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## Unthinking faith and enlightenment : Hegel and the impasse of modernity.

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UNTHINKING FAITH AND ENLIGHTENMENT:  
HEGEL AND THE IMPASSE OF MODERNITY

A Dissertation Presented

By

JANE ELIZABETH BENNETT

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1986

Department of Political Science

Jane Elizabeth Pennett



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By

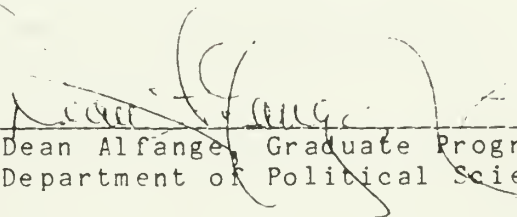
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Abstract

UNTHINKING FAITH AND ENLIGHTENMENT:  
HEGEL AND THE IMPASSE OF MODERNITY

(February 1986)

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Jerome King and George Kateb

Guided by Hegel's understanding in the Phenomenology of Spirit of the encounter between two paradigmatic modes of modern thought, Faith and Enlightenment, the dissertation first explores the boundaries of contemporary debates surrounding the natural environment and the theory of the state. It then argues that the orientations to nature and freedom embodied in these debates are flawed--they derive from either an exaggerated faith in human mastery or from an exaggerated faith in the extent to which the world is in ontological harmony with humans. Drawing critically upon the work of Michel Foucault and Charles Taylor, the dissertation concludes with the attempt to articulate a "fractious holist" orientation to nature and freedom that seeks to escape these flaws.

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C H A P T E R    I  
EXILE AND HOMECOMING

The intellectual motif of the 19th century has been described as "exile and homecoming,"<sup>1</sup> that is, the sense that the self is existentially estranged and the quest to unite the self with the larger cultural and natural worlds. A re-union was deemed necessary, a new and humanly imposed order was sought to replace the decaying synthesis effected by religion and tradition. Thus, the motif of exile and homecoming can also be expressed as the problem of the relation of self, nature and order.

Because this motif is emblazoned in Hegel's thought and because I believe its significance extends beyond the 19th century European experience, I was drawn to Hegel's attempt to confront and resolve homesickness. Alienation is for Hegel a positive good, necessary to the development of the reflective, self-defining modern subject. And only this self-conscious being will be able to recognize Geist and thus transcend alienation.

I do not endorse Hegel's solution to alienation. But his portrayal of modes of thought -- Faith and Enlightenment -- as variations on the theme of exile and homecoming is a rich source of insight into the nature of contemporary political debates.



Chapter II, "The Dialectic of Faith and Enlightenment," begins the exploration of this insight by summarizing the classical dialogue between Faith and Enlightenment in the Phenomenology of Spirit. Faith and Enlightenment are modes of thought which can neither accept nor dispense with each other. Faith seeks a world filled with divinity; Enlightenment seeks freedom in a disenchanting world. Enlightenment demands knowledge certain of itself, lacking the resources to achieve it; it views reason as a tool for ordering the world and rendering it predictable, understating the world's resistance to its order; and it understands nature to be a deposit of resources for use, underplaying human implication in a world larger than itself. Faith, the defensive voice in this dialectic, strives to appreciate the mysteries surrounding human knowing, sacrificing the contribution self-consciousness makes to freedom; it resists the spread of instrumental rationality, underestimating the necessity of technology and administration; and it seeks respect for nature, exaggerating its beneficence.

According to Hegel, the Faith and Enlightenment attempts to reconcile self and world are both faulty. While the flaws of each are readily exposed by the other, neither offers an affirmative position free of theoretical and practical difficulties. Because the two engender each other -- each formed in contrast to its perceived opponent

-- neither is able to transcend itself. Hegel insists that debates conforming to the Faith-Enlightenment dynamic will arrive at an impasse, until they accept the dialectical resolution of this impasse inscribed in Hegel's own theory.

Chapter II highlights several characteristics of modern discourse: its desire to overcome alienation, its recognition of political impact of theories of language and knowledge; its ambivalent stance toward rationality and utilitarianism; its preoccupation with order; and the inevitability of protest against this preoccupation.

Building upon Hegel's understanding of the encounter between Faith and Enlightenment, the study then moves, in Chapters III and IV, to an exploration of contemporary attempts to relate self, nature and order. It identifies characteristic formulations of this relation and characteristic flaws in them.

One set of formulations, inspired by Enlightenment, emphasizes the human creation of order; re-union or homecoming requires a strenuous exertion of rational will. Another set, the heirs of Faith, emphasizes the order already within nature; re-union requires an attunement of human will to natural structure. I argue that the first overestimates the power of human reason and will; the second, the beneficence of the extant natural order. Moreover, both overestimations result in an inability to acknowledge that within the self and that within nature



that declines to attend the reunion, i.e., "otherness." To rail against that which escapes unification with ever more insistent attempts at humanization (as Enlightenment does) has been ecologically and psychologically dangerous. But the re-constitution of this resistance as a mysterious part of a world designed in our best interests (as in Faith) is increasingly hard to believe, running too much against the grain of contemporary experience.

The aim of Chapters III and IV is not to prove that contemporary discourse must be enclosed within the Faith-Enlightenment problematic -- for Faith-Enlightenment is only one of many interpretive frameworks. Rather, my intention is to reveal dimensions of contemporary debates normally unthematized when these parameters are ignored.

Chapter III, "Environmental Management and Natural Holism," applies the Faith-Enlightenment dynamic to the environmental debate. Contemporary orientations to nature fall rather neatly into two groups: environmental management, with its enlightenment faith in human technique and-confidence that nature can be humanized; and natural holism, with its emphasis on the interconnectedness of self and nature.

Environmental management, as exemplified by environmental economists Allen Kneese and Charles Schultze, environmental lawyer Christopher Stone, and environmental ethicist John Passmore, gives primacy to human reason and

will. Natural holism, as exemplified by natural philosophers Erazim Kohak and John Compton, gives special status to nature, conceiving it as a moral guide for human conduct.

Environmental management and natural holism are opponents intimately involved with each other, and this intimacy confines them to a debate between an instrumental and a teleological view of nature. According to natural holism, environmental management is incapable of realizing environmental quality, for its Promethean orientation to nature is at base destructive. According to environmental management, natural holism is utopian, for it evades the necessity for a Promethean orientation by fantasizing about the extent to which self and nature can be reconciled.

Although the charges each makes against the other are on target, neither solution is satisfactory. Chapter III thus establishes an agenda to be pursued in Chapter V: the development of an orientation to nature more tenable than natural holism and less destructive than environmental management.

The organization of Chapter IV, "The Juridical State, the Consensual State, the Attuned State," is more complex, for Enlightenment theories of the state present both an individualist and a collectivist face. I examine three contemporary theorists of the state -- Theodore Lowi, Jurgen Habermas, and Charles Taylor -- by focusing on their

conceptions of freedom. Lowi and Habermas, disagreeing on much, nonetheless share the Enlightenment inheritance and conceive political freedom as rational mastery of the natural and social world; Taylor protests against these two faces of Enlightenment, claiming that freedom requires respect for the "natural bent" of the self and the world. Lowi and Habermas advocate a powerful state with an increasing realm of responsibility while Taylor argues for a more decentralized steady-state.

The focus of the Habermasian attack on Lowi's ideal state is that its commitment to a basically capitalist economy undermines its commitment to democracy. Habermas's ideal is a consensual state where rational norms rather than unreflective tradition or corporate imperatives govern social life. From the perspective of Taylor, however, Habermas shares with Lowi an exaggerated confidence in the ability of human reason to order individuals, collectivities, or nature. This overconfidence leads them, even against their will, to define their targets more and more in terms of use-value and to enlarge the scope of social rationalization. Taylor seeks an attuned state with a diminished need to administer citizens and social life. His ideal, then, is a state where social institutions acknowledge the limits of the world they inhabit. Such acknowledgement reduces the extent to which natural limits function as obstacles to human will.

Chapter IV concludes with a critique of the orientation to nature implicit in Taylor's ideal. Taylor assumes too great a degree of attunement between humans and the natural world. His theory, insightful in its critique of these two modernized theories of the enlightened state, ends by recapitulating defects in the Faith view of the world.

One of the aims of Chapter IV, then, is to elucidate the connection between orientations to nature and conceptions of freedom. Because nature must to some degree be experienced as outer, as a barrier to will, as setting boundary conditions for action, an orientation to nature enables some conceptions of freedom and disables others -- helping to decide, for example, whether freedom is understood as requiring transcendence of boundaries or acceptance of them. The orientation to nature also has implications for the treatment of troublesome or resistant elements of the population. Because nature is, in a sense, the paradigm "other," an approach to nature helps to constitute the range of ethical or not-so-ethical orientations to human "others."

This study allows Hegel to set the agenda for the examination of contemporary political debates (Chapters III and IV), but it is not itself Hegelian. Hegel's philosophical solution to alienation, the ontology of Geist, is untenable. Moreover, the Phenomenology



encourages the contemporary reader in this conclusion. By relentlessly exposing the complexities, anomalies, and flaws in every extant theory of self, morality, freedom, or nature, it teaches us to be skeptical of any theory that purports to be complete, consistent, and unified. Hegelian philosophy embodies the flaws of Faith and Enlightenment it so carefully identifies, but its attempt to provide the definitive solution to homesickness is so subtle and complex that its very failure recommends a more tentative political and theoretical stance.

Chapter V, "Unthinking Faith and Enlightenment," seeks such a stance, one that places its faith neither in human mastery nor in a world predisposed to harmonize with human needs. It seeks a political theory, or better, a philosophical anthropology, that acknowledges dissonance between humans and the world while appreciating our interdependence with it. Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault inspire this attempt, although they are not the authors of it.

This philosophical anthropology of "fractional holism" strives to acknowledge the integrity of intractable elements of the self, of non-humans, and of places not ordered according to principles of human design. More importantly, it seeks to accept this resistance to human ordering without grounding acceptance in a belief in the ontological concord of humans and nature.

Fractional holism makes the point that the world is best understood as neither intersubjectively constituted nor objectively given. The investigation of contemporary attempts to feel at home in the world has shown that while the world is to some extent a human construction, the result of the imposition of human form or order, it also escapes subjective and intersubjective control. In seeking to articulate the nature of this world, fractional holism continues the Faith and Enlightenment quest to return from exile -- but it acknowledges that there can be no fully satisfying homecoming and that the quest itself is not without imposing effects.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See George Steiner, Antigones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), Chapter One.

C H A P T E R    I I  
THE DIALECTIC OF FAITH AND ENLIGHTENMENT

What is Enlightenment?

Enlightenment was the de-mystification of a world of robust faith, a world filled with divine signs, intrinsic meaning, and intelligible order. Enlightenment transformed nature-as-God's text into nature as a set of rationalizable, mechanical, potentially useful parts. In the face of the rigid religious structure that grew up around the beautifully enchanted world, Enlightenment asserted a political freedom and self-determination where God has retreated to a more distant location in the cosmos; in the face of unreflective allegiance to tradition, it asserted the integrity and power of reflective and reflexive reason; in the face of a view of knowledge as mysterious hints from God, it pursued a transparent science of certainty; in the face of a sacralized nature, it asserted a potentially predictable, controllable fund of natural "resources."

According to Hegel, the self-consciousness within this new human self-assertion was infectious: the protest against Enlightenment could not retreat (or could retreat



only upon pain of nostalgia) to its earlier robust and unreflective form, but it could find another (albeit more defensive) voice. Modern faith could protest against the reduction of human reason to instrumental rationality; it could criticize Enlightenment's pursuit of a transparent knowledge by showing knowledge to be historically situated and limited by the finitude of the human mind; it could show how Enlightenment's utilitarianism leads to the treatment of humans as means and thereby undermines the desire to install new dignity and respect for humans; it could stand as a witness to the human submersion in and dependence upon nature and insist that nature's inherent order be respected even if it is no longer possible to read it as a text.

Enlightenment, then, defines itself by reference to its adversary; its self-image is that of destroyer of myths and archaic social institutions. Its critique of the robust faith applies as well to the modern version of faith -- for Enlightenment exposes, in the cold light of reason, the foundation of the new faith's moral claims to be the same old religion or teleology that was the source of the moral power of the robust faith. Faith too defines itself by reference to its adversary and it too has success in its critique, however. It persistently exposes the narrowness, overconfidence, and contradictions within Enlightenment's exaltation of the rational, autonomous human being.

The structure of my exploration of the dynamic between Enlightenment and Faith is as follows:

First, I provide a characterization of the pre-Enlightenment, robust, version of Faith, for the Faith (glauben) Hegel describes in the Phenomenology of Spirit has already been infiltrated by Enlightenment categories. This characterization of Robust Faith, along with the characterizations of all "modes of consciousness," is of an ideal type. There are many historical examples of the orientation I call Robust Faith, but because it is intended as a set of contrasts to modern orientations to self, world, nature, it is difficult and beside the point to give it a precise historical location. Roughly, it corresponds to post-Christian but pre-Enlightenment times, although for the Hegel of the Philosophy of History, who is thinking more in terms of changes in religious consciousness, the Reformation rather than the Enlightenment marks the demise of Robust Faith. The point of my elaboration of Robust Faith is not that it exhausts pre-Enlightenment or pre-Reformation orientations (neither are "modern faith" or "Enlightenment" monolithic categories), but that it cannot be our orientation. I try to capture the sense of a significant version of a non-modern ontology.

The account of Robust Faith ends with a description of the transition to modern Faith. Here I draw upon the work of Hans Blumenberg. We then arrive at the Faith of the

Phenomenology, a modern Faith that confronts and is confronted by Enlightenment. This Faith, still resonant with the enchanted world, is both the target of Enlightenment's critique and a critique of Enlightenment, the now dominant mode. The modern age appears as the continuation of the mutually engendering debate between Faith and Enlightenment.

### Robust Faith

Faith in its prime embodies an enchanted view of the world.<sup>1</sup> Nature is filled with mystery and meaning and every item within it is interconnected with every other. The world is a vast web whose threads are those of resemblance. This similitude of each with all is an ontological likeness due to the divine source of all things created, but it is also a literal connection among things. There are links of physical proximity (e.g., moss on trees, ticks on dogs); links of the identity, analogousness, or complementarity of function or form ("Just as man's intellect is an imperfect reflection of God's wisdom, so his two eyes, with their limited brightness, are a reflection of the vast illumination spread across the sky by sun and moon...");<sup>2</sup> and links of natural affinity (e.g., plants toward the sun) or repulsion (e.g., fire toward water).

Knowledge is organized around the principle of resemblance, but it would be misleading to think of resemblance as the epistemology of Robust Faith. Resemblance is not a conceptual scheme employed to investigate a physical world; it is a property inherent in nature. Nature speaks and says that it coheres through relations of resemblance. Every rock, every plant reveals part of its meaning, tells what it is, and what it is is its purpose and place within the order of creation.

There exists a sympathy between aconite and our eyes. This unexpected affinity would remain in obscurity if there were not some signature on the plant, some mark, some word, as it were, telling us that it is good for diseases of the eye. This sign is easily legible in its seeds: they are tiny dark globes set in white skinlike coverings whose appearance is much like that of eyelids covering an eye.

Knowledge here is knowledge of divine intention as it is embodied in the natural world. In this sense, knowledge in general is knowledge of God. Nature speaks, but by necessity something is lost in the translation; nature cannot pronounce an unambiguous directive. God provides only hints, or rather, his intentions must appear to mortals as cryptic clues. This opaqueness is not only a result of the limits of human reason; it is also bound up with the temporality and finitude of material things. Nature, therefore, whispers, but the whisper only concentrates our attention, draws our ears even closer, enhances the appeal of that which speaks.

Knowledge must have an element of mystery, for were it unambiguous, man would have no role to play. More precisely, man would cease to be man and instead become God, because in an enchanted world the only being with access to unambiguous knowledge is God. Man, like every part of creation, is an integral part of the ordered universe, a universe that includes the "objects" of human knowledge. Man is related to these objects precisely in his office as interpreter of them. The relation between man and the world -- i.e., knowledge -- consists then in interpretation; interpretation makes audible the world's voice.

Moreover, the veiled messages in nature are susceptible to a range of interpretations. The truth is gleaned only through multiple, partial attempts and even the final compilation of interpretations can only approximate truth. The range is not infinite, however, for the messages are grounded and the interpretations bounded by real divine intentions -- even while this ground and these limits are not fully transparent to us.

Writings and speech in the enchanted world are as any other naturally appearing thing. Language does not function as a medium privileged by its proximity to man; language has not yet become -- as it will in modernity -- a vastly richer and deeper source of truth than a neutral natural environment. Language, like nature, is simply



another site where resemblances connect earthly existence to the divine cosmos. Ancient texts, contemporary writings, theological treatises, ravings of the mad, art, music, and miracle plays were all subject to constant and relentless commentary, for overlapping interpretations were required to reveal the oracle within texts. All varieties of commentaries were encouraged: those which elaborated shape, structure, mythical history, medicinal application, smell, likenesses to other things, potential, tendencies, accidental or necessary events associated with the thing, etc. More importantly, "none of these forms of discourse is required to justify its claim to be expressing a truth before it is interpreted; all that is required of it is the possibility of talking about it."<sup>4</sup> The oracular nature of the text is not a specific divine command to be translated into human practice. Language does not here "represent" some real content in the world, but rather

...words group syllables together and syllables letters, because there are virtues placed in individual letters that draw them towards each other or keep them apart, exactly as the marks found in<sub>5</sub> nature also repel or attract one another.

It is the secret workings of these movements, more than a designative message (human or divine), that commentaries tirelessly seek.

Historians have had a difficulty explaining the coexistence, in the late Medieval period, of magic or

divination (used to cull meaning from nature) and scholarly erudition (used to examine the re-discovered Greek and Roman texts). The former is often viewed as an element of superstition incongruous with the theoretical strides made in the field of textual exegesis. But these two forms are more than complementary. As integral parts of the epistemic configuration of Robust Faith, divination and textual commentary are the methods appropriate to the production of the incomplete knowledge that is in turn appropriate to a world filled everywhere with divine hints of meaning. The model for reading nature is the same as that for reading texts. "God is revealed in Scripture; his works are also visible in the world...The book of nature becomes a commentary, further substantiation of the truth of the revealed word."<sup>6</sup>

Just as a poet conveys a message through the medium of words (a medium that precludes the possibility of a transparent transmission) and just as it is the reader's job to participate in reconstructing that message, the author of the world speaks through signs inscribed in the world and it is the human role to interpret those signs. It now becomes clear how the question of truth presented itself. For those of the enchanted world, it is useless to demand the title to authority of interpretations of natural signs or of texts, for God was the guarantor of their truth. Both commentary and division possess

...an ageless affinity with the things that it unveils...The truth of all these marks -- whether they are woven into nature itself or whether they exist in lines on parchment and in libraries -- is everywhere the same: coeval with the institution of God.<sup>7</sup>

Underlying all human attempts at deciphering is a more primal discourse, the divine text of origin, the macrocosm.

Things hide themselves in nature and in the word but then offer themselves up for interpretation. The world is recalcitrant but not silent. From the time when the order of things that "bear witness" to some trend or to some origin "without its being possible to indicate causes and effects."<sup>8</sup> Here is knowing where relationships are loose but secure, both flexible and strong; where the threads that link are more along the order of family resemblances than efficient causes.

