices has been without its struggle to resist experienced disorder and to restore order anew. This has recurred within the cosmological experience itself, where there is consciousness of degradation of the symbols and rites, and in the struggle by classic philosophy to go beyond the myth and to overcome sophistry. And there is the perennial struggle within the revelations to overcome idolatry or pharisaism, for example. Nor, as we have mentioned earlier, would the various ideologies have had an authoritative appeal had they not addressed some area of experienced neglect, whether that was the entire area of the secular, or aspects of it, such as material reality, sexuality, social justice, politics, nationhood, reason, and so on.

So Voegelin's attempt at understanding the nature of universal humanity can be summarized in terms of the structural interaction

[14] *The Ecumenic Age*, 62.

between human and divine consciousness, grounding the dramatic unfolding of that interaction in history whether compactly, in the myth, and the reductionisms of the various ideologies, or through the range of differentiated experiences of philosophy, revelation, and their recovery in post-ideological modernity. As he put it briefly in a 1964 lecture,

> the unfolding of this problem of [the order of] existence under God . . . [is] the central problem of order, that is history. . . . So there is history insofar as the presence under God and the knowledge of such presence under God runs through phases of compactness and differentiation.[15]

IV. Universal Humanity and its Equivalent Unfoldings

What is important is not to lose the dynamic, unifying thrust of consciousness underlying each of these matrices. In a remark in his discussion of Vico, in the unpublished History of Political Ideas, Voegelin says:

> [Vico] insists that man, even if he deceives himself, must do so under some image of truth. From this corollary, inspired by St. Augustine, follows the principle of interpretation for the history of ideas: that the structure of the spirit cannot be abolished through a revolt against the spirit; the revolt itself must assume the structure of the spirit....This principle of the identity of spiritual structure in all modifications of the spirit, right into the revolt against it, is the basis for a history of ideas, understood as an intelligible line of meaning in time. Without this principle, the various manifestations of the mind would be disconnected events in external time. (Chapter on Vico, 218f).

And it is only as correlated with the divine that this common spirit in all human experience can provide the invariant axis of consciousness/reality which grounds our common humanity through the ages. Voegelin expresses this most trenchantly in the chapter on Universal Humanity in *OH4:*

> The recognition of universal mankind as an eschatological index [that is, as a heuristic for every person and society within time yet oriented towards the timeless] penetrates to the center of the problem presented by history as a dimension of humanity. Without universality, there would be no mankind other than the

[15] Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans* (Munich, 1964). Typescript, 223.

> aggregate of members of a biological species; there would be no more a history of mankind than there is a history of catkind or horsekind. If mankind is to have history, its members must be able to respond to the movement of divine presence in their souls. But if that is the condition, then the mankind who has history is constituted by the God to whom man responds. A scattering of societies, belonging to the same biological type, thus, is discovered to be one mankind with one history, by virtue of participation in the same flux of divine presence.[16]

Only such a framework seems rich enough to articulate universal humanity as it manifests itself in the drama of history. And the fact that universal humanity is itself, in Voegelin's term, an eschatological index, is a caution against thinking that somehow we have available to us an encompassing explanation. What the expansion of the various matrices will lead to, what new interactions will occur between them, what further matrices may form, or when the whole story will come to an end at the level of a narration within time, we do not know as philosophers. All we can do is, by creatively reliving the richness of our past in our present, to open out the pages of human history to the future, rather than close off possibilities as yet beyond our capacities to unfold. And the fact that at all times, the narration in time is subtext to an unending story beyond time, stretches the limits of any symbolization of universal humanity to the horizon of the unsayable.

BERNARD LONERGAN'S NOTION OF UNIVERSAL VIEWPOINT

Although the last decade has brought into public view more of Lonergan's writings on the issue of a universal humanity than might have been suspected,[17] it was not as central a topic for him as for Voegelin, so I'll limit myself to tracing some equivalents in his approach to Voegelin's.

In his development of a theory of interpretation, Lonergan aimed at doing justice to historicity while yet developing a foundational basis

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[16] *The Ecumenic Age* , 305.

[17] See for example his late 1930s essay, 'Pantôn Anakephaliôsis.' In *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* vol. **9.2**, (October 1991) 139-172, and other unpublished Mss discussed in F. Crowe's and R. Doran's Preface, ibid., 134ff.

within which the particular and the changing could be grasped. As you know, he already had two massive works of interpretation (*Grace and Freedom*, *Verbum*) completed before he included his own first treatise on 'The Truth of Interpretation' as the third part of ch.17, 'Metaphysics as Dialectic' in *Insight*. His next explicit discussion of the topic was his 1963 'Hermeneutics' essay, with his last major treatment in chs. 7, 'Interpretation,' and 10, 'Dialectic,' in *Method in Theology*.