Let us review the elements which constitute the world of Faith in its robust phase.

(1) Holism: There is a deep sense that the universe is ordered or designed in a coherent and purposeful way. Each part of that whole is interconnected to every other through relations of resemblance. The earthly world is a microcosm, a category which

...provides all investigations with an assurance that everything will find its mirror and its macrocosmic justification on another and larger scale; it affirms, inversely, that the visible order of the highest spheres will be found reflected in the darkest depths of the earth.<sup>9</sup>

(2) Incompleteness: All knowledge is of relations -- relations between persons and their world and among things that co-exist in the world. Those relations have a necessary element of opacity; knowledge can be certain or rather, secure, without having to be complete, i.e., opacity and mystery need not be purged.

(3) Interpretation: All knowledge is therefore interpretation. Although the world of Robust Faith is a microcosm, the human relation to the world is not completely given, is not rigidly fixed -- it is the place of the self to participate in forming that relation through interpretation.

This characterization of Robust Faith emphasizes what was unique about its ontology; it draws a sharp contrast between modern understandings about the self, knowledge, and nature and those of the enchanted view of the world. But now it is appropriate to amend this first characterization. The ontology of Robust Faith attempted to create an integrated world where the fit between humans and their natural environment was neat. This attempt to be at home in the world (behind which stood the divine homemaker) was to a large degree successful, but only a romantic could say it was a complete success.

The different beings of the cosmos did for the most part intertwine through resemblances to form a coherent whole, but the cosmos always remained a puzzle with a few

pieces still missing. For example, language approached God's intentions but was in essence a defiled version of them. In general, all the signs in the text/nature were imperfect indicators and resemblances could never fully overcome the distance between self and other, between human and thing, between body and soul.

From outside the ontological horizon of Robust Faith, this distance reflects the resistance of the world to a creationist mold. A creationist ontology first posits telos and divine intentionality in nature and then "discovers" them in "signs." A creationist ontology underwrites (i.e., sets one's name to a policy of insurance for the purpose of becoming answerable to a designated loss or damage) the world of Robust Faith.

From inside the ontological horizon of Robust Faith, however, the imperfections in the schema of world-as-text are simply the necessary limits appropriate to material or mortal being; they are worrisome flaws within a basically sound structure. But inside this worry alienation found a place to grow. Robust Faith is complex: it expresses a tranquil and orderly world content to explain anomalies as divine mysteries, but upon closer inspection it also reveals an uneasiness regarding the depth of that tranquility. The question "From whence comes the modern world of alienation?" can thus be given a preliminary answer: the seeds of the characteristically modern



experience of estrangement were sown in the enchanted world of Robust Faith. This is the world from which the self is estranged.

### Hegel and Robust Faith

This insight brings us to a further concern: what is the relationship between Hegel's view of the world of Robust Faith as dark and alienated and my account of the happy and beautiful era of Robust Faith? Is it compatible with the Hegelian Faith-Enlightenment dialectic to say that Robust Faith is the predecessor to the modern Faith of the Phenomenology? Yes, for although Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history seem to provide an interpretation of the enchanted world at odds with the one developed here, the incongruity is only apparent. This claim relies on two contentions:

(1) that alienation existed within the attempt to secure an integrated world of resemblances. I have underplayed this element in order to draw the sharpest contrast between Robust Faith and the modern world; it is there nonetheless. I have suggested the outlines of such an argument above.

(2) that Hegel was drawn to accentuate the unhappy and irrational character of Robust Faith because of the teleological nature of his philosophy. We turn now to this second contention.

The Philosophy of History provides Hegel's developed interpretation of Medieval Faith as well as an explicit contrast between the religious orientation of the world of Catholicism and the Faith of Enlightenment. The contrasts he chooses to make, along with the character of his interpretation as a whole, are tied to his fundamental "principle of division" for historical periodization: the relation between Church and State. The categories that flow out of this principle are "Christendom" (patristic times - 800 A.D.), "Feudalism" (800 - 1500), and "Reformation" (1500 - 1800). In Christendom the Church/State split is as yet undifferentiated; Feudalism is the development of the antithesis between the theocracy of the Church and the monarch of the State; with the Reformation the critical moves toward the harmonization of religion and reason are begun. This triadic scheme is also characterized in terms of the Trinity:

The Kingdom of the Father [Christendom] is the consolidated, undistinguished mass, presenting a self-repeating cycle...the Kingdom of the Son [Feudalism] is the manifestation of God merely in a relation to secular existence -- shining upon it as upon an alien object. The Kingdom of Spirit [Reformation] is the harmonizing of the antithesis.

The Reformation is an unequivocal good for Hegel; nothing of value is lost in the transition from a world opulent and bloated with miracles and magic to the reasonable world of Luther. Pre-reformation religious

consciousness is "the long, eventful and terrible night," necessary because its irrationality is the precondition for a re-formation.

Let us take a step back and look at Robust Faith -- for Hegel the periods of Christendom and Feudalism. For Hegel they were radically incomplete, mere moments of a yet-to-be-realized synthesis. This incompleteness stems from the fact that consciousness was able to make certain categorical distinctions but unable to conceptualize the relation between opposing categories. This can be seen most clearly in the lack of integration between the Medieval notions of the sacred and the secular. The central project of the Medieval Age was, according to Hegel, the attempt to overcome this lack.

A major part of that attempt was the Church. The Church was both to embody religious beliefs and insights and to be an agent of political, economic and social control. Hegel will show, however, that the Church fails to effect a true reconciliation between sacred and secular and instead only contaminates each realm with the worst aspects of the other. For example, the Church corrupts, through the sale of indulgences and ecclesiastical office, its authentic spiritual insights with the secular hunger for power and wealth, at the same time that it introduces fear and superstition into everyday material existence. The only institution capable of achieving the precarious,

complex, and differentiated unity of sacred and secular (or of faith and reason) is the State, in Hegel's special use of the term. But because the Medieval Age invested its reconciliatory hopes in the Church, "we see everywhere vice, utter absence of respect for conscience, shamelessness, and a distracted state of things, of which the entire history of the period is the picture in detail."<sup>11</sup>

Spiritual concerns and the ethical prescriptions that follow from them have no comfortable place within available forms of political and economic organization. In the Medieval Age, says Hegel, religious life is estranged from secular life. The Church here failed because its guiding principles -- chastity, poverty, and obedience -- contravene those crucial to social and economic life. Marriage, necessary as the foundation of secular social interactions, was deemed inferior to celibacy; "pauperism, laziness, inactivity, was regarded as nobler" than activity where "the workman has to perform for his subsistence";<sup>12</sup> slavery as blind obedience to Church doctrine, replaces freedom or "obedience...to the Moral and Rational...to laws which I recognize as just",<sup>13</sup> a freedom integral to the good political state.

Moreover, in the absence of this freedom, the self cannot be integrated: reason is opposed to belief. Reason here means the self-conscious consideration (endorsement,

rejection or reformulation) of the standards governing a way of life. Robust Faith, says Hegel, does not subject its principles to critical reflection but accepts them as given by the Church hierarchy. The development of reflective conscience is, therefore, stunted by the overwhelming presence of the Church as institutional conscience. Norms and principles become commands and dogma. Robust Faith is deficient for Hegel because of its external character: its relation to the divine relies on pronouncements of Church councils, on intermediates called Saints or clergy, and upon formalistic rituals. "[M]an, as such, is declared incapable of recognizing the Divine and approaching thereto."<sup>14</sup>

In sum, the pre-Reformation attempt to reconcile the sacred and the secular -- an attempt that culminates in the establishment of an authoritative religious institution -- only fosters alienation at the level of the self.

Alienation consists in this, that men...accept their identification with external social reality...but they experience this social reality as other, they do not feel bei sich in it...This sense that the substance of their lives lies beyond them is the essence of alienation.<sup>15</sup>

For Hegel, alienation is exacerbated in the modern age, although it has been present in all periods of history. Alienation is necessary to develop human subjectivity: the individual must first separate himself from his natural surroundings and then create a new relation to the larger

whole that replaces the immediacy of a submersive identification that belonged, for example, to the ancient Greeks. This new relation must be one where there is both identification with the whole and the self-conscious assent of the individual. Alienation enables the individual to move from a natural being to a reflective, cultivated being. By bringing out the alienation within Robust Faith, Hegel shows us the sometimes latent but always present underside of the happy enchanted world. Later, in the transition to the Modern Age, this split between self and world widens radically.

Although the Church failed to reconcile sacred and secular, it was able somewhat to unify the sphere of the sacred. For Hegel, the insights of Faith cannot exist without institutional embodiment; even a flawed embodiment is superior to a privatized religion. An institution is needed to replace personal and therefore arbitrary will with abstract, general laws. The Church was at least a partial success at this; there existed no comparable secular institution to enforce universality. Monarchy, especially the reign of Charlemagne, was the last attempt to rationalize and unify the political realm. Hegel speaks disparagingly of the successor of monarchy, feudalism:

No authority of Law and Right is valid any longer; nothing but chance power -- the crude caprice of particularity as opposed to universally valid Right...



All right vanished before individual Might; for equality of Rights and rational legislation, where the interests of the political Totality, of the State, are kept in view, had no existence.<sup>16</sup>

One further point must be made regarding the outcome of the struggle of the Church to present divinity "as not in any sense an other-world existence, but as in unity with Human Nature in the Present and Actual."<sup>17</sup> Here we approach Hegel's interpretation of the natural environment of Robust Faith. Robust Faith became preoccupied with this question: In what way is the sacred made "present" and "actual," i.e., sensual? The doctrine of the Trinity (and its practical expression in the Eucharist) was the officially prescribed answer to this question, "but when it is once granted that God exists in external phenomenal presence, this external manifestation immediately becomes infinitely varied; for the need of this presence is infinite."<sup>18</sup> The point here is that once Robust Faith was committed to the view that the Spiritual has a sensual expression, it became difficult to confine the instances of this expression to those authorized by the Church. Why, for example, did the spiritual mingle in the material only in the Eucharist? Was it not possible that God provided instances of this co-mingling within our selves or within nature? For Hegel, it was a kind of excessive enthusiasm for realizing the unity of human and divine that allowed nature to become filled with miracles.

The Church, partially because of the decentralized character of pre-modern times, was unable to homogenize all versions of its doctrines and was therefore unsuccessful in establishing the hegemony of theological explanation of the unity of human and divine, i.e., the doctrine of the Trinity. Ordinary religious consciousness had tenuous ties to this official doctrine and instead improvised its own:

Thus innumerable instances will occur...in which Christ has appeared to one and another, in various places...In all places...there will occur manifestations of the Heavenly...and the Divine will be realized in miracles...

Unable to restrain or channel this zealousness for unity on the part of the believers, the Church eventually incorporated this enchanted view of nature into its own canon.

This is, for Hegel, an unfortunate turn of events.

In the period in question the Church presents the aspect of a world of miracle; ...natural existence has utterly lost its stability and certainty: rather, absolute certainty has turned against it, and the Divine is not conceived of...under conditions of universality as the law and nature of Spirit, but reveals itself in isolated and detached phenomena, in which the rational form of existence is utterly perverted.<sup>20</sup>

Hegel makes it clear that it is only from "our," i.e., the Hegelian, point of view that the irrationality of Robust Faith is so lamentable: the faithful participants of the Medieval Age experience "a state of satisfaction and enjoyment."<sup>21</sup> For Hegel, Faith is always held accountable

to the standard of absolute knowledge, that is, the model of transparent, conceptual knowledge. The complex process by which consciousness is supposed to achieve this knowledge is the Phenomenology of Spirit and Geist is the Hegelian term for the authentic reconciliation of matter and spirit.

The Medieval Age is irrational and Robust Faith is superstitious to the extent that this model for knowledge is tenable. Some have argued that it is not:

Hegel has a notion of conceptual thought as self-transparent which we find hard to share today. Much of contemporary philosophy has been concerned with showing how the clarity of our most explicit conceptual formulations reposes on a background of which we are not fully aware and which we can perhaps never exhaustively explore. Much that is implicit, for instance, in the very system of concepts or classifications that we use to formulate our clearest thought remains unstated and possibly unstatable.<sup>22</sup>

Once we become aware of the historicity of knowledge and begin to doubt the existence of absolute knowledge, once we no longer believe that the mystery expressed through religion can be raised to the level where its speculative content is fully uncovered, Hegel's discussions of Faith can be seen in a new light. Faith is no longer merely an insightful though naive precursor to absolute knowledge; it becomes a repository of historical evidence through which to question the possibility of transparent knowledge. Robust Faith becomes not the undisciplined,

soon-to-be-incorporated/superseded attempt to realize Geist, but a sign of the irreducible element of opacity in the world. On this reading, a reading which is consistent with the analysis of the Robust Faith as predecessor to modern Faith and Enlightenment, Faith can be shown to symbolize and convey our dark sense of that unstated or unstatable background necessary to the explicit formulations available to us. And the persistence of Faith-like expressions across epochs reinforces the judgment that a transparent knowing is a chimeral pursuit.

We see now why Hegel's account of Robust Faith, an account that always focuses on its "progressive" insights, is dominated by the discussion of the Church and its formal doctrines. Although Hegel understands that there was a time when nature was filled with divine signs, he dismisses this belief as "a credulity of the most absurd and childish character."<sup>23</sup> The moments of truth in Robust Faith, to the extent that they existed, were embodied in the Church, not in a view of nature as enchanted. This choice of emphasis in turn leads Hegel to see the self of Robust Faith as anything but robust: the self is either an overzealous producer of silliness or an unthinking slave to dogma. But if we peel away the view of the Medieval Age as a necessary but deficient stage in the progress of absolute knowledge, we are opened up to the interpretation that the self that had a lived experience of a miraculous natural text was an

active, creative self -- a self that allowed for ambiguous relations within its knowledge.

The Hegelian desire for unambiguous knowledge, its pursuit of a thoroughly intelligible nature, is Enlightenment's pursuit of scientific certainty. Thus, there is a sense in which Hegel's very characterization of Robust Faith is always already in Enlightenment terms. Yet Hegel, as we shall see later, provides a powerful critique of Enlightenment. Although ambiguity or mystery can in no way be construed as a moment of truth in Faith for Hegel, but is instead its defect, the subtlety of Hegel's analysis of Faith and Enlightenment itself provides considerations capable of converting the putative defect into an important insight.

The interpretation of Faith as robust, therefore, lies within Hegel's texts; it seems to be there in spite of his philosophical crusade for clarity.<sup>24</sup> Glimmerings of it are present in his critique of Enlightenment and in his qualified defense of Faith. I have given a generous reading of Hegel's own account of Faith and then supplemented it with an ideal-type account of Robust Faith, for Hegel is too anxious to transcend/preserve Faith into the higher rationality of a philosophy made possible by Enlightenment. To reject the view of history as the movement of increasing rationality requires more openness to the question of Faith's tenability or truth.

The Transition from Robust Faith to Modern Faith

Hegel's account of the age of Robust Faith provides a coherent account of the religious, political and economic conditions of the period. But his treatment of the shift from the Medieval to the Modern Age is less satisfying. It seems as though it is the Reformation that ushers in modernity, and it is the Reformation that sets the stage for Enlightenment, but how did Robust Faith become so weak and vulnerable to the Reformation and Enlightenment attacks? The abuses of the Church alone cannot account for its demise.

To answer this question it is necessary to make one more stop before encountering the Faith of the Phenomenology. Hans Blumenberg in The Legitimacy of the Modern Age offers an account of the transition from the late Medieval period to the early modern period that can be interpreted as an explanation of how Robust Faith loses sway and assumes a more modern, defensive stance. The affinity between Blumenberg and Hegel can be seen especially when one interprets the Phenomenology as a series of historical analyses, analyses that seem to capture the core of a way of life -- its sometimes smooth, sometimes troubled internal transformations, and its relations with opposing ways of life. Hegel gives us a case history of a mode of consciousness and in so doing can



illuminate the latest expression of that mode. Blumenberg, too, has a sense of the way historical modes of life articulate and perfect themselves, realize internal tensions and then re-form. Blumenberg's account of Medieval ontology enables us to understand Hegel's account of Faith more fully.

In short, Blumenberg's thesis is this:

Robust Faith's preoccupation with divine will and its attempt to preserve the omnipotence of that will, lead to the doctrine of the absolute and therefore possibly arbitrary character of that will. This "theological absolutism" opened the space for a radically different orientation to the world. It was no longer reasonable to suppose that the signs of divine will are legibly inscribed in nature. If God can create in ways not penetrable by human reason, then the world available to reason may be one of contingency, perhaps even sheer arbitrariness. The world as text thus disintegrates and the world slowly takes the plastic form of the mathematizable.

In my exploration of this Blumenberg thesis, I will address two questions:

(1) How did theological absolutism arise?

(2) What were the consequences of theological absolutism?

According to Blumenberg, an important Medieval concern was the attempt to overcome gnosticism. Gnosticism of the

early Christian era had addressed the problem of evil by positing two gods: a benevolent creator and a demiurge responsible for suffering, deception and evil.

To retrieve the world as the creation from the negative role assigned to it by the doctrine of its demiurgic origin, and to salvage the dignity of the ancient cosmos for its role in the Christian system, was the central effort all the way from Augustine to the height of Scholasticism.<sup>25</sup>

Augustine's efforts to preserve the power of the unified Christian god were definitive for all later attempts. He repudiates the existence of a demiurge and thereby heals the gnostic dualism by making humanity responsible for evil. The source of evil stems from the presence of sin, sin that God allows in order that the human be a free, willing and reasoning being. This formulation has the potential to unburden God and thereby restore him to benevolence, omnipotence and omniscience, but only if some human sin can be identified that is great enough to absorb the wickedness of the demiurge. Augustine could find no actual and individual sin that could bear this weight and this, says Blumenberg, leads him to posit "the uniquely great original guilt of mankind and...its mythical inheritance."<sup>26</sup>

Eventually in the development of Christianity, this primordial guilt, because it is not the direct responsibility of an individual but a congenital flaw of humanity, finds its possibility of absolution primarily in

an act of divine grace and only marginally, if at all, through good works. God can choose, therefore, to absolve some and not others. This selective absolution must in fact be the case, as we see that the world is not rid of the consequences of that guilt. A chosen few are saved; the majority remain blameworthy and their taint explains the persistence of evil. The implication of Augustine's original formulation is the emergence of a "hidden God" with "inconceivable absolute sovereignty."<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the Middle Ages this Augustinian theme of the primacy of divine will was pursued in many ways. One significant example is the theological absolutism of Medieval nominalism where the world was "the pure performance of reified omnipotence...a demonstration of the unlimited sovereignty of a will to which no questions can be addressed..."<sup>28</sup> God is nominalistic: we can know the bare fact of his creation, but can know no more about him or the mysterious, gratuitous nature of his creation. The intent here was to shore up God, to underscore His power, to preserve the enchanted world by making the individual feel all the more awed by it. But although nominalism sought to bring man "to the point of inevitable resignation and thus of submission to faith...the imminent dynamics of the situation led to the contrary result."<sup>29</sup> Theological absolutism was the final rally of Robust Faith in its attempt to preserve the title to hegemony, but it also weakened Faith in its struggle with Enlightenment.

asserts itself in the face of the dominating force of Enlightenment. One consequence of this confrontation is that modern Faith no longer has the degree of self-confidence appropriate to the hegemonic position of Robust Faith. While it still attempts to preserve the unique insights into the human condition expressed in Robust Faith, modern Faith is the mode of religious expression best suited to coexist with a world where secular reason, self-consciousness and modern science are coming to the fore.

For Hegel there are both internal and external sources of this loss of confidence, this mutation in Faith. Like Blumenberg after him, Hegel shows how Faith -- of its own accord and through the course of the logical development of its thought -- comes to confront limits in its own understandings. Faith, like all Hegelian modes of consciousness before absolute knowing, is drawn to issues and conclusions that it is unable to incorporate into the context of its way of life. This is one important impetus for the dialectical movement of history. But Faith is not alone in the modern age; alongside it has grown a way of life that poses what can be legitimately termed an external challenge: Enlightenment. This internal realization of tensions and this external critique combine in the Phenomenology: Enlightenment criticizes Faith by counter-posing the clear, reflective scientific ideals of

Enlightenment to the picture-thought of Faith, and this counter-posing is at the same time a public articulation of weaknesses that already haunt Faith itself.

Two examples will illustrate this:

(1) Faith asserts the existence of an ever-present yet not wholly comprehensible unity of the supersensuous and sensuous realms. This unity is expressed in the Eucharist: Absolute Being is present in the tangible bread and wine. This unity is both a symbolic one and an actual one -- indeed the sacrament is as well a celebration of the identity of symbol and fact. Picture-thoughts also have this characteristic: the knowledge gained through picture-thoughts lacks a dichotomous distinction between ideational representation and actual presence (the for-us and the in-itself).

(2) Faith believes in the unity of human history and the atemporal order of the universe. History reflects not only the course of human events but also the rationality of the divine Spirit. Faith does not dissociate the life of a mortal, Jesus, from His divinity and the timelessness of his words.

In both cases, Enlightenment steadfastly charges that Faith has confused two logically distinct categories -- the material and the spiritual -- and demands a more precise theoretical articulation of their relation. Enlightenment problematizes and dissociates the simple unities of Faith

and Faith cannot reply, for its affirmations, by definition, are not susceptible to the sort of justification Enlightenment demands. Enlightenment condemns Faith's stance as irrational.

The crux of Enlightenment's critique is that Faith results not in the reconciliation of matter and spirit (or of body and soul) but in a repudiation of the sensible world. For Enlightenment, the confidence of Faith relies on a deliberate naivete, a stubborn refusal to perceive evidence disruptive of its worldview.

Just as it sees Faith in general to be a tissue of superstitions, prejudices, and errors, so it further sees the consciousness of this content organized into a realm of error in which false insight, common to the mass of people<sup>45</sup>, is immediate, naive, and unreflective.

The price Faith must pay, then, for its "solution" to the homelessness felt by post-Robust consciousness, is the denial of the historicity of Jesus and the materiality of bread and the affirmation of only a vacuous and mysterious "spirituality." Faith's retreat to the world beyond is an expression of its pathetic inability to come to terms with human embodiment (and mortality) and to acknowledge a measure of human responsibility for personal, social and political conditions.

Faith might respond of these charges in a variety of ways:



(1) It might reply with a shrug of indifference, content to live out its understandings in blissful ignorance of any narrowly theoretical critique Enlightenment may provide.

(2) It might attempt a deconstructive reply: it could refute the charge of unreflectiveness by showing how no position can achieve full clarity of expression. Further, it could expose the naivete of Enlightenment regarding the falsifications necessarily within any position that claims to have achieved full articulation.

(3) It might reply that Enlightenment's critique is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of Faith. This is the reply that Hegel himself presents to us in the text: "Enlightenment distorts all the moments of Faith, changing them into something different from what they are in it [Faith]." <sup>44</sup> In its frenzy to free society from the irrationalism of religion and tradition, Enlightenment misses the crucial core of Faith: Faith sets aside the particularity of the individual in order to assert the ontological interpenetration of humans, things and God.

To faith, its absolute Being, while it is possessed of intrinsic being for the believer, is also at the same time not like an alien thing which is just found in him, no one knowing how and whence it came. On the contrary, the faith of the believer consists just in his finding himself as this particular personal consciousness in the absolute Being and his obedience and service consist in producing, through his own activity, that Being as his own absolute Being. <sup>45</sup>

Enlightenment was right, says Hegel, to bring out the hidden element of sensuousness and historical contingency in Faith's beliefs and practices, but wrong to view those beliefs as nothing but the reification of historically produced norms and to interpret those rituals as nothing but the celebration of earthly goods. Enlightenment "regards the object of the believer's veneration as stone and wood, or else as something finite and anthropomorphic."<sup>46</sup> Faith may have only an uncanny hunch that the human condition involves a spirituality and that individuals are inherently bound up with a larger social, natural and even universal whole, but Enlightenment mistakenly attributes the murky and sometimes tradition-bound character of Faith to the utter falsity of its insights. It can do so because its own inability to realize its own aspirations through the vehicle of abstract reason has not yet become apparent to it.

Although Faith at one time or another has responded in each of these three ways, the overall tendency of its replies has been something else: Faith attempts to "rationalize" itself along the Enlightenment model of reason and in so doing depreciates its own insights. The key question here is this: Why does Faith respond in Enlightenment terms? How is it drawn into a game designed by and for Enlightenment? In order to understand the seduction of Faith, more needs to be said about the modus operandi of the Enlightenment critique of Faith.

It is not true that the perspectives of theoretical reason, embodiment and historicity are simply absent from Faith and that Enlightenment arrogantly imposes its own standards upon Faith. Faith already contains these, but they exist as implicit moments of its understandings and practices. What is absent in Faith is the conceptualization of these moments as discrete, dichotomous categories.

For Enlightenment does not empty principles peculiar to itself in its attack on Faith, but principles which are implicit in Faith itself. Enlightenment merely presents Faith with its own thoughts which Faith unconsciously lets fall apart...it merely reminds Faith when one of its own modes is present to it, of the others which it also has, but which it <sup>47</sup>always forgets when the other one is present.

#### Enlightenment

upsets the housekeeping of Spirit in the household of Faith by bringing into that household the tools and utensils of this world, a world which Spirit cannot deny is its own, because its consciousness likewise belongs to it. <sup>48</sup>

As the discussion of picture-thoughts and the examples of the Eucharist and the role of Jesus have shown, Faith posits large, diffuse categories. But these categories are not without their specificity; they are concerned to show how religious insights are situated within a finite historical context. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity is a theoretically sophisticated theological argument that acknowledges embodiment in its preoccupation

with the mortality/death of Jesus and contains a historical dimension in that the unity of the Trinity is realized when the savior is born. Faith, in its doctrine of the Trinity, thus subscribes to the standards for which Enlightenment holds it responsible.

And the type of understanding expressed in the Trinity is also relevant to non-theological areas. The example I will explore here is Faith's view of nature. Faith recognizes that embodiment requires that humans use and transform nature, that we relate to nature in part from the point of view of technical effectiveness. After all, the similitude Robust Faith saw between the aconite seed and a human eye was partly for the sake of improving human vision. But Faith also has insight into the way nature provides the conditions of possibility for our existence and it acknowledges that we express our sense of this most intimate relation to nature through symbolic or religious means. These two sorts of understanding -- of the "instrumental" and the "expressive" moments in our relation to nature -- are intermingled in Faith: hence the Robust Faith notion of nature as imbued with telos and spirit.

The very terms "instrumental" and "expressive" are not fully appropriate to a discussion of Faith, for they embody a distinction best suited to Enlightenment sensibility. Faith resists the dichotomy between instrumental and expressive as well as the split between animate and

inanimate being, and this resistance is both its weakness and its strength. The strength ought to be obvious by now, though Hegel himself only saw it imperfectly: Faith gives us a glimpse into another world, a pre-modern world where, for example, the relation to nature may not result in the masterful attitude of modern science and technology. It also glimpses the way in which the Enlightenment project of freedom, rationality and control underplays limitations inherent in its project. Faith's resistance to dichotomies is weakness because it prevents Faith from achieving a level of clarity of expression, a clarity that is the key to the achievement of a high level of theoretical sophistication. Faith's simple and harmonious holism also makes it vulnerable to the charge that its insights cannot have practical or political application. —

These are the weaknesses to which Enlightenment makes appeals. Enlightenment charges that Faith's unities can hold together only if left unexamined, that once the individual parts of these unities are isolated and exposed to the light of critical reason they are seen to be a hodgepodge of obscure insights and confused ideas, not coherent wholes. Because Hegel understands the way this weakness of Faith is tied to its strengths, he is critical of Enlightenment's wholesale condemnation of Faith. Yet Hegel shares Enlightenment's visionary commitment to the precise concepts that result from a systematic,

self-reflective epistemology. Enlightenment strives to make its philosophical categories as well as its social practices fully susceptible to rational analysis and pursues a theoretical articulation of those categories and practices that is clear and precise and sophisticated enough to capture their complexities. Hegel calls this the development of self-consciousness.

Although Enlightenment gives primacy to this pursuit, the potential for self-consciousness is given in all modes of consciousness, says Hegel. Faith "has within it the moment of reflection-into-self, or of self-consciousness, separated from its naivete, in the shape of an insight which remains independently in the background..."<sup>49</sup> Thus, Hegel describes the Enlightenment critique of Faith as one whereby Enlightenment discloses to Faith the presence of its own latent, underdeveloped powers of self-consciousness. Enlightenment draws on this inner affinity of Faith for Enlightenment and exposes an aspect of the self of Faith of which Faith was only darkly aware. Faith is impressed by the disclosure as it recognizes itself in the critique; the legitimacy in Faith's own eyes of its picture-thought knowing is weakened.

Enlightenment, then, holds an irresistible authority over Faith because, in the believer's own consciousness, are found the very moments which Enlightenment has established as valid. Examining the effect of this authority more closely, its behavior toward Faith seems to rend asunder the beautiful unity of trust and immediate certainly, to pollute its spiritual



consciousness with mean thoughts of sensuous reality, to destroy the soul which is composed and secure in its submission, by the vanity of...self-will and self-fulfillment. But as a matter of fact, the result of the Enlightenment is rather to do away with the thoughtless... separation which is presented in Faith. The believing consciousness weighs and measures by a twofold standard; it has two sorts of eyes, two sorts of ears, speaks with two voices, has duplicated all ideas without comparing the two-fold meanings...The Enlightenment illuminates... [the] heavenly world with ideas belonging to the world of sense, and points out this finitude which Faith<sup>50</sup> cannot deny because it is self-consciousness...

We see now why none of the above mentioned responses to the Enlightenment critique is readily available to Faith. Faith's own capacities for theoretical reflection are aroused by Enlightenment, thus indifference toward Enlightenment's critique is impossible once Faith recognizes itself therein. For both Faith and Enlightenment subscribe to the criterion of articulation for knowledge. As well, Faith's self-consciousness is not yet developed enough for it to offer either the deconstructive or Hegelian replies.

Enlightenment charges Faith with a stubborn refusal to perceive evidence disruptive of its world view. Now we can see why modern Faith is so stubborn. Its tenaciousness is a defensive technique. The enchanted view of the world is merely vestigial; it has to assert itself much harder. Faith is properly insistent in some ways -- it does see that Enlightenment's conceptual confidence stems from a

systematic oversimplification of reality. Faith sees this flaw and itself acknowledges the complexity of reality even while it is unable to articulate this richer understanding.

Because of the latent affinities between Faith and Enlightenment, the distinction between an "internal" and an "external" critique becomes blurred. On the one hand, Enlightenment acts upon Faith as would a self-critique: Enlightenment

...is comparable to a silent expansion or... diffusion, say, of a perfume in the unresisting atmosphere. It is a penetrating infection which does not make itself noticeable beforehand as something opposed to the indifferent element into which it insinuates itself, and therefore cannot be warded off.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, Enlightenment, since it is not identical to Faith, mounts an independent challenge to it.

Enlightenment is also "a developed, self-differentiating movement which...must appear on the scene as a sheer uproar and a violent struggle with its antithesis."<sup>52</sup>

### The Hegemony of Enlightenment and the Persistence of Faith

The result of a struggle between Faith and Enlightenment is that Enlightenment establishes itself as the dominant mode of consciousness. Faith "has been expelled from its kingdom," says Hegel, and is a "yearning ...which mourns over the loss of its spiritual world." Faith, however, still "lurks in the background"<sup>53</sup> to haunt

Enlightenment. Although modern Faith will have a multiplicity of guises and although it will lose the unified appearance enabled by a historical position of hegemony, the insights of Faith endure. They endure both in positions that are recognizable as direct heirs of Robust Faith and as they are incorporated into Enlightenment itself. The infection spreads in two directions: Faith infiltrates Enlightenment while Enlightenment internalizes elements of Faith.

"Enlightenment is caught up in the same...conflict that it formerly experienced in connection with faith," only now "it contains within itself the principle it is attacking...and the other party is forgotten."<sup>54</sup> Faith is "forgotten," however, only in the sense that its key insights -- holism, essential incompleteness of Enlightenment knowledge, and interpretation as the role of humanity -- now reside in cognito inside Enlightenment. Faith no longer is the spirit of the age but neither is it absent from the emerging historical self-understanding.

Enlightenment incorporates and re-appropriates moments of Faith but this re-appropriation is as much a transformation of those moments as it is a preservation of them. Faith's concern with a realm of non-human reality, with the enduring essence of Being, was focused around a specific divine person, God. Enlightenment follows Faith in this focus as it, too, attempts to conceive Being in

theological terms. The difference in the effect on the role of God of these two approaches to the "same" issue is, however, profound.

Faith, through its picture-thought understandings and practices, was able to integrate God and earthly existence and to found workable epistemological and technical principles upon God. As long as this integration was successful, the world of Faith could include a reality irreducible to human intentions, creation or by-production. Enlightenment, on the other hand, was from the start unable to sustain that integration. This was due to both the type of theoretical treatment it gave the concept "God" and its exposure of the flaws inherent in Faith's perspective. Thus Enlightenment diminishes the efficacy of God. This means not only that the theological world-view was given another, perhaps fatal, blow, but also that it becomes increasingly difficult for Enlightenment to consider the existence of any non-human being.

Enlightenment internalizes Faith through two distinct but connected moves: Deism and Materialism. Deism affirms the existence of absolute Being but insists upon purifying the notion of this being through philosophical analysis. The attempt here is to take the mysterious God of Faith and to de-mystify him. Deism aims to transform Faith's loose picture-thoughts, to distill them, to have them congeal into clear concepts. Enlightenment arrives at Deism in roughly the following way:

The essence of the concept God is the otherness of his nature when compared human nature -- his supersensuousness, infinity, immortality. Because this is so, there is practically nothing we can know or say about him, for any knowledge claim or descriptive assertion would entail the attribution of perceptible, sensible, determinate, i.e., human, characteristics to him. No predicates can be assigned to God, hence knowledge of him is limited at the extreme: one can only know that he is, not how or why or in what way.

Deism does not deny Faith's God; rather Deism, in its refusal to defile God with predicates, sees itself as according God his proper respect.

To let nothing of that sort [of particularity and limitation] appertain to absolute Being...is the prudent behavior of Reason...which knows how to put itself and its finite riches in their proper place, and how<sup>55</sup> to deal with the Absolute in a worthy manner.

The result, however, of this respectful purification of God is his eventual de-throning: "absolute Being becomes...a vacuum."<sup>56</sup> Hegel shows how a God about which one can know nothing in particular cannot loom large in consciousness or in human affairs. Indeed, this God cannot continue to be understood as existing in any real sense. Materialism, the other side of Enlightenment, takes the step from epistemological skepticism to atheism and completes the Deist de-mystification process. Why hold on

to the now merely formal profession of God's existence? Materialism denies God, disregards the possibility of a supersensuous or spiritual realm and instead turns its attention toward finite reality. Here it is useful to note that Blumenberg's account of the way theological absolutism brings forth its own counter-world of modern atomism is in many ways parallel to Hegel's description of the mutual engendering of Deism and Materialism. By disenchanting the world and reducing it to contingency, Medieval nominalism made Deism possible. There are, of course, differences. The God of nominalism was intended to be an awesome, powerful being whereas Deism from the start conceived of a cool, efficient but distant God.

Hegel shows how Materialism and Deism suffer from the same defect: The ontologically privileged realm, whether that of spirit or matter, is conceived too abstractly. This charge of abstractness means that neither notion is intelligible, for neither can be embodied in words, theories or practices. By definition, "absolute Being" and "pure matter" are opposed to any such embodiment.

...it is important to bear in mind that pure matter is merely what is left over when we abstract from seeing, feeling, tasting, etc. ...what is seen, felt tasted is not matter, but colour, a stone, a salt, etc. Matter <sup>is</sup> rather a pure abstraction..."a pure in-itself."

Like Deism's God, Materialism's matter is a vacuum, a non-being. Hegel will conclude that, as a whole, Enlightenment is



...undiluted platitute, and the confession of platitute; because it consists in knowing nothing of absolute Being or, what amounts to the same thing, in knowing this quite flat truism...that it is only absolute Being; and, on the other hand, in knowing only what is finite and... thinking that this knowledge of the finite<sup>58</sup> as true is the highest knowledge attainable.

But while Materialism sees readily the emptiness of Deism's conception of the divine realm and thus aims to deny that residual God, it is blind to the essential abstractness of its reality, a reality that is limited to the realm of finite, sensible beings. Rather, Materialism conceives itself as having no choice, as having the only understanding possible once Faith's struggle to experience the world as a mysterious unity of spirit and matter is for the most part taken over by, and to that extent rendered innocuous through, Deism.

As was said above, what counts for Enlightenment is not supersensuousness but finite reality. But what is the precise character of this turning toward finite reality or of the claim about its significance? Is the claim of Enlightenment that matter is all we can know? Or is the claim that matter is all there is? Hegel seems to suggest that it is both. The Enlightenment theory that knowledge is determined by sense data -- that only with regard to things of sense can knowledge claims be articulated, or predicates be assigned -- Hegel calls sense-certainty. The ontological claim of Enlightenment that finite being has

its ground in a substratum called "matter" Hegel calls philosophical materialism. The figure of consciousness called Enlightenment is this conjoining of sense-certainty and materialism.<sup>59</sup> Reality is now exhausted by things which immediately and indifferently confront human senses. "Enlightenment...isolates the actual world as...[sheer] determinateness [and]...unmoved finitude."<sup>60</sup>

The emergence of sense-certainty brings to light another instance of the Enlightenment's opposition to the imprecision of picture-thoughts. Sense-certainty as a theory of knowledge presupposes a sharp split between that which is the cause of sense data (objects) and that which receives and interprets the data (subjects). "Consciousness...here...is...a knowledge of what is purely negative of itself, or of things of sense..."<sup>61</sup> The interpenetration of the human, the natural-physical and the divine that was the essence of the enchanted world is, in the early stages of the Faith-Enlightenment dynamic, refined/reduced into two distinct realms: the here-on-earth and the there-beyond. Now, Enlightenment further purifies/limits reality by dismissing everything that transcends human essence and human representation. Finite reality is now exhaustively made up of two types of beings and a new dichotomy crystallizes: subject/object.