It is to deal with what he calls 'the basic problem of interpretation' (*Insight*, 563), due to the 'individual, group, and general bias' that can affect a scholar's historical sense of another age, (564) that Lonergan elaborates his notion of what he calls in *Insight*, the 'universal viewpoint.'

> By a universal viewpoint will be meant a potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints . . . [which] is simply a heuristic structure that contains virtually the various ranges of possible alternatives of interpretations. . . . [T]he universal viewpoint is an ordered totality of viewpoints. It has its base in an adequate self-knowledge. . . . it has a retrospective expansion in the various genetic series of discoveries through which man could advance to his present knowledge. It has a dialectical expansion in the many formulations of discoveries due to the polymorphic consciousness of man . . . . (564-5)

But what does his notion of the universal viewpoint contribute to the problem of relativism or historicism in interpretation?

Lonergan writes: "To approach the problem from another angle, the core of meaning is the notion of being . . . .(567)" His universal viewpoint can thus be seen as based on Thomas's development of Aristotle's desire to know, and not that far removed from Voegelin's consciousness-reality polarity. In this context, Gaspare Mura says that "here lies Lonergan's originality, that he is the first author to have credibly confronted the relationship between hermeneutics and metaphysics", in the sense of placing hermeneutics in the context of a philosophy of being.[18] Lonergan continues:

> In the measure that one grasps the structure of this protean notion of being, one possesses the base and ground from which

[18] Gaspare Mura, *Ermeneutica e veritá: Storia e problemi della filosofia dell'interpretazione* (Rome: Cittá Nuova, 1990) 32.

> one can proceed to the content and context of every meaning. (*Insight*, 567)

And in the 'Hermeneutics' essay he explains:

> Basic context is a context of contexts: . . . it is the level on which genetic and dialectical relationships are found between the scientific accounts of successive author's meetings.
>
> Compare 1) reference frames, 2) the group of transformation equations defining the geometry of the reference frames, 3) the series of groups of transformations defining the series of geometries. (14)

What Lonergan has said here about the hermeneutic 'upper blade' can be extended on the basis of his own articulation of a philosophy of the person in social and historical community. Earlier in *Insight*, he has outlined the fourfold bias of the quest for truth/desire to know, that is for him the fundamental mark of our humanity. Those biases are dramatic [or psychiatric], individual, group [or social], and general [or historical]. Each bias is marked by what he calls a scotosis or blind-spot, which leads to an inability (in the case of dramatic bias) or an unwillingness to ask the relevant questions, with its corresponding scotoma, or area of reality eclipsed by that refusal to question. So that an adequate upper-blade hermeneutic context would have to be structural, developmental, diagnostic and therapeutic, at the interface between neural process and sensitive consciousness, and then at the affective-imaginative, intellectual, moral and spiritual levels of the individual, the group and the historical epoch.

What marks out the later 'Hermeneutics' talk of January 1963 is that Lonergan has in the meantime read Gadamer; and he fills out his understanding of the habitual knowledge of the interpreter with Gadamer's profound appreciation of tradition as pre-cognition, and his critique of the Enlightenment prejudgment against all prejudgments.

When we move on to *Method in Theology*, where he now distinguishes the dialectical elements hermeneutics in chapter 4, from those in chapter 7, articulating the principles of interpretation: Understanding the Object, the Words, the Author, Oneself, Judging the Correctness of one's Interpretation, and Stating the Meaning of the Text. How those principles are applied in each particular area and science he discusses in terms of exegesis.