We must note that for Hegel it is not so much that Deism is replaced by Materialism, as it is the case the

they function together to crystallize subject and object. The character of Enlightenment is not so neat as the discussion above, for the sake of clarity, tends to make it appear: Enlightenment never succeeds completely in the negation of everything non-human. Every figure of consciousness is always in a struggle with competing modes of being. The relationships between Robust Faith, modern Faith, Deism, Materialism, and later utilitarianism and will, do not constitute a linear progression. Rather, the model is one of parry and thrust, of advance and retreat, of variable degrees and kinds of success in a fight for predominance. This is not to say that it is impossible to discern any historical trend. It is possible: Faith eventually loses sway to Enlightenment. Yet elements generally understood as distinctive of Enlightenment, e.g., the subject/object dichotomy or, in the discussion to follow, utility, are produced only against the backdrop of persistent non-Enlightenment modes.

### Utility, Reason and Will

The principle of utility is the outcome of Enlightenment's attempt to answer the question of the status of finite reality, now conceived as "object." Utility becomes "the predicate of all real being."<sup>62</sup> What is the relationship between finite reality and human being?

What ought to be the human posture toward finite reality?

A standard of usefulness emerges that provides the conceptual link between subject and object -- it is necessary to seek a new link once the old relation of permeation begins to recede. Enlightenment's consideration of the status of finite reality proceeds simultaneously in two directions, both influenced still by a concern with absolute Being.

(1) The moment of atheism latent within Deism comes to the fore wherein absolute Being is exposed as an empty abstraction. Finite reality can have no meaningful relation to this void and must therefore be conceived as pure being-in-itself. Finite reality is self-contained, independent of God and determined by internal laws.

(2) The moment of the believing consciousness latent within Deism comes to the fore and finite reality can be conceived only in comparison to an eternal spiritual realm. Here finite reality is deficient, humbled, and indebted to absolute Being, although in an unspecifiable way because God is himself unspecifiable. Finite reality is thus being-for-another.

Enlightenment as a whole understands finite reality as having then a dual nature and concludes that

...everything is thus as much something in-itself as it is for-an-other; in other words, everything is useful. Everything is at the mercy of everything else, now lets itself be used by others...and now stands...on its hind legs.<sup>63</sup> is for itself, and uses the other in its turn.

The unique thing about finite reality is that it is what it is only insofar as it is instrumental or for something else. Its essence is its usefulness; its end is to be a means.

What is useful, is something with an enduring being in itself...[but] this being-in-itself is at the same time only a pure moment; hence it is absolutely for an other, but equally<sup>64</sup> is for an 'other' merely what it is in itself.

We saw above how Enlightenment turns its attention toward finite beings, toward "things" that have both a moment of autonomy and a moment of heteronomy. These insights then suggest a new set of troubling questions for Enlightenment: Things are for-an-other, but which other? Insofar as a thing is "in-itself," it is "other" or alien, but to what or to whom is it other? The original impetus for uncovering/producing the dual nature of finite reality was the comparison with God: God was the reference point, the other of the for-an-other, that upon which all being was dependent. Yet a point of reference, in order that it provide an orientation to temporal acts and beliefs, must have a fixedness, a solidity, and the capacity to be clearly identified by those in search of orientation. It becomes apparent that while the exalted but attributeness God has residual presence in early modern life (enough to spark the initial consideration of the status of material being), it no longer has the strength to be its reference point.

The God of the Robust Faith had been the center and ground of all experience: it was the still fertile creator, the site of efficacious intentionality, the locus of subjectivity. But as Enlightenment unfolds the human self emerges as the only being eligible for the position of reference point. There is thus increasing pressure to view humans as subject, as having a deep, complex inner or mental life, a psychology, a reflexive self-consciousness. The principle of utility is the accomplice to this shift in ontological emphasis; it is the formalization of the view that reality is constituted by its references to human subjects. "Finite reality can therefore, properly speaking, be taken just as one needs."<sup>65</sup>

Yet Enlightenment inevitably if paradoxically uncovers ambivalence in the status of humans. On the one hand, the human is lord, the sovereign subject: as "one who has come from the hand of God" (to take his place, that is), "everything exists for his pleasure and delight and...he walks the earth as in a garden planted for him."<sup>66</sup> The non-human elements of the natural world become objects implicated in a system of known or soon to be discovered laws, objects docilely awaiting manipulation in the service of human desire.

Thus Experimental Science became the science of the World...It seemed to man as if God had but just created the moon and stars, plants and animals, as if the laws of the universe were established for the first time, for only then did they feel a real interest in the universe, when



they recognized their own Reason in the Reason  
which pervades it. <sup>67</sup>

The world is a garden made for humans -- the creationist ontology, the remnant of the enchanted world of Faith, is still within Enlightenment and here shores up the sovereign subjectivity of the self. On the other hand, the human is the enslaved object: the human, too, fits within the category of finite reality through its embodiment. Thus the principle of utility contains within it the possibility of treating humans as mere means.

This ambivalence, this realization that humans are, at one and the same time, subject and object, has the potential to muddy the self-assured waters of Enlightenment. Enlightenment is in a position to question its pursuit of ever-increasing conceptual clarity, a pursuit which motivated its desire to disentangle self, thing and God. The subject/object "refinement" could be shown to be not only a clarification but also a mystifying oversimplification if Enlightenment would apply its method to the point of its origin -- to the human self. It is also possible now for Enlightenment to confront the pernicious or at least problematic moral and political consequences of utilitarianism. Hyppolite specifies some of these consequences:

In reducing everything speculative to the human, it seems that the Enlightenment reaches a world of no depth, a world in which things are only what they are immediately, and a world in which

individuals are...linked to each other only by considerations of interest.<sup>68</sup>

Enlightenment does not, however, take advantage of this opportunity to deepen its insight; it covers up its methodological and moral weaknesses as soon as it raises the possibility of their discussion. It will be Faith, the mode of consciousness still lurking in the background, that will periodically emerge to make the point about the limits or underside of utilitarianism.

Enlightenment sidesteps these issues by placing its faith in reason and will. Reason here refers to a natural capacity for principled thinking; it refers also to the ability to justify those principles (to provide "reasons") by reference to their human consequences and/or by reference to other principles deemed fundamental to human existence. Reason is always paired with will for Enlightenment. Reason is the universal human potential to discern, devise and judge moral principles, will is the decision to invoke reason and to carry out principled action. For example, although Enlightenment admits that utility "can go beyond itself and destroy itself" (where the destruction refers both to the exploitation of nature and the perversion of the essence of man by reducing him to his use-value), man is the "Thing that is conscious of this relation"<sup>69</sup> of utility. Thus, according to Enlightenment, consciousness equips man with reflective powers that can limit the overextension of utility.

We see that the view of God as designer is not dead yet for Enlightenment, for the basis of its assertion that utility will not destroy man or nature is another assertion that man is designed such that he contains a natural barrier to immoderation. "Reason is for him a useful instrument for keeping this excess within bounds, or rather for preserving himself when he oversteps his limit..." Reason is also called upon to ensure that utility will be channelled in socially beneficial ways: "Just as everything is useful to man, so man is useful too, and his vocation is to make himself a member of the groups, of use for the common good..."<sup>70</sup>

Enlightenment has now turned its attention exclusively toward human reason/will and although the concern with the self has always informed Enlightenment understandings, Hegel now, in his discussion of the French revolution and Rousseau's general will, thematizes this concern and dramatizes its effects.

Despite Enlightenment's conclusion that finite reality is what it is only insofar as it is instrumental, its early formulation of the principle of utility still presupposed the in-itself or autonomous moment of the object. The dual nature of finite reality remained dual even as the "other" of the for-an-other was given primacy. Utility attempted to reconcile subject and object by making the latter subordinate to the former, but it was incapable, in both

intention and effect, of subsuming reality into subjective consciousness. "Utility is still a predicate of the object..."<sup>71</sup> The thing continued to have the appearance of objectivity and of opposition to self-consciousness. But new developments, tied up with the newly emerging view of freedom as will, now allow Enlightenment to bring utilitarianism to its logical conclusion -- the "withdrawal of the form of objectivity of the Useful."<sup>72</sup> Enlightenment re-thinks the nature of finite reality and delegitimizes the in-itself moment by saying that the self of the in-its-self is not a true and valid self for another [human] self." Thus the very conception of what it means to be "in-itself" has changed. The primacy of the human self and its subjectivity go hand in hand with the loss of the object as an independent center of resistance. The human subject has become the model to which anything that claims "in-itself-hood" has to conform. Clearly, natural objects do not conform to this model. Human consciousness "lets nothing break loose to become a free object standing over against it."<sup>73</sup>

What is the new status of "things"? The primary unit of reality to which one must relate is no longer "objects" but "notions"; our concepts of objects. "The individual consciousness conceives the object as having no other essence than self-consciousness itself or as being absolutely Notion."<sup>74</sup> Objects are second-order beings, the

products of the particular mental category that organized and created an identity for an originally chaotic cluster of elements. In Hegel's introductory discussion of Enlightenment he foreshadows the effect of the transcending/preserving of utility: Enlightenment "seeks to abolish every kind of independence other than that of self-consciousness, whether it be the independence of what is actual, or of what possesses intrinsic being..."<sup>75</sup>

Enlightenment's focus on the mental constructs of reality, combined with its faith in a self-limiting and self-generated reason, expose how Enlightenment privileges subjectivity. Enlightenment has a clear rationalist strand. But we saw earlier that Enlightenment is also committed to a sense-certainty epistemology and a materialism, both of which have as their necessary precondition the existence of finite "things" ontologically strong enough to ground knowledge. Within the Enlightenment decision to give primacy to finite material reality is contained the view that things -- rocks, rivers, stars, tables, animals, plants -- have an existence prior to the human conceptualization and categorization of them. Otherwise objects could not perform their role as the stimulus of knowledge, i.e., there would be nothing out there that shouts to the senses. Enlightenment here privileges the object and has a clear empiricist strand.

Enlightenment, then, seems to be the paradoxical convergence of a type of empiricism (where things-in-themselves ground perception-as-knowledge) and a version of rationalism (where objects are products of consciousness and the mind is the ground of knowledge). The paradox disappears however, when we focus on the subject/object dichotomy shared by empiricism and rationalism. Empiricism and rationalism engender each other; they both presuppose that the most basic way of being in the world is knowing. In both cases reality is exhausted by what lends itself to clear representation -- representation in human perception or in human thought. An experimental science that manipulates physical objects and a logical analysis that manipulates concepts together presuppose a view of self as subject and a view of nature as a depository of objects lacking in the will, intelligence and purposefulness necessary for subjectivity.

In the move to lower the status of objects, Enlightenment continues to respond to alienation, i.e., it continues its attempt to experience the world as a unified whole, where every element is a work of art designed to fit neatly with every other element. The "experimental science" of Enlightenment is motivated by the desire to believe that relations among inanimate objects contain a pattern, a rationality intelligible to humans. And Enlightenment philosophy is motivated by the desire to



believe that things or processes or experiences lend themselves to the form of "notion." "A practical interest makes use of, consumes the objects offered to it; a theoretical interest calmly contemplates them, assured that in themselves they present no alien element," because "for the...Ego...that which is diverse from itself, sensual or spiritual,...presents an object of dread..."<sup>76</sup> The overall aim of Enlightenment is to secure external reality, to seek the "unity of Thought with its Object" and this "penetration of the Ego into and beyond other forms of being...directly involves the harmonization of Being..."<sup>77</sup> Notwithstanding his commitment to the philosophy of absolute Spirit, Hegel understands that the harmonization of Being is a tricky business, for he says that Enlightenment's project requires "challenging the external world to exhibit the same Reason which Subject [Ego] possesses."<sup>78</sup>

### Absolute Freedom

Thinking itself successful, through science and philosophy, in escaping the constraints of objects, Enlightenment experiences and seeks to prolong an euphoric sense of freedom: "the world is for it simply its own will..."<sup>79</sup> Freedom of the will -- freedom is derived from and properly belongs to the human will alone. This is

because, as we have seen, neither objects nor God any longer have central existential roles. Human freedom is understood not as an inferior replica of divine omnipotence nor as necessitating participation in a constant struggle to control objects inherently resistant to control. Thus the will is free only when all impediments to its pure exercise are removed. God had receded, objects have been unnerved, only the particularity of an act of will stands in the way of the purity of will and thus of the absoluteness of freedom. Enlightenment "must know what the Will is in itself...The Will is Free only when it does not will anything alien, extrinsic, foreign to itself..., but wills itself alone -- wills the Will."<sup>80</sup> This task, the task of the French Revolution, requires that will be universalized, not limited by the contingency and finitude of any individual will. Thus there appears in history Rousseau's notion of the general will.

For Hegel the emergence of talk of a "general will" exemplifies the Enlightenment process of subsuming reality into universal concepts. What it means for reality to become "notion" is that all particulars, e.g., all individual persons or acts or desires, are de-particularized and absorbed into a general abstract category. In the case of the reality of individual will, the notion of the general will is the medium of absorption. The general will is universal; it is a category accessible

to, applicable for, and inclusive of a subject inherently universal.

The universalization of will involves the harmonization of individual wills into one will. This means that freedom requires that there be no social differentiation of roles, functions, ideas --

...all social groups or classes...into which the whole is articulated are abolished; the individual consciousness that belonged to any such sphere and willed and fulfilled itself in it, has put aside its limitation; its purpose is the general purpose, its language universal law, its work the universal work.

The primary political conflict and the significant theoretical tension now to be reckoned with is that between the individual and the community. The debate, perhaps now an impasse, between the two continues today -- forms of individualism vs. forms of collectivism. Enlightenment is forced, or rather has forced itself, into the position of viewing the world in exaggerated oppositional terms. It sees only two forces in a struggle: "It divides itself into extremes equally abstract, into a simple, inflexible, cold universality, and into the discrete, absolute hard rigidity and self-willed atomism of actual self-consciousness."<sup>82</sup> This tension is a subset of the subject/object dichotomy that preoccupied Enlightenment utilitarians. Both persist despite the confidence that the resisting object has been absorbed into the subject and the individual has been absorbed into the general will.

Hegel shows us why the mopping up project fails. Here is the problem with the pursuit of absolute freedom:

How does Will assume a definite form? For in willing itself, it is nothing but an identical reference to itself; but, in point of fact, it wills something specific: there are, we<sup>83</sup> know, distinct and special Duties and Rights.

Before the universal can perform a deed it must concentrate itself into the One of individuality and put at the head an individual self-consciousness...But thereby all other individuals are excluded...so that the deed would not be a deed of the actual universal self-consciousness.<sup>84</sup>

Because any action whatsoever of an individual is guilty of being non-general and thus arbitrary and counter to the universal needs of humankind, any and every particular action is suspect. The result of absolute freedom is and only can be negative: The terror of the guillotine, the denial of civil liberties, the violence of revolution. Universal will can only act, in a way parallel with the Enlightenment negation of Faith, to destroy that which is established. When it tries to build or to express affirmatively the universal will, it finds that it can only issue in particular actions. Action implies particular action. Yet advocates of the general will cannot help but note the absence of the general will; social life still contains factions, strife, differences. They then locate responsibility in the secret wills of evil individuals seeking to undermine the community. Absolute freedom

becomes absolute terror, as the leaders of the general will seek out and destroy suspect individuals.

Enlightenment completes itself in disarray and decomposition. On one side, its definition of the world through the notion of utility threatens to convert the self into a means and undercut its ideal of freedom; on the other side, its attempt to realize a pure will threatens to engulf the particular self in an abstract universal which can only act to deny and destroy, never to build and affirm. Although Enlightenment, contrary to its belief, has not eradicated Faith, it has exposed serious flaws in it. Despite these flaws, Faith has shown how neither can Enlightenment sustain its views of knowledge, science or freedom. In their attempt to fulfill their ideals, Enlightenment and Faith require each other.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>My account of this enchanted world relies primarily on Michel Foucault in The Order of Things, Vintage Books, 1970. This interpretation is supported by many other sources: see Clarence J. Glacken, Traces on the Rhodian Shore, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967; Hans Blumenberg, The Legitimacy of the Modern Age, trans. Robert Wallace, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983; Martin Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, trans. Albert Hofstadter, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982; Charles Taylor, "Rationality" in Rationality and Relativism, ed. Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982 and "Language and Human Nature," A. P. Plaunt Memorial Lecture, Carleton University, 1978; John Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954.

<sup>2</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>Glacken, Traces on the Rhodian Shore, p. 203.



<sup>7</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup>Foucault, The Order of Things, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 345.

<sup>11</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 381.

<sup>12</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 380.

<sup>13</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 380.

<sup>14</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 379.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Taylor, Hegel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 178.

<sup>16</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 371-3.

<sup>17</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 389-90.

<sup>18</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 390.

<sup>19</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 390.

<sup>20</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 390-1.

<sup>21</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 391.

<sup>22</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 466-7.

<sup>23</sup>Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p. 413.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Taylor elaborates this point in Hegel, p.

539:

Now while Hegel's philosophy claims to be the fulfillment of Enlightenment thought, he in fact tries to combine with this, and with each other, two strands of thought and sensibility which were as much reactions to as extensions of the Enlightenment...Hegel's philosophy can be seen as an attempt...to combine the rational self-legislating freedom of the Kantian subject with the expressive unity within man and with nature for which the age longed.

<sup>25</sup>Blumenberg, The Legitimacy of the Modern Age, p.

130.

<sup>26</sup>Blumenberg, p. 134.

<sup>27</sup>Blumenberg, p. 135.

<sup>28</sup>Blumenberg, p. 171.

<sup>29</sup>Blumenberg, p. 156.

<sup>30</sup>Blumenberg, p. 176.

<sup>31</sup>Blumenberg, p. xix.

<sup>32</sup>Blumenberg, p. 182.

<sup>33</sup>Blumenberg, p. 196.

<sup>34</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, trans.

A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977),  
par. 484.

<sup>35</sup>Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 534.

<sup>36</sup>Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 527.

<sup>37</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 480.

<sup>38</sup>Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 529.

<sup>39</sup>Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 529.

<sup>40</sup>Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 537.

- <sup>41</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 529.
- <sup>42</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 540.
- <sup>43</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 542.
- <sup>44</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 563.
- <sup>45</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 566.
- <sup>46</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 567.
- <sup>47</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 564.
- <sup>48</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 486.
- <sup>49</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 542.
- <sup>50</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 572.
- <sup>51</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 545.
- <sup>52</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 546.
- <sup>53</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 573.

<sup>54</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 575.

<sup>55</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 557.

<sup>56</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 557.

<sup>57</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 578.

<sup>58</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 562.

<sup>59</sup> All Hegelian modes of consciousness exhibit this conjoining of epistemology and ontology; the dialectical shift from one mode of consciousness to another is a shift in both epistemology and ontology.

...the Phenomenology is a concrete history of consciousness, of its departure from the cave, and its ascent to science...In the course of its development, consciousness loses not only what it held to be true from a theoretical point of view, but also its own view of life and of being, its intuition of the world. Experience bears not only on knowledge, in the narrow meaning of the word, but also on conceptions of existence.

Jean Hyppolite, Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 567.

<sup>61</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 558.

<sup>62</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 586.

<sup>63</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 560.

<sup>64</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 580.

<sup>65</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 559.

<sup>66</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 560.

<sup>67</sup> Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 440.

<sup>68</sup> Hyppolite, Genesis and Structure, p. 440.

<sup>69</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 560.

<sup>70</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 560.

<sup>71</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 582, my emphasis.

<sup>72</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology.

<sup>73</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 588.

<sup>74</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 585.



<sup>75</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 536.

<sup>76</sup> Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 439.

<sup>77</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 439.

<sup>78</sup> Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 439.

<sup>79</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 584.

<sup>80</sup> Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 442.

<sup>81</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 585.

<sup>82</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 590.

<sup>83</sup> Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 443.

<sup>84</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology, par. 589.

C H A P T E R     J I I  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND NATURAL HOLISM

Introduction

Hegel anticipated that the dialectic of Faith and Enlightenment would come to a close as modernity was realized. But if, as we claim, the Hegelian solution that was to transcend the dialectic, the ontology of Geist, failed, and if, as we also claim, Hegel's account of the dilemma is accurate, we should expect to find its manifestations in the contemporary political world. In this chapter, I explore those manifestations as they occur in the attempt to rectify the damage done to the natural environment. I concentrate on the presuppositions made about nature in alternative environmental orientations to see whether the understandings of nature required by contemporary versions of Faith and Enlightenment can be sustained today.

The thesis is that the two paradigmatic contemporary orientations to nature function together, each providing an insightful critique of the other, yet neither able to transcend the critique of itself. Moreover, it is the ability of each to uncover defects in the programs of the other that helps to foster that uncritical view of each toward itself.

One modern orientation to nature gives primacy to economic utility. Both the (lamentable but unavoidable) destruction of natural sites and their preservation are defended on this ground. Marshes are drained and developed in order to increase the value of real estate and the supply of desirable housing; retail businesses are encouraged to form a mall on farm land for the sake of the tax base of declining rural areas. Yet the condemnation of residential and commercial development is couched as well in terms of financial losses to the recreation or tourist industry (rather than, for example, in terms of acknowledging the integrity of beings different from ourselves or for places not ordered according to principles of human design). This chapter explores the implications of this view of nature as standing in reserve for human use for conceptions of knowledge, self and reason.

There is also a strand in modern thinking, however, that finds this view inadequate and it is an important philosophical task to draw out and articulate this holistic perspective. There is something troubling, for example, about stripmining even if the land is "successfully reclaimed." And it is difficult to explain, in terms of economic, productive, or even aesthetic utility alone, the sense that there is something wrong about the needless destruction of an old tree, even were the axeman the last and soon-to-die human. This chapter explores the

epistemological and experiential bases of this sense of the inadequacy of an instrumental orientation to nature.

These two types of orientations, those relating to nature primarily through utilitarian categories (environmental management) and those relating primarily through moral categories (natural holism), form the dominant paradigms for environmentalism today.

### Management, Technique and Control

From the perspective of environmental management, the instrumental use and mastery of nature are irreducible elements in the human relation to nature; environmental awareness allows us to compensate for the side-effects of this necessary orientation. Environmental management assumes that the environmental problem, once properly defined as "pollution," or "overpopulation," or "conservation," or "societal values," finds its solution in better human planning, organization and technical control.

In its most fundamental sense, technique refers to any human contrivance designed to further human aims: enlightened solutions to the environmental problem revolve around the attempt to devise new techniques to mitigate adverse technological effects on the environment. Examples of these techniques cut across professions and academic disciplines: tax incentives for pollution reduction, legal

procedures for acknowledging environmental rights, engineering plans for pollution control devices, analytic-philosophical arguments for an environmental ethic, and bureaucratic regulations of industry.

The theme that runs throughout environmental management is the requirement that human-made order be imposed upon the self, upon society, upon nature:

(1) The self is not a natural harmony of interests and needs; it needs discipline that simultaneously fosters that which is uniquely human and suppresses that which is uncultivated and animalistic within humans. Spiritual insight must be replaced by scientific knowledge. Because of the need for discipline, elements of the self, its attitudes and emotions, become targets of the techniques of personnel departments, advertisers, the military, consumer advocates, religious groups, environmentalists.

(2) Society is not grounded in a secure tradition; it needs to be conventionalized. The reification that is tradition falsely insinuates a unity of individual and collectivity, whereas convention is human contrivance self-conscious of its non-natural, controversial and controvertible form. Traditions and customs must be replaced by self-conscious norms and rational policies. A conventionalized social order is an entity amenable to the application of techniques of administrative rationalization.

(3) Nature is not enchanted with the echoes of resemblances, the physical world is not intentionally and divinely ordered; it needs to be humanized. The self-operating order of nature in the wild must be replaced by environmentally managed sites. And the assumption is that nature's resistance to the human arrangement of it can in general be overcome. We already form nature through our sciences that enable domestication of plants and animals and cultivation of soils -- in short, through good "resource management." Nature, divested of superstition, is a potentially useful environment where atoms, electrical attractions/repulsions, chemical interactions, and plant and animal biologies wait, standing ready to be harnessed.

I will here explore two versions of the attempt to apply technique to environmental side-effects: environmental economics and environmental ethics. Our concern is not with the details of any particular economic or ethical plan, but with the assumptions about nature operative within such plans.

If one were to distill from environmental economics its basic aim, it would be the intention to rationalize, according to a recently discovered value called environmental quality, the economic system. We will internalize the finally recognized but still external social costs of pollution.



It is relatively easy to see the way an instrumental view of nature coheres with the beliefs and practices of environmental economics -- the values of efficient resource use and distribution, a high material standard of living, preservation of economic freedom, etc., presuppose a conception of nature as lifeless materials for use. Nature has the ontological status of matter; this matter has an order of statistical regularities, indifferent to human needs but amenable, once understood through scientific investigation, to human re-ordering. The discussion of environmental economics is for the purpose of introducing this modern scientific conception of nature, the rational-empirical conception of knowledge, and the faith in human reason and technique.

The discussion of environmental ethics shows how it displays a more complex, subtle version of these same conceptions. Environmental ethics shifts the emphasis from the efficient and prudent use of a deposit of natural resources to our responsibility for them and our right to the continued use of them. In its dominant mode, it shares with environmental economics the motivation for the pursuit of environmental quality: human desires for recreation, health, scientific curiosity, or wealth.

Both the economist and the ethicist carry forth the project of artifice-making, subjecting to human organization and control that which was beyond or indifferent to

it. Environmental economics operates primarily at the level of society, rationalizing its policies, regulations, and laws; environmental ethics concentrates on the self, examining and reshaping the beliefs and attitudes presumed to underlie the modern treatment of nature. From the perspective of environmental ethics, human values are available for technical manipulation and can with skill be altered and deployed to achieve an environmentally sound effect.

I turn now to a fuller discussion of each of these versions of environmental management.

### Environmental Economics

The environmental problem is, for environmental economics, a matter of inadequate pollution control. Until recently, the primary tool for pollution control was government regulation. A public agency was made responsible for determining how much of each pollutant could be safely discharged into the air, land, or water, and for monitoring each pollution source and imposing appropriate fines. In determining the "threshold values," the maximum allowable level of discharges, the agency was to take into account the public health, the best practicable technology for each industry, and the financial burden a firm could bear.<sup>1</sup>

Economists were quick to recognize that this approach contained obstacles to efficiency and economic freedom:

(1) It required an inordinate demand on bureaucracy. How could a public agency determine threshold values for every pollutant and for every firm? Because fines were minimal or, more often, never imposed, there was little financial incentive for pollution reduction. The regulation approach required either constant inspection by agencies notoriously understaffed, or a faith, unjustified by any experience, that the social conscience of polluters would compel them to act in the public interest.

(2) It was highly susceptible to corruption. Regulatory agencies tended to be responsive to the industries they were designed to monitor.

(3) It was legally complicated. It was difficult to determine the "best available technology" or a "reasonable cost." Pollution could continue while cases were ensnared in legal contest.

(4) It focused only on the output of factories and did nothing to encourage recycling, internal changes in the production process, or the restructuring of production or consumption priorities. Moreover, even if a polluting firm complied with the letter of the law, it had no incentive to reduce pollution further.

(5) Its interventionist logic raised the specter of a socialism that suppressed free enterprise and entrepreneurial initiative.

Environmental economics then invested its hopes in market incentives for production reduction, for the market was the best known way to preserve freedom and efficiency. A price, in the form of a tax, could be put on pollution, obviating the need to regulate the amount of pollution discharge. The price of a product would then reflect the true cost to society, for unlike labor, supplies or overhead, air, water and land had for too long been treated as if they were free. There was, therefore, no economic incentive to minimize damage to them or depletion of them. This market approach, which internalized the externalities of pollution, gave the polluting firm freedom to choose its own pollution, reduction procedures. The key, of course, was to set the tax higher than the cost of any pollution-reduction strategy a firm may devise.

Advocates of the market incentives approach claim that another advantage is its reliance on the self-interest of polluters. It assumes no special good will on their part, but only that producers seek to reduce costs and increase profits. The beauty of the incentives approach is that the result is socially desirable but the motivation is individual gain. Changes in social behavior can be accomplished by modifying the incentives that induce people

to act rather than by mandating or prohibiting certain acts.

But while advocates of putting a price on pollution are more successful than the regulators approach in preserving economic freedom (where freedom means the greatest possible choice options), their scheme too requires considerable government intervention. A public agency still must measure the output of pollution from each source in order to set a fee which approximates the marginal social cost of pollution.

A related attempt to preserve the market by closing/internalizing its loopholes/externalities was the concept of amenity rights. Within the legal system that ensures the preconditions of free enterprise, industry must compensate owners of private property for damage resulting from their activities, yet there exists no legal provision for damage to peace and quiet, clean air and water, or privacy. If these amenities were given legal standing, then damage to them would have to be considered in production decisions. There would then be an incentive -- losing a court case or facing a jail sentence -- either to compensate victims or to reduce damage in the first place through the manufacture of quieter, cleaner, less ecologically intrusive products.

What are some of the themes common to these three -- regulation, tax incentive and amenity rights -- attempts?

First, the orientation to nature is politicized: pollution becomes an issue of public policy. Pollution calls for a rational plan, a plan that requires increasing our understanding of natural systems through basic research, research that can facilitate prediction of natural responses to human intervention, prediction that in turn can allow control. All environmental economic perspectives agree that nature cannot simply be left alone: the good life is tied to continued increases in production and consumption. But just as the pollution problem is human-made, it can be solved through human ingenuity.

There is, however, some evidence of dissension in the ranks of the technophiles. The problems are complex and require an interdisciplinary effort, they say. The once confident field of economics begins to fear that its focus on quantitative scarcity is inadequate to the task of environmental protection: economic growth as now measured may not be the most fruitful focus. Economic techniques must be supplemented with political ones, and concern with "quality of life" and the political criteria used for choosing among resource-use strategies grows. "The difficult questions now are not whether physical and economic problems can be solved, but which problems to solve and how to solve them."<sup>2</sup> Despite these stirrings, the internal debates of environmental economists and policy scientists continue to center around the method of control



of nature and its human polluters, arguing over the merits of regulation-driven control, market-incentive-driven, and legal-incentive-driven.

Second, there is a general faith in human contrivance, even though the specific remedial techniques are as yet unspecified:

If private firms were adequately motivated to modify their production processes so as to generate less pollution, there is every reason to believe that technology could be harnessed, in as yet unknown ways, to diminish rather than to increase pollution.

Ignorance is one of the most potent obstacles to solving our ecological problems, an ignorance which only science can dispel.

Here the environmental managers mirror the Enlightenment faith in a self-monitoring, self-correcting reason. This reason operates at peak efficiency if carried out at the level of the reflective individual and when uninhibited by the demands of tradition, religion, or collective action. However, environmental management's faith in the autonomy of reason conflicts with the detailed, extensive regulation by a central authority required by each of their schemes.

Third, the faith in reason and technique is connected to a conception of nature as a deposit of resources with latent potentialities. There are a multitude of

potentialities within nature, but each is realized only in collaboration with science and technology.

Half a century ago the air was for breathing and burning; now it is also a natural resource of the chemical industry. Two decades ago Vermont granite was only building and tombstone material; now it is a potential fuel, each ton of which has a usable content (uranium) equal to 150 tons of coal.<sup>5</sup>

Nature is matter and when we apply technology we treat it in the manner appropriate to the type of being it has. No wrong is done to nature when it is used, rather we are perfecting it, allowing it to realize its essence (i.e., utility for human beings.) The relationship of use is mutually beneficial, not merely exploitive. Here we see an endorsement of the Enlightenment understanding of finite reality as having a dual nature: It is what it is only insofar as it is instrumental or for something else; its end is to be a means.

There are different versions of this conception of nature as a resource in need of technological fulfillment. The three perspectives we have explored briefly generally understand nature to be plastic, easily moldable. Regardless of whether nature is initially unordered or is ordered in ways oblivious to human need, it offers little resistance to the imposition of form upon it. The success of modern technology is evidence of this.

Few components of the earth's crust, including farm land, are so specific as to defy economic replacement, or so resistant to technological advance as to

be incapable of eventually yielding extractive products at constant or declining cost.

Infatuated with technological power, some environmental economists claim that scarcity of natural resources, defined as diminishing returns for extractive industries, simply may never occur, for it is now possible to "escape the quantitative constraints imposed by the character of the earth's crust."<sup>7</sup>

### Environmental Ethics

The environmental ethics version of environmental management sees the natural constraints on human action as more serious. There are limits to the shape nature can be forced to assume, limits that no technological advance can overcome without dangerous consequences. Technique is still the preferred method, but this version uses a vocabulary of responsibility rather than economic efficiency. In this view, if natural limits are ignored or overridden by the sheer magnitude or force of technology, we are no longer fulfilling our duty to perfect nature.

[T]o perfect nature is to humanise it, to make it more useful for men's purposes, more intelligible to their reason, more beautiful...Put like good artists, men should...respect their material.

This combination of transformation, use, and respect results in a relation to nature of mastery, but a mastery

which disciplines and enhances rather than enslaves and destroys. Nature needs to be liberated from itself. Like a tantrum-prone child, it can be freed from the torment of chaos or imperfect control through the imposition of external constraints. Nature realizes itself through our transformation of it and we realize our highest potential through this process as well.

[Man's great memorials -- his science, his philosophy, his technology, his architecture, his countryside -- are all...founded upon his attempt to understand and subdue nature.

Not only must humans use, transform, and subdue nature for the sake of survival and for the establishment of a stable society, they ought to, for "it is only they who can create."<sup>10</sup>

This shift in emphasis from the efficient and prudent use of natural resources to our responsibility for them and our right to the continued use of them is exemplified in the work of Christopher Stone. In Should Trees Have Standing? he proposes that we grant rights to natural objects themselves. We will see how Stone continues to assume the primacy of human needs even though his overt aim is to accord natural objects a status independent of humans.

Stone advocates that natural objects be recognized as jural entities competent to press for damages for injury to themselves. Natural objects cannot speak, but one can

handle this "as one does the problems of legal incompetents -- human beings who have become vegetable...[S]omeone is designated by the court with the authority to manage the incompetent's affairs."<sup>11</sup> Thus, a human guardian, such as the Sierra Club, could apply to be the representative of natural objects. Stone's view differs from the current legal approach whereby natural objects are treated as property, property protected for the sake of its individual owner -- damages are liable only at the owner's behest and only for demonstrable injury to the owner. The granting of rights to the objects themselves would facilitate the restriction of industrial, commercial, or recreational actions that threaten remote public lands (whose owner is the diffuse and fragmented "public") or particular ecosystems (whose owners might include "the future inhabitants of the Southwest"). The guardian could be viewed as the voice "of unborn generations...of the otherwise unrepresented, but distantly injured, contemporary humans."<sup>12</sup>

Stone's attempt to legally acknowledge injury to natural objects requires a method for assessing damages. Here Stone participates in the project of incorporating into the legal-economic system that which should be included by the system's own logic, but has not been. "[T]he river polluter's actions are costless, so far as he is concerned -- except insofar as the legal system can

somehow force him to internalize them."<sup>13</sup> This internalization requires an assessment of the social costs of environmental degradation, costs that then could constitute damage claims in a court of law. But in order for a river to receive damages, its guardian must provide a monetary value for the injury. Stone admits the difficulties in estimating these often intangible costs, but nevertheless pursues the attempt, for society is better off with rude estimates than with none at all.<sup>14</sup> Estimates could be based upon losses to the fishing or vacation industry requiring the unpolluted site, or upon the costs to the environment per se, i.e., the cost of returning the degraded area or object to approximately its original state.

This brief summary of Stone's position enables us to discern the ways in which his conception of nature is lodged with the human-centered framework of Enlightenment and thus undermines his commitment to accord natural objects a status independent of humans.

First, the environmental management theme that the perfection of nature requires our transformation of it is reasserted by Stone as the view that nature ought to be conceived on the model of deficient humanity.<sup>15</sup> Like the status of the insane or mentally handicapped (human objects deemed legally incompetent), the status of natural objects depends upon an external standard -- the characteristics of



normal human beings. Natural objects are worthy of respect to the extent that their physical or psychological structures resemble those of normal humans. This vision of nature as inferior humanity both reflects and helps to constitute what much of nature has in the modern age become: the domesticated product of human technique. Evidence of this is the breeding of animals and plants more and more according to marketing, packaging, and distribution imperatives, as well as the emergence of animal rights groups protesting this.

A second way in which Stone privileges humans is through the conventionalization of rights. Drawing upon the Enlightenment insight about the social construction of reality, rights and the status they endow are conceived as "legal conventions acting in support of some status quo."<sup>16</sup> This view departs from both the classical liberal doctrine of rights as having an inalienable attachment to their (human) bearers and the theological position that value has a divine source only. According to Stone, the modern self dispenses value as it "grants" rights to those objects it deems fit. Although the granting of rights must to some degree reflect a prior cultural valuation of the affected group, its primary function is to create that higher, more independent status. "[U]ntil the rightless thing receives its rights, we cannot see it as anything but a thing for the use of 'us' -- those who are holding rights at the time."<sup>17</sup>

Because rights are conventional and because conventions are "hypostatizations [that] always have a pragmatic quality to them,"<sup>18</sup> the extension of rights to non-human nature is justifiable in terms of its utility: It can protect us from the adverse environmental impact of industrial society. Besides, says Stone, his proposal is only a logical extension of the Western moral tradition that has progressively included children, prisoners, aliens, women, Blacks, and the insane into the realm of moral consideration. In conclusion, when Stone says "the rightlessness of the natural environment can and should change,"<sup>19</sup> we now see that he means (1) all rights are conventions and thus "can" be changed, and (2) a change in the status of the environment would be better for us at this stage in industrial society and thus "should" be pursued.

Stone's argument that "the strongest case can be made from the perspective of human advantage for conferring rights on the environment,"<sup>20</sup> admittedly employs a broad notion of what counts as advantageous to humans. To elevate the legal standing of nature through righthood can improve not only our material standard of living, but, by enlarging our empathy and our sense of interdependency with nature, also can make us "far better humans."<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, despite this broadened notion of utility, despite references to the "environment per se," and despite

the attempt to differentiate himself from purely anthropocentric perspectives, Stone's approach presupposes a view of nature as instrumental -- as potentially malleable and value-dependent upon humans.