But the universal viewpoint, or what he called 'Basic Context' as a context of contexts in the interim 'Hermeneutics' essay, is now discussed under the functional specialty, 'Dialectic'.[19]

Already, in 'Hermeneutics' he had spoken of basic context, a heuristic notion, which, as a first approximation,

> is the pure desire to know, unfolding through experience, understanding, and judgment, and leading to the statements found in the texts of authors, interpreters, and critics. Secondly, it is the pure desire as a reality with a real unfolding leading to actual statements in each of the relevant authors, interpreters and critics. Thirdly, it is a reality that develops, that proceeds from the undifferentiated through differentiation to an articulated integration. Such development is both individual (from infancy to senility) and historical (from primitives to contemporary culture). Fourthly, it is a reality that undergoes conversion, intellectual, moral, and religious, and that is subject to aberration. (13-4)

That core notion of conversion recurs in the 'Dialectics' chapter of *Method*. At this juncture Frederick Crowe's remark, in *The Lonergan Enterprise* [20] seems relevant:

> [D]oes Kierkegaard haunt your thinking, your theology, perhaps your very living? If he does not haunt your theology, then I would say quite bluntly that you are not yet ready for Lonergan's dialectic and foundations....Kierkegaard has an unparalleled talent for forcing us out of the neutral stance of, say, the student of religions, and challenging us to our own personal commitment which is just where Lonergan's dialectic directs us . . . . (237-8)

It is, as we have said, "the presence or absence of intellectual, of moral, of religious conversion" that "gives rise to dialectically opposed horizons" (247).

Throughout *Method*, Lonergan will repeat the four transcendental precepts, be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, along with the fifth, more explicitly existential level of commitment at the personal level, with its precept, to be in love. The fourth and fifth of those precepts expand at the level of freedom and love, the three

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[19] The term 'dialectic' in *Method* has a much wider meaning than the almost exclusively negative meaning it has in *Insight*, where it generally, although by no means necessarily, refers to a heuristic for breakdowns at psychiatric, individual, social and historic levels.

[20] Frederick E. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise* (Cowley: Cambridge MA, 1980) 90.

cognitive precepts implicit in what he called the universal viewpoint in *Insight*. An interpreter who lived out those precepts in the concrete sense of *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* would be in a position to envisage the full range of contents of human consciousness.

For Lonergan, then, he problem of interpretation is resolvable in terms of its 'upper blade' which is provided by a philosophical anthropology, that is to say, by the heuristic articulation of the full range of human consciousness. However, that upper blade fulfillment is not an exact analogue to mathematics' role in helping to formulate all the possible ranges of relationships in the quantifiable world of material extensions and durations. For interpreters themselves must have actualized to some significant degree their potential aesthetic, intellectual, moral and spiritual capacities, or they will be unable to make much sense of ranges of significant human data in the arts, in the human sciences and philosophy, in morality, law and politics, and in the religious sphere.

ii] What that universal viewpoint actually envisages is the individual/ group/historical reality in its development, various cycles of decline, and in the overcoming of that decline by a reversal of the various aversions from beauty, truth, the good and the mystery of divine reality. In outlining what he intends by universal viewpoint, Lonergan also referred to the totality of human existence envisaged by that dynamic hermeneutic context. Perhaps the closest he came to formulating what Voegelin treats as universal humanity came in *Insight*:

> So too it may be that the contemporary crisis of human living and human values demands of the theologian . . . a treatise on the concrete universal that is mankind in the concrete and cumulative consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the message of the Gospel. (743)

ONENESS AND DIFFERENCE: TOWARDS A HERMENEUTIC FOR HUMANITY AS A UNIVERSAL COMMUNION OF PERSONS AND PEOPLES

In answer to the depersonalizing effects of what has been termed a collective dark night of the spirit, many have tried to lay the foundations

for what will not be just an accumulation of some six billion individuals in several hundred independent states, nor merely the experience of being swept up into one or several massive political-economic-communicative collectivities. What we're looking for is some way to work towards a substantive communion of persons and communities, in which all of us everywhere can experience and live out our belongingness to the same human family.[21]

Let's begin with a remark of the Russian film director, Andrey Tarkovsky, more from the standpoint of someone open to the transcendent than as an Orthodox believer, from the film scenario of his film, *Andrei Rublëv*:

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[21] A recent discussion of these issues can be found in Taylor's essay, 'The Politics of Recognition,' and the cluster of responses it evoked, in *Multiculturalism and The Politics of Recognition*, 19 Taylor spells out the difficulties for a democracy aiming at equal treatment for everyone with the growing demands for recognition of their differences on the part of various groups and cultures within the democracy. Rather than regard all cultures as of equal value, he suggests holding the lesser presumption that they are of worth, involving what he calls 'something like an act of faith.'(66) The reason for this presumption would seem to be that such an application of a politics of recognition would seem to flow from what he has been speaking of as the politics of equal dignity:

> Just as all must have equal civil rights, and equal voting rights, regardless of race or culture, so all should enjoy the presumption that their traditional culture has value. This extension, however logically it may seem to flow from the accepted norms of equal dignity, fits uneasily within them...because it challenges the "difference-blindness" that was central to them. Yet it does seem to flow from them, albeit uneasily.(68)

While not ruling out what he calls Herder's 'religious' grounding of such an attitude on the basis of diversity willed by divine providence in the interests of a greater harmony, Taylor says that merely at the human level,

> one could argue that it is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time or that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable or are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject. (72)

Taylor's way of dealing with multiculturalism at the end of his essay, has a curiously Victorian tone, almost as if the museum director was somewhat embarrassedly excusing a graphic exhibit of the successful results of a New Guinea headhunting expedition. What is disappointing in his conclusions as to why other cultures should be given the benefit of his 'presumption of equal worth'(72) is his apparent inability to get far beyond a commonsense extrinsicism in relation to them.

> Here at last is the 'Trinity,' great, serene, completely penetrated by a trembling joy from which flows human brotherhood. The concrete division of one alone into three, and the triple union in one alone, is a wonderful perspective towards the future still to be unfolded throughout the ages.[22]

Someone once remarked of Maritain's statement that just as Aquinas had baptized Aristotle, Marx needed to be baptized: that Marx was baptized. In other words, even the core secular thinkers of the last few centuries, bear the imprint of cultural Christianity, and deal with their problems in a derivatively interpersonal fashion. There is no reason for not drawing, as did Hegel, Fichte, Schelling and Marx, on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity for a paradigm case which will hold for all human relationships and their abuses. We've already learned to deal with other expressions of Judaeo-Christianity, like the transcendent worth of each human being and the various expressions of that in the legal recognition of individual rights, the institution of monogamous marriage, and democracy. Such religiously originated values have entered into Western culture to such an extent and are so integral to it, that, for better or worse, they have become detached from the historical fact of their Jewish and Christian origin. So the notion of a communion of persons originally developed as an analogue for the Trinity will provide a context for both the unique difference of cultures and their possible flourishing within a shared communion of persons.

In a sense, then, secular culture has already taken on board the kind of issue Lonergan was referring to in his famous footnote in *Insight*, 731, where he remarked that personal relations could only be studied adequately in the larger and more concrete context of the Christian faith.

Already his notion of the good of value in *Insight* (597) had indicated a concrete heuristic for investigating interpersonal relations. This was followed by a rich elaboration in his discussion of the good of human order in *De Deo Trino* II, 244ff, 256ff. *Trino* I concluded with a brilliant interpretation of St. John's understanding of the Word and of the Spirit in terms of what could be called an existential psychology of personal truth and love (276-298). And in *Method* he has developed the basic

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[22] Scènario litteraire du film *André Roublev*, 155. Quoted in Olivier Clément, *L'esprit du Soljènitsyne* (Paris: Stock, 1974) 299. See Andrei Tarkovsky, *Andrei Rublëv*, trans. Kitty Hunter Blair (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991) 188.

interpretative framework of 'personal relations' in the table on page 48. We can expand his developmental category of the tension between immanence and transcendence to include his intrinsically interpersonal notion of the 'law of the cross,' in which a person deliberately takes on himself the suffering needed to restore an ordered interpersonal relationship with the wronged other. If we include the law of the cross as integral to the attainment of the interpersonal good, I'd suggest we have a workable interpersonal framework for understanding universal humanity.[23]

Before applying such a framework, I'd like to turn to Voegelin's work again to see if it too is patient of such an expansion. In his *Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History*, Eugene Webb has already referred to an important comment of Voegelin's which is highly relevant to the interpersonal development we are suggesting for a hermeneutic of humanity:

> Let us stress that in this study we are not concerned with theological issues. The doctrine of *fides caritate formata* is relevant for us as a differentiating analysis of the experience of faith; regardless of its theological merits, it is a masterpiece of empirical type construction . . . the Platonic participation is not the mutual relationship of the Christian *amicitia* . . . . There is no parallel in Hellenic civilization to the passage in I John 4: "He who does not love, does not know God; for God is love. . . . We love him because he first loved us." The development of these experiences of Johannine Christianity (which, it is my impression, were closest to St. Thomas) into the doctrine of *fides caritate formata,* and the amplification of this doctrinal nucleus into a grandiose, systematic philosophy of man and society, are the medieval climax of the interpenetration of Christianity with the body of a historical civilization. Here perhaps we touch the historical raison

[23] At the beginning of his *Il Negativo en la Trinitá: Ipotesi su Hegel* (Rome: Citta Nuova, 1987) Piero Coda quotes two remarks of Hegel. The first remark is from the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: "The death of Christ is the central point around which everything turns." The second is from the Lectures on the Philosophy of History: "He who does not know of God that he is Trinity, knows nothing of Christianity. This new principle is the axis around which turns the history of the world." (5) Levinas' notion of regarding oneself as 'hostage' to the other, and the primary rule of relationship as 'Thou shalt not kill,' suggest themselves here. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'étre ou au-dela de l'essence* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974) Chapters I and IV. ET. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence,* trans. A. Lingis (the Hague: Nijhoff, 1981).

> d'être of the West, and certainly we touch the empirical standard by which the further course of Western intellectual history must be measured. This further course . . . has as its main theme the disintegration of the doctrinal nucleus of the amicitia between God and man.[24]

As is well known, Voegelin's preferred equivalent to Lonergan's developmental tension between immanence and transcendence is Plato's philosophical notion of the In-Between or Metaxy, expressed in the practice of dying or the Aristotelian immortalizing. He doesn't quite rise to the lex crucis with its specifically interpersonal tonality. However, with the specifically interpersonal dynamics available from Lonergan's work, there's no reason why we can't develop both their interpretative theories in that direction.

Martin Buber has expressed what we may see as the dynamics of this interpersonal order in his well-known essay, 'Distance and Relation':

> The principle of human life is not simple but twofold, being built up in a twofold movement which is of such a kind that the one movement is the presupposition of the other. I propose to call the first movement 'the primal setting at a distance' and the second 'entering into relation'. . . . Man, as man, sets man at a distance and makes him independent; he lets the life of men like himself go on round about him, and so he, and he alone, is able to enter into relation...with those like himself.[25]

Interviewed in Israel about 30 years ago, he commented on the need to be able to show that respect for the other he calls 'setting at a distance' in order to be able to relate to him/her or them:

> Another thing we need is the ability to put ourselves in the place of the other man, the stranger, and to make his soul ours. I must confess that I am horrified at how little we know the Arabs. . . . As we [Arabs and Jews] love the country and together seek its welfare, it is possible for us to work together for it.[26]

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[24] Eric Voegelin,Chapter 4: "The Great Confusion I: Luther and Calvin," 49-50, *A History of Political Ideas*, (unpublished typescript); see *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) 77-78.

[25] *The Knowledge of Man.* (New York: Harper, 1965) 60,67.

[26] Aubrey Hodes, *Encounter with Marin Buber* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) 108.

Recalling Etty Hillesum's recovery of her experience of herself as a You-for-God precisely in the face of the National Socialist attempt at obliterative non-recognition of her Jewish otherness, we can roughly list that failures to recognize the other, and consequent failures to build a communion of persons as the false 1] 'distancing' and 2] 'relating' of:

1] the **exclusion of the other** to be found in the exaggerated assertion of sexual, national, economic, civilizational or religious differences;

2] the dominating and forced **inclusion of the other** to be found in the various empires, cosmological (based on myth of cosmos, e.g, ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Aztec, Maya, Inca); ecumenic (conscious of representing a world-order: e.g., Chinese, Persian, Roman); orthodox (Byzantine, Holy Roman Empire, Islamic); national (Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, British); ideological (National Socialist, Fascist, Communist); economic /technological/ communication 'empires.'

But Buber's development of an ethics of recognition of otherness within the context of a common relationship needs a more substantial philosophical articulation of that common humanity. This further articulation can be supplied by expanding Voegelin's consciousness-reality-language in terms of the language of the person-in dialogue-with-the-other. While this language also has its ancient past, it has been developed more recently by, among others, a diverse group of philosophical and literary writers who have articulated the notion of persons in dialogue, including Vyacheslav Ivanov, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Levinas, Ronald Laing, Giuseppe ZanghÌ, and Josef Seifert.[27]

Developing, then, Voegelin's triad of consciousness-reality-language, we can suggest an equivalent complex of person-other-embodiment. For the intellectual and spiritual consciousness he focuses on is always located in a concrete human person, whose experience of himself as an I has emerged through the vicissitudes of his personal history. Martin Buber has well expressed the intrinsic other-orientedness of each I, since I cannot be without the co-existence of a

[27] Seifert's "Essere e Persona" is a careful and valuable synthesis of a phenomenological understanding of the person in the context of a philosophy of being.