This is not to say that nature exists only to serve humans -- that would imply that nature has an inherent purpose and scientific investigation has uncovered too many random events, too many natural processes that fly in the face of human desires and aims to substantiate that claim. Rather, Stone's view implies that since nature cannot be understood as sacred or enchanted, there is nothing immoral about using it to our advantage. The resistance of nature to mastery is not sufficient to de-legitimize mastery, but means only that we must anticipate practical or technical obstacles in order to overcome them in the future. Stone's opposition to the view that natural objects are "for man to conquer and master and use"<sup>22</sup> is a pragmatic one: No ontological violence is done, i.e., no violence to the essence of what the thing is, when natural objects are conquered, mastered, or used.

I note here that because Stone had to conventionalize rights in order to extend them to nature, there always exists the possibility of reversing or revoking these mere conventions, especially when other human needs outweigh the desire to preserve nature. Stone does not acknowledge this possibility implicit in his position, but it accounts for

the fact that he is unable to maintain his distinction between a natural object that is a "thing for the use of us" and one that is a "thing with rights." The distinction collapses because no beings except humans can have intrinsic value within a conventionalized view of rights (and even this standing of humans is partly grounded in convention, a convention self-bestowed because necessary to any further social construction).

Stone leaves himself, then with two ontological-status alternatives for non-humans: instrumental value narrowly construed, where natural objects are used indiscriminately and without regard for consequences; and enlightened instrumental value, where natural objects are used with awareness of the ecological, economic, or recreational needs of living humans or their descendants. Other environmental ethicists distinguish among types of use-value while holding to the fundamental instrumentality of nature. One such distinction is between instrumental value and inherent value. "Instrumental value" includes the concrete uses of a thing and "inherent value" refers to the more subtle worth a thing has through its ability to inspire, fascinate, spiritually heal, or aesthetically please us.<sup>23</sup>

The conclusion about the essential instrumentality of nature to which Stone and all environmental ethicists are led is bound up with the attempt to discern the type of

"value" that can properly be ascribed to nature. What are the methods through which the ethicist determines "value"?

An environmental ethic requires a theory of value, they say, and this requires the elaboration of criteria that establish something as worthy of moral consideration. The criteria range from those most tightly linked to human being (rational agency, consciousness, cognition, the ability to have interests) to those associated with animateness (sentience, self-determination) and finally to those which could include inanimate things (beneficence, having a "good of one's own"). After the fact of some value is established, environmental ethicists must decide the order of this value, and they generally agree that value can be either instrumental or intrinsic. (The issue of moral significance, where the value of a particular thing must be weighed against that of another, depends in part upon this prior establishment of the type of value each thing has.)

A review of these ethical discussions of nature shows them to be quite intricate, requiring finer and finer distinctions: Is sentience necessary (or sufficient?) to qualify a thing for moral consideration? they ask. And if so, does that imply that pleasure has intrinsic value? And does that imply that individual sentient members of a species are of more value than the species itself? Does interest-bearing mean the capacity for actual or potential

interest? Are interests linked to consciousness or simply to having a "good of one's own"? I will argue that there is something askew in these discussions of nature caught within the frame of "value." The distinctions made collapse or explain very little: The project as a whole seems to be sustained by the very activity of tangling and untangling the fine hairs created by each differentiating argument.

Why? One reason is that the instrumental/intrinsic distinction is faulty in the context of a philosophy of nature. All talk of "value" presupposes the centrality of humans; the subject always determines the "value" of an object. In fact, an object is that which requires subjectivity as its foundation. Therefore, within this frame of value, the category of "intrinsic value" can have no place, if "intrinsic" is meant to capture our sense of the recalcitrance of nature or the existence of that element of nature awesome because independent of us. And yet this is precisely the sense in which the environmental ethicist intends the term: Intrinsic value is "value [that exists] independently of any awareness or appreciation...or interest...on the part of any conscious being."<sup>24</sup> The concept of intrinsic value is a category mistake except when applied to the human self as a subject. In the other cases, it is analogous to an "accidental intention": Each term is inimical to the one it is supposed to qualify, and



the conceptual incompatibility expresses a deeper incongruity in the theory. The subjectivism of environmental management talk of "value," as well as its overall aim to impose form on nature, are the residues of Enlightenment's preoccupation with human will as it attaches to reason in the service of freedom.

Robin Attfield, in The Ethics of Environmental Concern, defends the concept of "intrinsic value" and its use in expressing the impossibility of reducing natural beings to instrumentalities: "[A]ny theory of value, however instrumentalist in tenor, must recognize intrinsic value somewhere, or there is nothing which gives anything of value its point."<sup>25</sup> This is not, however, a defense of intrinsic value for nonhumans, but rather supports the case that human subjectivity is the genesis of value. It is no surprise that we conclude from Stone that the only "value" of natural objects is instrumental; all value, when probed deeply enough, finds "its point" in human aims, needs, or ideals.

Despite these philosophical difficulties, environmental ethics is drawn to discussion of the "value" of nature. Why? Because they are caught within an Enlightenment frame: The discourse of "value" privileges the self and supports an instrumental view of nature because it sees the alternative as unsupportable in the face of modern science and technology. If humans cannot

assign value to what is essentially a material nature, they say, then human worth must be dependent upon biological contribution to nature; if nature is not made up of usable objects, then it must have subjectivity and a teleology; if nature is not a means then it must be an end-in-itself; if humans do not investigate nature according to a rational, scientific model, then the orientation to nature must be irrational, primitive, and mystical.

### The Environmental Management Critique of Natural Holism

This method of self-justification through contrast to an implausible alternative presented as the only alternative is characteristic of environmental management. Exemplifying the dualistic character of Enlightenment thought, it defines all alternatives as its stark opposite and thus presents them in a way that presupposes its own hegemony. Once this implicit move is accepted, the case against the alternative is already made:

To aim at the formulation of rational propositions, theories, and policies is to relegate utterances based upon other standards to the realm of irrationality and abnormality; to strive for the clean, odorless and glamorous life of modernity is to require a life lived in close contact with nature to be deemed primitive; to deploy a science that aims to uncover in full the mechanism of

nature is to classify knowledge that anticipates some irreducible opacity in nature as mystical. For example, an extreme version of environmental management fears that contact with "raw" nature may result in a "highly strained imagination...the source of fanatical religious and superstitious terrors."<sup>26</sup>

Although management thought has restricted knowledge to a set of conceptions and their mirror images, it has also enabled knowledge through its insistence on precise distinctions such as that between what is given (nature), what is a human creation (society), and what wills and creates (humanity). This is an achievement because it is a prerequisite for the painstaking civilizing process of rescuing humans from submersion in the realm of necessity. We are increasingly self-determining beings; nature is a background environment which, although not static, does not move in any obviously teleological way. Both science and reason point in the same direction: Nature is governed by laws not designed for us or by us and not functioning necessarily to our own advantage.

Only if men see themselves...for what they are, quite alone with no one to help them except their fellow-men, products of natural processes... wholly indifferent to their survival, will they face their ecological problems in their full implications.

The natural holists, according to environmental management, do not see humans for what they are, for they

cannot bear to accept the disappearance of telos from nature. Instead, they still seek in nature principles that could guide an ethical or social order and signs that could reveal the human essence or the meaning of life. While this quest for meaning is an enchanting idea, compatible with the world of Robust Faith, it is radically incongruent with modern institutions, science, roles and norms. Conceptions of nature not grounded in human "value" are unable to find embodiment in any of the mutually engendering modern forms. Thus estranged from our world, holism routinely becomes abstract, able to exist only in philosophical constructs; or nostalgic, able to exist only as unattainable, albeit inspiring visions.

Environmental management places its opponents within a frame that makes them easy to dismiss, yet it never actually dispenses with them; quite to the contrary, it continually revivifies what by its own account ought to be a decaying and anachronistic body. It does this because, like the parasite that saves the vital organs of its host until last in order to prolong its feast, environmental management requires its opponents but it requires them to be constituted in a particular way.

First, it requires them as content for its rationalizing critique: environmental management needs less-than-rationalistic accounts to serve as the messy raw material in need of clarification. Second, the credibility

of its own affirmations depends upon its audience accepting the management construal of the alternative position. For without this acceptance, the defects within environmental management would become more apparent, encouraging movement toward the opponent and the weakening of its own hegemony. Environmental management has an ambivalent stance of rejection and engagement with non-instrumental views of nature. It claims to fear as confused and regressive these views, but the characterization of them that exaggerates the confusion and the regressive potentialities suggests that what it really fears is the disappearance of such views, for it darkly recognizes its dependence on them as a foil for its own weaknesses.

Through our examination of nature according to environmental management, we have seen how Enlightenment finds contemporary expression. It appears now that environmental management deploys several different but related conceptions of nature. We can categorize these views according to the degree and kind of order ascribed to nature:

(1) Chaotic Disorder. Nature has little or no inherent organization and is chaotic, wild and dangerous in its pristine state. No matter what the resistance or difficulty, we have little choice but to master and transform nature. Nature, far from being in harmony with moral law, is in conflict with it. We saw how Chaotic

Disorder, where nature is feared as the beast within us and as a threat to civilization, is tied to the way environmental management constitutes its required double.

(2) Plastic Disorder. Nature has little or no inherent organization and is benign and neutral, a messy conglomerate of functions, forms and processes, all passive with regard to human attempts to organize them. The assumption of Plastic Disorder in nature found expression in the belief that nature is in need of technological fulfillment. In cases (1) or (2), whether nature is chaotic and something to be feared or benign and amenable to the imposition of order upon it, there is nothing morally wrong with widescale altering of it.

(3) Indifferent Order. Nature has some sort of significant order and that order is indifferent to humans, that is, ordered according to priorities not necessarily compatible with human rationality, psychology, sensibility or perception. Advocates of this view differ according to the degree nature is believed to resist re-ordering attempts. The continuum ranges from nature as highly resistant to nature as easily overpowered. We saw, for example, how Indifferent Order is tied to the rejection of a teleological view of nature as radically incongruent with modernity. Thus, environmental management can come to the conclusion that mastery is the appropriate response of humans to a world not designed to coincide neatly with them.



There exists, however, another conception of nature and order, one that finds little expression through environmental management:

(4) Natural Holism. Nature has some sort of significant order of its own and this order harmonizes with humans' needs. Advocates of this view see little call for aggressive restructuring of nature and instead seek to discover and comprehend natural laws in order to mold human behavior and society to them. Extreme versions of this harmonious holism see nature as sacred, with an inviolate order.

We have already caught a glimpse of natural holism as environmental management characterizes it; soon we will allow it to speak for itself through the works of Erazim Kohak and John Compton. But first, we will explore an orientation to nature intermediate between environmental management and natural holism, the science of ecology, in order to illustrate the way Enlightenment and Faith interpenetrate.

#### The Intersection of Environmental Management and Natural Holism

Modern science must assume that nature is ordered to some degree, for science "works" -- the description and prediction of natural regularities has technological

success. But this order is understood as imperfect, containing inexplicables and irregularities. Science posits not a harmonious fit between plants and animals or between human needs and the natural provision for them, but recurring natural patterns with some degree of internal coherence.

Evolutionary theory, for example, repudiates a strictly teleological interpretation of nature. Nature has a general tendency toward adaptation for survival, but it is also full of instances of what can only be called evolutionary dead ends, maladaptations or mistakes. Despite attempts by natural holists to use evolutionary theory as evidence of telos in nature (the theory, they say, assumes "universal kinship and common bonds of function, experience and value among organisms"),<sup>28</sup> science insists that evolution does not imply the kind of telos that offers the assurance that the world is a purposive order or even that its natural elements tend toward a state of harmonious equilibrium.

The latest theories within physics confirm the view that nature is a field of chance and statistical regularities rather than a composite of stable, rationally ordered substances.

[W]ith the advent of quantum theory and the indeterminacy relations...present theory implies that objectively, and in fact, material particles of very small dimensions do not possess certain combinations of these precise values simultaneously...[T]heir individual behavior is not theoretically determinate...

[E]ntities exist and are definable primarily by virtue of interrelationships with other entities, rather than by virtue of any supposed substance-essences of their own. Their fundamental properties <sup>30</sup> are not so much inherent as derivative.

The irregularities in the order of nature, the dead ends of evolution, and the indeterminacy of subatomic particles that calls the materiality of matter into question, are interpreted from an Enlightenment perspective as evidence that the world is not imbued with telos.

From a Faith perspective, however, these discoveries are interpreted as Enlightenment science's own admission of the incompleteness of its knowledge and the irreducible element of mystery in its theories. For Faith, the regularities of evolutionary development are signs of a designed universe and the irregularities of evolutionary development and subatomic particle/waves are signs of the discrepancy between finite human science and divine omniscience. Enlightenment ordinarily assumes the possibility of certain and complete knowledge, says Faith, but here finds itself asserting indeterminacy, incompleteness and mystery as characteristics both of the world and of the knowledge of it available to us -- and these latter assertions have affinities with those of Faith.

We can pursue this claim that environmental management intersects with natural holism by examining the science of

ecology. In general, the environmental manager's adherence to the essential instrumentality of nature involves some kind of atomistic conception of nature, for its assumption is that particular natural elements can be manipulated without so disrupting other elements that the net result is a negative benefit to humans. The science of ecology has called the hegemony of this atomism into question. Those environmental economists who worried about the instrumental view of nature edged, as we have seen, toward the recognition that nature is a system of interconnected parts, an organic whole.

The science of ecology attempts to investigate, predict and control nature through uncovering the functional interdependencies of members of an ecosystem such as a watershed area, a forest, a prairie. It emphasizes properties whole systems rather than its parts. "The idea of the ecosystem...means...that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, that a molecule of water is 'more than' the simple addition of hydrogen and oxygen."<sup>31</sup> The ecology within environmental management has a certain affinity with Faith's holism.

Put while the systems approach of ecology overlaps with the holism of Faith, it does not coincide with it. Faith seeks to articulate the interdependencies of all parts of the world, where "world" means the interplay of psychological, social and natural worlds. There are no

truly autonomous entities but only relative degrees of autonomy of function or form. Faith's holism views the world through an understanding of relations, of how all "internal" workings of an entity, be it a plant, an animal, an idea, a self, a social problem or a norm, are involved in a web of relations with other entities too numerous to mention, much less investigate exhaustively.

There are at least three ways in which the science of ecology parts company with Faith's holism.

First, while a sector within environmental management accedes to the ecological assumption that nature is a system of functionally interdependent parts, this sector resists conceiving humans as simply another one of those parts. The environmental manager finds it difficult to acknowledge the interdependency of all living and non-living things without immediately following the acknowledgement with a disclaimer distancing humans from that web of interdependency. The uniqueness of a human "lies...in the special character of his relations with other systems...[i.e., his] ability to transform them."<sup>32</sup> The preservation of the sanctity of humanity and of the uniqueness of each particular individual requires the rejection of what one environmental manager called mystical holism, the view of nature as a metaphysical whole within which all differences are converted into differences in

degree. A harmonious holism (but not a systems theory holism) is seen as ecological fascism.

Second, when the science of ecology says that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, the "more than" does not include that dimension of life that evades empirical identification. While holism when compared to chemistry or to the traditional biology of classification and dissection, ecology is still tied, if more ambivalently so, to the dominant scientific paradigm. Nature is an ecosystem filled with complex and interconnected parts but the parts are essentially physical and mechanical. "Kinship" among parts is purely survival-functional; it is the kinship of a shared evolutionary history or of a shared need for food, shelter and air. Ecology is most comfortable when the world it engages is the world of material reality. One of Faith's central concerns is to find the appropriate way to express the intimate relation between reality and those aspects of existence inadequately described as material (spiritually, consciousness, intentionality, God).

Third, both the enthusiasm and explanatory power of the science of ecology dwindle the closer it approaches thoroughly humanized environments like suburban neighborhoods, city blocks or industrial parks. Ecology can best account for humans and their relationship to nature when humans account for a tiny percentage of the



population of the biotic community under study. Ecology is inadequate, for example, for understanding the implications of human embodiment or an orientation to nature. What it means for humans to be a part of nature in light of the fact that they are not exhausted by their physical form and what is the connection between the structure of human perception and the natural world are questions beyond the ken of ecology. Humans are related to nature from the perspective of ecology, but primarily in their role as external manipulators of it. Human actions affect natural disruptions; but the science of ecology is unable to elucidate ways in which natural structures enable human actions.

Through the examples of evolutionary theory, quantum physics, and the science of ecology, we see ways in which Enlightenment draws nearer to holistic Faith. Even though it is primarily the theologians of Faith who dwell upon the parallels between scientific and religious orientations to the world (while science continues to define itself as militantly secular), and even though it is often those already committed to a harmonious holism who see ecology as on the right track but deficient (while ecologists are quite content with systems theory), there do seem to be many points of contact between Enlightenment and Faith. But it may be too strong to call them affinities, which connote an untroubled attraction -- evolutionary theory,

quantum physics, and ecology are at the intersection of Faith and Enlightenment and they partake of the ambivalency which accompanies such intermediacy.

Although dichotomies are most operative within environmental management, a certain dualism is constitutive of the holist-management relationship itself. Part of what it means to say that there exists a Faith-Enlightenment dialectic is to affirm the mutually engendering nature of the two modes of understanding -- elements of each mode migrate into the other and mingle with elements initially foreign to them. Thus, natural holism harbors a secret respect for the precise method of science and environmental management finds itself unable to ignore the questions of ethics.

We will soon see how natural holism too defines its opponent narrowly through a simple contrast to its own favorably interpreted views. Yet it tries to avoid proceeding through dichotomies in developing its internal understandings. It struggles, for example, to resist either/or categories in order to embrace the organic model of knowledge reminiscent of picture-thoughts.

Faith and Enlightenment continually draw near only to diverge once again. They draw near because each bumps into its own limits as it pursues its project. They diverge as they respond to these limits differently and give different weighting to similar considerations; each is governed by a

different project it thinks susceptible to fulfillment. For Enlightenment the project is the precise articulation of knowledge about the world; for Faith the project is to show how the world cannot be described truly in Enlightenment's precise terms. Thus, the "same" phenomenon, e.g., the social costs not captured in product prices or the rights of natural objects not included in the legal system, are weighted differently by environmental managers and by the natural holists. For environmental managers, they are externalities to its technological schemes to control pollution, side-effects of a neutral attempt to improve the natural environment; for holists they are flaws endemic to the attempt to manage nature. Social costs and the integrity of natural objects, from within a view of the organic connection between the physical, social, moral, political and economic worlds, are not contingent externalities but central and necessary concerns.

#### Natural Holism Speaks for Itself

For the holist, nature is not merely a deposit of resources for use, although we do draw moral and physical sustenance from it. Nature (animal, plant and inorganic systems) and humans are conceived as a mutually engendering web. The task of organized science should not be the

mastery of nature but the development of knowledges that facilitate a minimum of human disturbance to natural functions, processes or forms.

Environmental management seeks mastery and control of nature, albeit a mastery that avoids actions upon nature harmful to long-term human interests; holism seeks accomodation with nature. The aim is not to rationalize nature, for it already possesses its own rationality and is to be respected for its beautifully complex design.