Thou.[28] Intellectual consciousness is always consciousness-of, is primarily reality-oriented, whether (in Voegelin's terms) 'intentionally' towards the intra-mundane thing-reality or 'luminously' to participation in the transcendent reality he calls It-reality. Similarly, the richer primary orientation of the person as such is other-oriented, but in a somewhat more complex way.

My orientation as a person is richer in the sense that there is no higher possible term or object of a person's orientation than towards another person. Just as consciousness is articulated in terms of the unlimited reality of which it is in quest and in which it participates, it can be said of each human I what Edith Stein wrote in her *Finite and Eternal Being*:

> So the riddle of the I remains. For the I must receive its being from Someone else, not from itself. I do not exist of myself, and of myself I am nothing. Every moment I stand before nothingness, so that every moment I must be dowered anew with being . . . this nothinged being of mine, this frail received being, is being. It thirsts not only for endless continuation of its being but for full possession of being.[29]

Stein brings out here the core of the existence of a human person. The question of personal existence cannot be answered only in terms of my parents, who provided me with the biological basis for my existence but could not have grounded my existence as a person. The question remains, why am I, why do I as a unique person exist? And Stein, at the same time as she brings out the ontological humility of human personal existence, also indicates its capacity for transfiguration by participation in its personal transcendent source. For it would be inconceivable that a being which is personal could be constituted in existence by a being which is of less than personal reality.[30] This absolutely personal Other, in the sense of not requiring any further ground of existence, then, would

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[28] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. W. Kaufman (New York: Scribner's, 1970) 3, 4, 11, 15, 28.

[29] Edith Stein, *L'Être fini et l'Être Èternel*, 60ñ1.

[30] The topic echoes Aquinas' Fourth Way, requiring much more discussion than is possible here. For the present it will suffice to have posed the question of the existence of personal beings who are neither causes of their own existence, nor adequately caused by the other human persons who have caused their physical existence, their parents.

be Stein's 'Someone else.' I am who I am because You, the absolutely personal Other, are. And since my being is intrinsically oriented to the You who constituted me in existence, I have been chosen to be a you for You.

There would then seem to be two basic types of other-orientedness which articulated my personhood, neither belonging to what Voegelin has called thing-reality: I have been conceived into existence by the love of a communion of two persons; and I am born into a communion of persons. But since at the heart of every human person is their openness to and participation in the absolute personhood that has constituted them in existence as persons, each you I meet is also and primarily a you for the absolute You. As Etty Hillesum put it, in her diary at Westerbork concentration camp:

> Many are still hieroglyphs before me, but very slowly I learn to decipher them. It is the most beautiful thing I know: to read life from people. In Westerbork it was just as if I stood before the naked skeleton of life. I love people so terribly much, because in every one I love a part of you. And I look for you everywhere in others and I often find a part of you. And I try to unearth you in the hearts of others. And now I must do everything alone. The best and noblest part of my friend, of the man who awakened you in me, is now already with you.[31]

It would seem then, that we are persons rooted within what Stein called ending or finite being and oriented to other persons also rooted within finite being. Since our existence is grounded in its being chosen by You, both I and you are even more profoundly oriented towards the unending or infinite being of the absolute You to whom Etty Hillesum directed her diary. Then any relationship between human persons as persons participates in the deeper relationship to the absolute You, through whom we are both a you.

We have suggested person and other as an equivalent to the two components in Voegelin's complex of consciousness and reality. What of the third component—embodiment—as an equivalent for Voegelin's third component of language? It is not necessary here to repeat the rich range of articulations of human embodiedness that have been carried out by such others as Maurice Merleau Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, and

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[31] Etty Hillesum, *Het verstoorde Leven,* 1941-1943, 150, 158.

particularly in relation to human sexuality, by John Paul II.[32] Voegelin understood the language by which consciousness achieved an articulation of its participation in transfinite existence as itself participating in the truth of that reality, too. Similarly, we can say that the human body is the body of a person who has as the constitutive orientation of its own existence, a participation in absolute personal reality. Consequently, the body itself along with language (which may be assimilated to it as its highest expression) partakes in some way in that absoluteness, a participation profoundly emphasized for example in the burial customs of many archaic peoples. This does not mean that the human body may not also be grasped abstractively as a thing-reality and studied as such by the various natural sciences from physics up to zoology. Yet all such understandings abstract from the primary existence of the human body as the body of a human person, not some thing which I have, but the concrete expression of who I am, of my personal existence. Perhaps Levinas' meditative explorations of the ethical significance of the face of the other, as expressive exteriority of an interiority oriented towards the infinity in other persons, has found artistic expression in Andrei Sinyavsky's reflection on his wife's visit to him in prison:

> In the course of the four hours during which we kept almost silent and merely looked at each other, I became utterly convinced that the face is a window through which you can look or enter, and also out of which a soft light is shed on the earth (And if people looked more carefully at each other's faces, they would treat their neighbor with greater caution and respect, for they would notice that every man is like a palace of crystal in which he dwells with his own inner access to the kingdom we seek). In short, the face violates the law of nature. It seems to serve as a kind of very thin screen which allows the light to pass both ways, back and forth between spirit and matter. Our faces enable us to lean out, as it were, from within, thus showing ourselves to the world and flowering on the surface of life.[33]

So our bodies have a personal significance, towards which all their other meanings, physical, chemical, biological, physiological, sensory and

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[32] Especially in his *Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis* (Boston: St. Paul Books, 1981).

[33] *A Voice from the Chorus* (London: Fontana, 1977) 85. On 'exteriority' see Levinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968).

neural, are in function. And that personal significance is in its being the embodiment of a person who is primarily youwards in orientation, a youwardness with the dual depth we have referred to above, towards the human yous who participate in the absolute You, and towards that absolute You. It is precisely because of their being hieroglyphs of the beyond in which they participate that those sad faces looking out at us through the barred windows of a cattle-train in photographs of Jewish deportees have such a power to move us even now, half a century later.

The human person, as Plato's discussion of the 'metaxy' indicates, existing between ending and unending being, may be characterized by focusing on the personal dimension, in terms of Dostoevsky's tension between humility and love. At the interpersonal dimension, it may be seen in terms of an existence lived on the horizon of service and communion. However, Plato regarded the living out of the metaxy as calling for the practice of dying, dramatically enacted by Socrates' own witnessing by his death to his experience of both metaxic poles. And the fate of Edith Stein and of Etty Hillesum, who were conscious of the danger to which they were subject, and who both died at Auschwitz, illuminates the meaning of personhood with the truth of tragic action surpassing theory's capacity to explain. The consciousness-reality-language heuristic for understanding a universal humanity, must always have the density of the readiness to endure the physical, emotional, and mental suffering and perhaps even death, in order to witness to the utter priority of human existence as lived in the metaxy from an experience of the Beyond.

Voegelin's exploration of humanity can be further clarified as an understanding of a community or communion of persons, where that notion of a communion of persons will emerge from the exploration itself, particularly in its philosophic and Judaeo-Christian expressions. Since the constitutive freedom that makes us the persons we are includes the freedom to fail to be persons, to depersonalize ourselves, the notion of a communion of persons also provides a diagnostic insight into the mystery of willed unfreedom and the withering of social and historical community it wreaks. Elsewhere, I am developing this context in terms of the giving, receiving, and uniting of persons and of peoples with one another, their dominating, being dominated and alienation from one another, and finally, their forgiving, being forgiven by, and reconciling

with one another.[34] The drama of humanity, then, can be explored as the unfolding and contraction of human persons in social and historical communion and excommunication with one another and their transcendent personal source.

As we come to the third millennium, it seems more than worthwhile to reflect on who we essentially are, as belonging to the one family of universal humanity, trying to understand every particular cultural expression as also a manifestation of our shared humanity. That attempt will often involve suffering in representatively tragic figures like Socrates, Christ, Gandhi, the University of Munich students Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst,[35] to the point of utter self-sacrifice and cultural-decentering in order to respect the other, and the other's culture, as our own. If we make that effort, we may begin to experience the constant order at the heart of our universal humanity. As Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Speech Genres and Other Essays* put it,

> The mutual understanding of centuries and millennia, of peoples, nations, and cultures, provides a complex unity of all humanity, all human culture . . . and a complex unity of human literature. (167)

[34] See Brendan Purcell, *The Drama of Humanity: A Philosophical Inquiry into Universal Humanity in History* (Hamburg: Peter Lang, 1996).

[35] Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst were executed in 1943 for distributing anti-National Socialist leaflets in the University. See Inge Scholl, *The White Rose, Munich 1942-1943*, trans. Arthur R. Schultz (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1983).