Holism criticizes environmental management for naive faith in science: No amount of technique can reverse our environmentally destructive path. An orientation to nature in terms of use-value, despite any attempt to mitigate the most dangerous or distasteful side-effects, must result in environmental crisis. Moreover, such an approach to nature has pernicious moral-political consequences. Humans, through their embodiment, are natural too, and a utilitarian orientation to nature fosters the instrumental use of humans -- through genetic and social engineering, manipulation of public opinion, and bureaucratic treatment of clients. For holism, the tyranny of instrumental rationality, an often lamented hallmark of modern life, must be fought at the level of our orientation to nature if it is to be fought at all.

We explore now two natural holists: Erazim Kohak in The Embers and the Stars and John Compton in "Re-inventing

the Philosophy of Nature" and "Science and God's Action in Nature." What makes them both representatives of Faith is their focus on experiential contact with nature and on the implications this direct experience carries for an appreciation of holism. For Kohak, the nature to be experienced is the great outdoors, where a simple life in pursuit of basic needs teaches us about the moral order of nature. For Compton, the natural site of interest is the human body, where one investigates the structures of perception and cognition in order to uncover the primordial belongingness of embodied selves to the natural world.

An exploration of these modern representatives tells us that Faith has once again changed its locus. Robust Faith spoke in terms of the wonder of the world and the darkness of knowledge and drew these insights from within an enchanted natural world. The Faith facing the eighteenth century Enlightenment attack found the context for spirituality and picture-thought knowledge in the supersensuous realm of salvation and human ensoulment. Contemporary Faith's sense that the world is in harmony with the true human self and that the relations between selves and things must be understood holistically is based upon the actual experience of humans immersed in their natural-bodily environment.

The Embers and the Stars

Before we can see the moral sense of nature, says Kohak, we must be shown how the dominant view of nature, (the one we recognize as environmental management), impedes our recognition of this sense. This concealing view presupposes a fundamental discontinuity between humans and nature: Humans are the active, purposive and free beings, nature is "dead, meaningless, material...at best irrelevant and typically threatening, to be conquered by an act of will."<sup>33</sup> Kohak connects this view to the secularism of the modern age:

If there is no God, then nature is not a creation, lovingly crafted and endowed with purpose and value...It can only be a cosmic accident, dead matter contingently propelled by blind force...If God were dead, so would nature be.<sup>34</sup>

If God is dead, if nature is contingent, then we are accidents thrown into an inhospitable world. (This sort of reasoning, where all alternatives to one's own view are characterized as the simple inverse, should ring a bell. Holism too requires its nemesis to be constituted in a particular way.)

Kohak rejects this secular orientation for its inability to generate respect for nature. Any secular environmental ethic can ground its "moral" stance ultimately only in utility, and an instrumental view of



nature will be destructive, not respectful of it. Only a created, teleological nature can do the job. Kohak does not, as some might, concede the death of God and then attempt to dissociate that death from a respectful orientation to nature. Instead, he seeks to show how a respectful orientation itself evokes God. There is no distinction for Kohak between purpose in nature and integrity worthy of human concern, as there might be for a non-teleological ethic where concern for nature was grounded in its otherness, its difference, its resistance to humans.

The "eidetic structure of being,"<sup>35</sup> is echoed in the organization of human minds and bodies: "though distinct in my own way, I yet belong, deeply, within the harmony of nature."<sup>36</sup> This harmony is as tangible as the craftsmanship of the beaver's dam and the regularity of the movement of the stars. Kohak's vivid descriptions of nature seduce with the promise of a non-alienated existence, and, after this longing to be at home in the world has been aroused, he encourages recollection of times when we have in fact "understood" and not merely "explained" our world. Our ability to make this distinction is evidence that our longing to be at home can be fulfilled, given the proper orientation to nature. Because understanding "is fundamentally...the empathetic grasp on the intrinsic...rhyme and reason of its object,"<sup>37</sup>

understanding implies the existence of a moral order in nature.

But if the harmony of nature and humans is a primordial given, what accounts for the dominance of environmental management? We often fail to recognize the eloquence of the cosmos, says Kohak, because we can no longer experience nature-in-itself, for we have buried it under a thick layer of abstract theories and explanatory models. For example, the methodology of science mediates and distorts our relation to nature, substituting "a theoretical nature-construct for the nature of lived experience."<sup>38</sup> "For the sake of managing our environment purposively -- say, of dispatching rockets to the moon,"<sup>39</sup> this substitution is profitable, but it cannot explain the moral dimension of human existence, a dimension Kohak tries to draw out and re-secure.

But a change in the theoretical orientation to nature would not suffice to de-throne the environmental management, for the nature with which we can be in direct, unmediated contact has already been to a large extent physically transformed to fit the scientific model. Much of the outdoors has become artifact: fenced and regulated parks, perpetually noisy and neon-lit streets. We still have ordinary "actual experience," but the world we experience is rarely that of nature in itself. We situate ourselves not against the truly "other" of the stars or the

soft darkness but within an eerie neon light; we interact not with food that we have touched and watched grow, but with pre-cooked and packaged meals. "Our estrangement from nature is no longer conceptual only: it has acquired an experiential grounding."<sup>40</sup>

What is the way to nature in itself? How do we approach that which presents itself not as our own making but as something "to be acknowledged, making its own demands"?<sup>41</sup> The enabling method, Kohak tells us, necessitates living, at intervals, in "radical brackets," that is, apart from the most characteristic modern thoughts, institutions, practices and devices. We have to put ourselves in a situation where we can escape the physical and intellectual snare of everydayness. "We need to suspend, for the moment, the presumption of the ontological significance of our constructs, including our concept of nature as 'material.'"<sup>42</sup>

Only through the solitary immersion in nature undominated by humans can we experience its moral order and our place within it. Otherwise, we sink into individual solipsism ("I have only to conceive for there to be") or the collective solipsism of intersubjective consensus ("We have agreed that x is true"). Intersubjective consensus is all too often a ratification of unreflective commonplaces, for it installs "truth" through insistent repetition. A favorite mode of television commercials, it loses its power

to convince when we put ourselves in a truly natural environment. There we see that truth is not conventional but something that makes itself manifest through patient observation. Near the roar of the ocean or in the stillness of the forest,

...nature presses in. It is too vast for the human to shout it, too close for him to withdraw from it into speculation...[There we learn that] a human cannot impose...upon the world quite so easily.

Nature resists. True, nature is ordered with a place in it for us, but the solidity of its own order means that it will not be bent to any and every will. This fit between nature and humans is not one that humans have crafted, not the result of a plasticity in nature. We belong to nature, but to belong is not to control; the need for control is lessened once the cosmos is seen as always already there before us -- standing in front of us to be experienced and existing prior to our experience.

Already favorably disposed to us, nature bestows gifts. First, the gift of "the night": "Were there no darkness to restore the soul, humans would quickly burn out their finite store of dreams. Unrested, unreconciled, they would grow brittle."<sup>44</sup> Night soothes ontologically as well as psychologically: It makes us whole, enabling the full range of human experiences, providing a setting where modes of perception, knowing and feeling unexpressed during the busy day can come to the fore. One of these latent moods

is an encompassing and easy wonder. When the first star makes its appearance seemingly from nowhere, we experience a wonder that does not require effort or even assent.

The...moon does not 'shine'...All our words for lighting...are active verbs, suggesting doing, while the moon does not do. It lets itself be seen, not crowding out the darkness but rendering it visible.<sup>45</sup>

The darkness and inexactitude of the night relieve us of the pressure to explain all, to know all, to re-enact in our minds the structure and mechanism of phenomena around us. The inescapable difficulty of working or investigating in the dark excuses us from the duty to do so. Electric lights enable in many ways, but their illumination obscures the way they deprive us of relief. Nature soothes while the artifact world alienates, an ironic state of affairs given that nature, unlike society, is not our creation.

The dominant colors of a forest...are green and light blue, both of which, as empirical psychology can attest, have a distinctly soothing effect...The decibel levels here are geared to the tolerances of the human nervous system...The environing world of a forest...is calm and and unjarring, living its own familiar life, so unlike the threatening<sup>46</sup> unpredictable environment of the artifact world.

Night also shows our senses to be a gift, dependent upon the world's cooperation with them. Sight is possible only because light, shadow and form allow it. We can loosen our attachment to sight, sometimes even gratefully, in the vague and mellow world of the night. And then the

gift of hearing can come to the fore. Sometimes we do best to listen patiently, to be open to the voice of nature.

A third natural gift is "the word." The dominant modern orientation to nature and language declines to accept this gift: If nature is meaningless in itself and meaningful only as utility, as artifacts are, then words can only designate or assign meaning, they cannot express a sense already present. For Kohak, actual experience of untamed nature allows us to have a new thought:

"[S]omething must be for something to be said -- there must be meaning to which our words point, not as...impositions, but as expressions of the meaning that stands out..."<sup>47</sup>

Through our linguistic, social, and scientific interpretations, we articulate the being of natural things-- but nature allows some interpretations and disallows others.

How does Kohak, as the heir of Faith, convince us that language does in fact have an expressive function? He simply sets forth the expressive model of language and waits and sees whether his account strikes a chord in us, a chord familiar but long silent because of the dominance of the designative model that is well suited for (because developed in conjunction with) life in the artifact world.

Language is a gift that expresses the meaningful order of being, but expresses it indirectly and darkly. Words can gesture toward their source, but their "source"



includes both the human who receives and interprets meaning as well as the thing which evokes and encourages a range of interpretations. Because of the constraint of "the double discipline of the reality it confronts and the demands of those to whom it would speak,"<sup>48</sup> language is suggestive but not definitive. Words express that which is but cannot do so "with the same clarity and immediacy as in lived experience itself."<sup>49</sup> And yet the articulation into words and thoughts is crucial to "lived experience," for some degree of articulation is necessary in order that lived experience become fixed rather than inchoate, fleeting and thus immediately forgotten. The relationship between natural things, the lived experience of them, and the articulation of the experience is evocative not designative. Like Robust Faith, Kohak conceives language on the model of parables whose ability to convince is a function of metaphor and the power to incite empathy.

Kohak's prose exemplifies how a text relies upon the incitement of the reader's longing for ontological comfort. It is filled with gentle, healing words: inherent rhythms, rhyme and reason, integrated cycles, continuity and periodicity of being, harmony, primordial and enduring presence, immutable order, revealing truths, miraculous wonder, invisible renewal, deep solitude, peace, warmth. Kohak experiences nature as a meaningful whole and experiences himself as a moral subject; his text makes

explicit the function of all language, the evocation of "an analogous experience."<sup>50</sup> Kohak's language resounds with the resemblances and similitudes of an enchanted natural world.

Can the evocative argument that nature has a moral integrity that is of itself worthy of respect convince? I think not. Kohak's use of actual experience and of the evocative power of metaphor in support of a teleological view of nature do not suffice. Actual experience of nature includes experience of drought, parasites, hurricanes, earthquakes, disease and senseless events. The environmental management position that nature is ordered in ways indifferent to us, that nature is an aggregate of matter "exhibiting at most...ontologically random...regularities,"<sup>51</sup> too has a basis in lived experience. And metaphors can also be put to the service of management aims. Kohak is aware of the incompleteness of the appeal to actual experience and metaphor, but waits until we have been primed by them to supply the missing ingredient: Trust in the cosmos, read God.

From the perspective of faith, the real issue in the environmental debate between holism and management is not how to devise and implement the most efficient method of control of polluters or pollution, but how to recognize the proper place of the human in the cosmos. The question is "whether we shall conceive of ourselves as integrally

continuous with the world about us or as contingently thrown into it as strangers into an alien medium.<sup>52</sup> If, as Kohak admits, "nature lends itself willingly to either interpretation,"<sup>53</sup> how can he claim that his view is the way "nature in truth is"?<sup>54</sup> For management, the choice between the two options is ours, to be based upon a judgment of the political, economic, and psychological consequences of each. Holism too sees nature's flexibility as an invitation to human choice, but one to be based not upon a utilitarian calculus or upon the will to carry out, but upon

...an act of trust that the harmony of the embers that glow with the warmth of the human heart and the stars that proclaim the glory of God...is not only...[a] naive first impression...but...the ultimate conclusion of deep thought.<sup>55</sup>

Kohak admits that he can never prove the truth of that conclusion, but claims that faith -- in providence, God, human reason or will, progress, history -- is a requisite for any conception of nature, not just his own. Kohak admits that his harmonious holism is contestable; however, the view of nature as standing reserve is just as unproven.

...all that can be said will not constitute an argument, nor will arguments convince...[A]ll knowledge rests on faith. That faith, though, is neither arbitrary nor irrational. It is an expression of a vision...<sup>56</sup>

Thus, Kohak follows in the epistemological footsteps of picture-thoughts. Knowledge can be evocative only, never definitive. Trust or faith is necessary; we can at best

get only a glimpse of the moral order. To pursue precise and clear concepts is to transform natural holism into the systems theory of ecology.

### A Natural Philosophy of Embodiment

Like Kohak, Compton takes issue with the dominant understanding of nature as resources for use. He identifies the source of the environmental problem specifically in modern science. Also like Kohak, he argues that despite appearances nature and self are in fundamental harmony. His strategy for making holistic inroads into the dominant view is to show how science presupposes a pre-theoretical experience of nature where it is revealed that nature and self engender one another and that nature corresponds to our capacities for perceiving it. Compton seeks to inform science of its unacknowledged debt to this experience of belonging. The philosophy of science, he hopes, can be made into a "re-invented philosophy of nature," less destructive but still theoretically refined and powerful.

Compton begins with an account of the structure of human knowing. The condition of possibility for both pre-theoretical and scientific knowing is a background of beliefs, conventions, perceptions, thoughts, geographical prejudices, bodily moods and rhythms, which can never in

full be the explicit object of knowledge. The structure of any knowing is akin to the structure of sight: To "see" is to focus on a particular scene or item while necessarily blurring the field of vision in which it is set; to shift to another scene or item requires the re-submergence of the first. The only knowing available is a knowing of that which is lifted to the foreground by the focus of our attention.

Because pre-theoretical knowing occurs almost automatically, through perception given with a normal human body, it is less complete and less precise than scientific knowing. Implicit knowledge of nature is pervasive and always there affecting thought and judgment about nature. But its status as knowledge is suspect because of its vagueness. Scientific knowing, on the other hand, secures its status by accelerating, intensifying and crystallizing the perceptual process of lifting out and isolating particular items from within the field of experience. For Compton, modern science too often achieves clarity at the price of reification; it seeks to prevent the re-submergence of the object in its knowledge-context by fixing it in a mathematical formula or a statement of "fact."

Scientific inquiry...is so technical...so pre-oriented to serve...interests in prediction and control, so selective...in its...assumptions, that we must wonder whether...<sup>57</sup> it can provide... revealing knowledge of nature.

Compton hopes to articulate a philosophy of nature that integrates both modes, walking a fine line between the elusive but primary knowledge of actual experience and the clear but reductive knowledge of science.

In order to defend the primary knowledge-theoretical knowledge distinction, Compton must attempt the nearly paradoxical task of articulating the pre-theoretical understanding of nature. There are several general claims we can make about the structure of pre-theoretical nature, says Compton. We can give an "at least heuristically suggestive description" of how we know nature through our "bodily receptivity and activity with things as we seek to satisfy our needs and purposes."<sup>58</sup>

First, actual experience is experience of something that has some identifiable continuity and thus some predictability. Events, processes, or things -- the objects of the lived natural world -- have recurrent constancies which allow us to pick out one object from amidst all the others. Certain relations among these objects also persist; they have characteristic and in some cases even law-like ways of combining or interacting. These constancies occur within the context of bodily-perceptual expectation of them. Human bodies are such that we live through identifying and re-identifying unities within the multiplicity of forms and manifestations of the natural world. Our anticipatory apparatus is "the



amorphous field of...spatiality and temporality, of moving and grasping, seeing and seeking."<sup>59</sup> This unifying field of the-body-as-it-interacts-with-the-world operates at the individual and the intersubjective level, for

...at the margin of each individual's experiencing of things is the unstated, but assumed presence of other experiencers...thus, the concrete unities-in-multiplicities...are... not only [mine]...but...ours.<sup>60</sup>

Second, actual experience is essentially implicated in relation with other perceived objects, including humans. There is a dialectical relation between nature and humans; we belong to each other because we exist only in conjunction with each other. We perceive and interpret nature through bodily organs which are themselves natural; we encounter nature through communal history which comingles with natural history. The intersubjective world interprets, interpretation made possible by the porousness of perceived objects -- the very objects which include and condition the intersubjectively experiencing community. Humans, both individually and collectively, find themselves over against but within nature.

Third, actual experience is experience of something open-ended, with an indeterminacy that calls humans to a project of uniformity that can never be fully successful or complete. The "real" perceived object will always startle. Within the perceptual-natural field, objects become meaningful, but while human interpretation contributes to

this meaning, it can never exhaust what the perceived object is. This is different from saying that part of the meaning of an object is inherent and part derived from human interpretation -- all of the "meaning" of an object is bound up with its place in the lived world, is essentially connected to the human experience of it. The point is that the object is more than its "meaning." What that "more than" consists of always eludes our grasp, for only mediated knowledge is available to humans. Although the objects of lived reality are incompletely determinate and open to further determination, inviting human interpretation, objects are at the same time experienced as resistant to us, as somewhat opaque, as already there before interpretation, and as "always more than we know and ever surprising us."<sup>61</sup> These characteristics hold sway also for the human object, who as an embodied self is also natural. The embodied self encounters the other in its only partially explained impulses, in reactions, in disease. These coexist with the sense of being an intention-bearing subject, the author of actions.

Let us compare, for a moment, Compton's account of the actual experience of nature with Kohak's. For Compton, the reality behind our linguistic and scientific apparatuses does not refer to a nature-in-itself. The distinction for Compton is a two-fold one, between what we know of nature independently of science and what we know of nature through

theoretical constructs; it is not Kohak's three-fold distinction between natural things as they are in themselves, the lived experience of them, and the interpretation of that experience. For Kohak, nature is expressed and not produced through language; language is more expressive than constitutive for Compton as well, but it is only the lived pre-theoretical experience of nature that can be expressed. Compton cannot make sense of a "nature without reference to the presence of the effects of human or any other experiencing life."<sup>62</sup> An analysis like Kohak's that allows for nature-in-itself can speak of distortions within actual experience or of the possibility of an authentic relation to nature -- there is a "true nature" to be discovered or covered over. For Compton, however, pre-theoretical experience is mistaken or distorted only in clearly identifiable cases of neuro-psychological disease. But while experience is rarely distorted for Compton, the translation of it into concrete theories often is. Thus, scientific models of nature have ignored their grounding in lived experience and thus miss the insight that self and world harmonize.

Two conceptions of actual experience are at work within natural holism, then. For Kohak, actual experience is a looser term, pointing to the immediacy of certain understandings of the wilderness; for Compton, actual experience is a more precise term referring to the

fundamental ontological structures of the bodily-perceptual encounter with the world.

Let us continue with our account of Compton's version of natural holism. The criteria implicit in scientific judgments of the reality of some new entity, effect, or structure are, for Compton, closely analogous to the three characteristics of the reality of primary experience elaborated earlier. In physics, a new existent must exhibit one or more of the following: It must be detected and identified through several independent experiments (identifiable continuity); it must interact with other known existents (essential relationality); it must manifest a property hitherto only suspected (an open-endedness that surprises). Compton concludes that the theoretical constructs of an adequate philosophy of nature will find their reference in characteristics of the lived natural world. To put it more precisely, perceptual experience puts limits upon what is recognizable by science as a part of the natural world.

Not only are there structural affinities between human perception and human theoretical/scientific activity, but between human experience and non-human experience as well. "[W]hat is characteristic of embodied, intersubjective, world-related human life, is not an aberration, but is structurally analogous to what is found in other regions of the natural world."<sup>63</sup> Other holists have spoken of this

structural analogy, sometimes likening the mode of being of the embodied self to the life of nature:

The epidermis of the skin is...like a pond surface or a forest soil, not a shell so much as a delicate interpenetration. It reveals the self enobled and extended rather than threatened as a part of the landscape...because the beauty and complexity<sup>64</sup> of nature are continuous with ourselves.

The details of the structural analogy between the human body and the natural order, an analogy that is evidence for the existence of a harmoniously ordered cosmos, are not specified by Compton. He does not try to defend fully his claim that nature forms a meaningful whole. He can only "point to some striking evidence of... [its] truth,"<sup>65</sup> phenomenological evidence of the essential connection between anticipatory perception and the natural world. This evidence is under-acknowledged by modern science.

Like Kohak, Compton rejects the pursuit of certain knowledge. All claims about nature can only be suggestive possibilities, never definitive proofs. The mode of argumentation of Kohak and Compton requires a sympathetic reader; the claim is that all conviction relies to a certain extent upon the prior disposition of the reader to believe. Kohak asks only that we listen to the evocative call of nature and metaphor; Compton asks us not to be convinced but merely to be open to the possibility of harmonious holism and to consider it in our philosophical/

scientific inquiries. Kohak's position has in the background a divine creator of nature and borrows some of the power of the belief in God to strengthen the case for his philosophy of nature; Compton, too, has philosophical aspirations grander than his mild declarations of purpose suggest.

Compton's natural holism is not a morally-neutral alternative to the scientific conception of nature, but is superior because "it reminds us that...we could, in a reflective and empathetic way...enlarge the world we live to include responsiveness to life-world structures at other levels."<sup>66</sup> To strive to inquire under the assumption of harmonious natural holism is to foster the possibility of a respectful, non-destructive orientation to nature.

Through the environmental crisis, we have become painfully aware of the danger in attitudes of exploitation and domination reinforced by a philosophy<sup>87</sup> which divests nature of meaning entirely.

Compton's position provides a safer, more sustainable and morally preferable orientation to nature.

Let us grant that the assumption of harmonious natural holism results in a less destructive orientation to nature. Is this enough to justify that assumption today? There is some evidence that is "in a broad sense empirical"<sup>68</sup> to support the assumption of harmony, but there is also some experiential evidence to support the assumption of a world not designed to fit humans. Compton says that science must



presuppose a harmonious holism if it is to have a nature-revealing and not merely instrumental or predictive quality. For were science capable only of the latter, we could not "tell the difference between reality and useful fiction."<sup>69</sup>

It is conceivable to Compton that human existence could achieve nothing more than useful fictions, but he rejects the possibility that our conceptual and perceptual powers do not belong to the world (in the sense of fitting harmoniously with it); he rejects the possibility that primary experience, the phenomenological articulation of it, and scientific theorizing all have only the roughest correspondence with and very precarious (because humanly imposed and not "natural") attachment to the world; and he rejects the possibility that our wish for harmonious integration with nature might not imply any privileged ontological status for it.

Why does Compton make so much of very general and incomplete structural analogies between human and non-human being? Perhaps Compton believes that the conventionalization project has already gotten plenty of attention. It is also the case that God lurks in the background for Compton, as he does for Kohak. "Science and God's Action in Nature," written by Compton seven years earlier than "Re-inventing the Philosophy of Nature," aims explicitly to reconcile a theology of nature with natural science. In

brief, his argument there is this: The modern world has an environmental crisis; the alleviation of the crisis involves a revision of our orientation to nature; this revision requires affirming "intrinsic meaning and value in the natural order of which man is a part;"<sup>70</sup> and this affirmation unfolds through the concepts of God, creation, providence, telos and logos. Compton's project is to retain yet revise these concepts, giving them "plausibility and applicability...in terms of our common experiences and...the scientific world view."<sup>71</sup> The bulk of the essay explores what a satisfactory concept of God might be like by suggesting an analogy between a particular model of the embodied human self and a model of God's action in nature. This conception of God is said to be "consistent with Christian faith and may even be coherent with natural science."<sup>72</sup> The admission by theoretical physics and evolutionary theory that science can never fully explain matter (because it is indeterminate), means that science has made room in its framework for a new conception of God. The modern God can find a home in the mystery of matter.

Compton's theological commitment was overt in "Science and God's Action in Nature;" it is likely that a similar commitment is present in "Re-inventing," for it provides the missing element in a re-invented philosophy of nature based upon primary experience. Faith in God allows us to move from the mere possibility of harmonious holism to the

conviction of its truth. Our examination of Kohak and Compton shows, then, that there is a recurrent connection between theological convictions and the philosophy of natural holism. It is highly unlikely that holism can function even as an ideal without some residual commitment to God as creator of nature.

### Natural Holism Reconsidered

We are now in a position to ask a question that gets at the heart of the dispute between environment management and natural holism: Is the assumption of a harmonious holism, one that includes a place for a God, the only route to a non-destructive orientation to nature? If it is, and we want to avoid ecological catastrophe, then Faith will be the best path to pursue. If it is not, then some perhaps version of Enlightenment is our best bet.

It has been the premise of this chapter that an investigation of the Enlightenment and Faith orientations to nature would enable us to answer this question, but at first it seems as if our analysis of the dualism of Faith and Enlightenment suggests that no answer is possible. Because Faith's holism of actual experience considers itself only with regard to its secular-rational opponent, it is difficult to know whether the holistic view of language, knowledge, self and nature could take a truly

secular form. Holism sees how the dominant view of nature has contributed to the environmental crisis and then offers its own religiously-tinged position as a morally superior alternative. Environmental management then undercuts the force of holism's moral superiority by showing its assumption of harmony to be incongruous with modern beliefs and practices. After this critique, it seems as though we must reject natural holism. On the other hand, holism has exposed the limits to the management conception of nature, showing that it is not capable of a position that is both coherent and non-destructive of nature. Holism uncovers the self-contradictory nature of environmental management solutions: It espouses an instrumental view of nature which, because of our ineradicable participation in nature through our bodies, encourages the application of technique to humans. An instrumental view of nature must reduce humans to means, subjecting them to technical manipulation and instrumental exploitation. This result conflicts with management's self-righteous emphasis on the dignity of humans as the only beings capable of reason, will and freedom.

But the beginning of an answer to our question ultimately does emerge from the exploration of environmentalism in terms of Hegel's Faith-Enlightenment dialectic. Ironically, or better, as a result of the dialectic and not the dualism between Faith and

Enlightenment, management's negative characterization of holism and holism's critique of management uncover the possibility of a conception of nature that rejects harmonious holism but affirms an orientation that will let nature be.

The holist view of nature makes two basic claims: (1) nature is worthy of more than instrumental treatment, having an integrity of its own, and (2) nature is in harmonious relation within humans and among humans and non-humans. Holism insists that these claims are connected, but there may be a way to endorse the first without implying the second. It is possible to conceive nature as an order without purpose but one worthy of regard precisely because it is beyond our total control and resistant to human attempts to mold it. There is a moment within Enlightenment science that affirms this: Reality is constructable, we can impose order upon it and constitute it as artifact, but also -- and this is the important point -- we can never do this totally or completely, for reality resists. And the resistance of nature is ineliminable: We can rail against it with ever more insistent attempts to humanize it, or we can acknowledge the resistance without tying that acknowledgement to a belief in the ontological attunement of humans with nature.

Compton's point about the open-endedness of the objects of lived experience goes to the brink of this

let-otherness-be position. There is an indeterminacy, he says, that both invites technical intervention and conceptual imposition of unity but still resists that imposition and places limits upon its duration. Compton could acknowledge that humans have functions, forms and action-possibilities similar to those available to non-human nature, that nature "fits us" in so far as it provides the conditions of possibility for human existence, without endorsing the view that we were made for each other.

It is consistent with the phenomenological evidence offered by Compton that the relation between humans and nature is not one of harmony but one of the embodied self, replete with affinities and with aspects accidental or adverse to human needs. We could endorse an essential and problematic relationality between rather than the intrinsic value of humans and nature. Because of its theological commitments, natural holism does not turn to this appreciation of the open-endedness of nature, and because of its anthropocentrism, neither can environmental management. Further development of this position may have to await the passing of the dialectic of Faith and Enlightenment.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>My account of the regulation and market incentive approaches draws heavily from Allen V. Kneese and Charles L. Schultze, Pollution, Prices, and Public Policy (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1975). I consider this book a paradigmatic example of environmental management.

<sup>2</sup>Harold J. Barnett and Chandler Morse, Scarcity and Growth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Kneese and Schultze, p. 24-5.

<sup>4</sup>John Passmore, Man's Responsibility for Nature (London: Duckworth and Company, 1974), p. 177.

<sup>5</sup>Barnett and Morse, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Barnett and Morse, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Barnett and Morse, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Passmore, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup>Passmore, p. 179.

<sup>10</sup>Passmore, p. 180.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher Stone, Should Trees Have Standing? --  
Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects (Los Altos, CA:  
William Kaufman, Inc., 1974), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>Stone, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup>Stone, p. 19, note 53.

<sup>14</sup>Stone, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup>For a critique of this model, see John Rodman, "The  
Liberation of Nature," Inquiry 20, 1977, 83-145.

<sup>16</sup>Stone, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>Stone, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Stone, p. 9, note 26.

<sup>19</sup>Stone, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup>Stone, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup>Stone, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup>Stone, p. 16.

<sup>23</sup>See W. K. Frankena, "Ethics and the Environment," in Ethics and the Problems of the 21st Century, eds. K. E. Goodpaster and K. M. Sayre (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), p. 3-20.

<sup>24</sup>Robin Attfield, The Ethics of Environmental Concern (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 146.

<sup>25</sup>Attfield, p. 160.

<sup>26</sup>Passmore, p. 107.

<sup>27</sup>Passmore, p. 184.

<sup>28</sup>Paul Shepard, "Introduction: Ecology and Man -- A Viewpoint," in The Subversive Science, eds. Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup>John Compton, "Science and God's Action in Nature," in Earth Might Be Fair, ed. Ian G. Barbour (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 45.

<sup>30</sup>Harold K. Schilling, "The Whole Earth is the Lord's: Toward a Holistic Ethic," in Earth Might Be Fair, ed. Ian G. Barbour (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 103.

<sup>31</sup>Frank E. Egler, "Pesticides -- in Our Ecosystem," in The Subversive Science, eds. Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969), p. 246.

<sup>32</sup>Passmore, p. 183.

<sup>33</sup>Erazim Kohak, The Embers and the Stars (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>Kohak, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Kohak, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup>Kohak, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>Kohak, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup>Kohak, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup>Kohak, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup>Kohak, p. 23.

<sup>41</sup>Kohak, p. 35.

<sup>42</sup>Kohak, p. 22.

<sup>43</sup>Kohak, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup>Kohak, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup>Kohak, p. 57.

<sup>46</sup>Kohak, p. 42.

<sup>47</sup>Kohak, p. 48.

<sup>48</sup>Kohak, p. 68.

<sup>49</sup>Kohak, p. 48.

<sup>50</sup>Kohak, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup>Kohak, p. 125.

<sup>52</sup>Kohak, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup>Kohak, p. 125.

<sup>54</sup>Kohak, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup>Kohak, p. 126-7.

<sup>56</sup>Kohak, p. 175.

<sup>57</sup>John Compton, "Re-inventing the Philosophy of Nature," Review of Metaphysics 33, September 1979: 6.

<sup>58</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 7-8.

<sup>59</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 9.

<sup>60</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 9-10.

<sup>61</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 9.

<sup>62</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 22.

<sup>63</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 24.



<sup>64</sup>Shepard, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 12.

<sup>66</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 25.

<sup>67</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 28.

<sup>68</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 5.

<sup>69</sup>Compton, "Re-inventing," p. 16.

<sup>70</sup>Compton, "Science and God's Action," p. 33.

<sup>71</sup>Compton, "Science and God's Action," p. 37.

<sup>72</sup>Compton, "Science and God's Action," p. 43.

and its formally recorded history. Government by law enables the state to rationally coordinate policies that cut across different sectors of society, for policy guided by law can be modified, in known and regular ways, to adjust to complex and changing circumstances. Juridical democracy pursues the simplification and systemization of law, leading ultimately to "a unified code."<sup>4</sup>

Planning within the juridical state is both participatory and centralized. It is participatory through its insistence on representative government and its institutional encouragement of "bargaining on the rule," the self-conscious debate about the aim, meaning, and implications of a piece of legislation. This debate, because it surrounds a formal legal procedure, is particularly susceptible to public scrutiny and participation. The juridical state is centralized because it limits the site of popular participation. Access is readily available during the formulation of policy, limited at the implementation stages. The centralization of power in Congress produces a clarification of purpose and a consistency among public acts, yet it does not disempower local government. Because national directives make clear the responsibilities of local authorities, self-monitoring helps to reduce central control. Federal oversight, when necessary, is less intrusive, for judgments of success or failure can be straightforward when standards have been

made explicit beforehand. "[L]egality and efficiency tend to go together."<sup>5</sup>

But juridical democracy fosters more than efficiency; it also enables public consideration of social goals. While the "juridical approach does not dictate a particular definition of justice, of virtue, or of the good life,"<sup>6</sup> the politics of government by law fosters a healthy consideration of them. The American state today too often underspecifies the intent of a policy, "expressing broad and noble sentiments, giving almost no direction...but imploring executive power, administrative expertise, and interest-group wisdom."<sup>7</sup> This sloppy faith in good intentions compromises liberal democracy. By assuming that the outcome of competition among organized interest-groups is by definition just, we eschew the a priori formulation of the principles that are to guide public actions.

Considerations of justice...cannot be made unless a deliberate and conscious attempt was made to derive the [public] action from a preexisting general rule or moral principle governing such a class of actions. Therefore, any...regime that makes a virtue of avoiding such rules puts itself outside the context of justice.

The juridical state, through its partiality for formal procedure over informal bargaining, also strengthens Congress and the judiciary as sites of legitimate public authority and reduces corporate influence. Special economic interests are not denied access to the policy-making process but are limited to forums where they can be

recognized as corporate and not public interests.

Corporate lobbying power is also controlled through the requirement of precise and overt policy intentions: "In many cases the powerful would be immobilized if they had to articulate what they were going to do before they did it."<sup>9</sup> Government by law similarly lessens the possibility of covert bureaucratic power. Careful laws with definitive aims allow Congress to control fiscal expenditures of public agencies and to check administrative discretionary power, a major source of policy incoherency and public cynicism toward government.

It is the broad grant of power without standards that leads to bargaining, unanticipated commitments, and...confusions that are the essence of bureaucratic irresponsibility and the illegitimate state.

But, says Lowi, government by law is insufficient to restore democratic liberalism. As the undesirable side-effects of capitalism have grown, the liberal state has been drawn into an economic role that has undermined its commitment to democratic participation and the public interest. Lowi argues that the state's orientation to the economy, as well as its orientation to legislation, must be modified.

In order for a modern state to coordinate rationally a large range of programs, it must control or have great influence over "at least some of the strategic resources and networks in the economy."<sup>11</sup> The American state has

responded to this coordination imperative not by socializing production or banks, but by socializing risk. Examples of the socialization of risk include regulations that protect established firms by limiting new entrants into the competition (the role of the Civil Aeronautics Board) and federal guarantees of loans to private investors (the role of the Emergency Loan Guarantee Board in the Lockheed "bail-out"). In 1978 the American government had potential obligations for 368 billion dollars' worth of private investments.<sup>12</sup>

Low is highly critical of the American response to the need for economic intervention. Public economic intervention through the socialization of risk creates a large class of private units in a state of "permanent receivership." Industries and other privately organized groups deemed important enough are eligible to have their organizational and fiscal stability underwritten by the government. The socialization of risk typically requires no immediate transfer of funds, only a guarantee that if the enterprise fails, the government will deal with its creditors. First, the indirectness of involvement allows the underwriting agency to escape official Treasury or Congressional clearance and there is thus little room for public debate in the decision. Second, the discretionary nature of permanent receivership policies enable ostensibly public agencies and committees to establish highly stable

and almost autonomous clienteles. These clienteles have a structural advantage over smaller firms, for the initial state intervention entails a certain obligation for the state to protect its investment. Thus, permanent receivership discriminates against innovative or small enterprises that could increase the competitiveness of an economic sector; it allows "economically irrational uses of resources by encouraging expansion beyond demand or...retention of inefficient firms or processes."<sup>13</sup>

Neo-laissez-faire, Lowi's substitute for permanent receivership, would combine "a substantial deflation of government in general with a strengthening of certain aspects of government in particular."<sup>14</sup> It would

...radicalize economy and society...by an...  
abnegation of government power...Multinational...  
corporations could probably be jolted back into  
more actual price competition if the hundreds of  
protections...logged<sub>15</sub> in our public policy were  
suddenly eliminated.

The state would be laissez-faire in its introduction of a smaller set of specific rules designed to encourage justice and the public interest as they have been defined previously in the reformed political process.

Under neo-laissez-faire, many discretionary economic programs would be abolished and others placed in a defensive position. Non-discretionary fiscal policies, such as shifts in the money supply, the level of government investment, and tax laws, would be strengthened. Federal

police power to regulate economic activity destructive of the public interest would expand, but such regulation would be clear in intent and limited in scope. "If there is... unacceptable distribution of income...irrational use of resources...water or air pollution or racial inequality, then [we] ought to be able to identify rather precisely"<sup>16</sup> their sources and remedies.

### A Preliminary Critique of the Juridical State

Lowi's procedural democracy and neo-laissez-faire economy represent the individualist version of Enlightenment rationalism. Habermas' faith in the possibility of rational consensus represents the collectivist version. Before we provide a fuller account of Habermas' affirmative theory of the state, a theory developed in response to positions like Lowi's, we will sketch how the consensual state is a critique of the Lowian. In order to then expose a different set of flaws in the Lowian ideal, we anticipate briefly the critique by the theory of the attuned state. This latter critique, which applies to the Habermasian ideal as well as the Lowian, focuses upon the Promethean commitment to human mastery.

From a Habermasian perspective, Lowi's defense of neo-laissez-faire is insufficient, even on his own terms. Lowi calls his attack on permanent receivership a protest



"against the existing state as supportive of organized capitalism,"<sup>17</sup> a recognition of capitalism's oligarchical tendencies, and an assault on the bloated and irresponsible bureaucratic state. Yet neo-laissez-faire preserves the fundamental structures of capitalism and itself anticipates "a large though altered state apparatus."<sup>18</sup> If Lowi is willing to invest the state with extensive coordination and planning powers, why does he exclude the possibility of neo-socialism? Lowi's first objection to socialism, that a socialist transformation of the political economy would not necessarily remedy the problems of rule by professional expertise and administrative discretion, is weak, for neither necessarily does capitalism, in ways that Lowi himself has shown. Why couldn't the juridical control of discretionary power be applied to a socialized economy? His second objection is more serious but still insufficient to reject all socialist alternatives. Because of its radical nature, socialism would entail an interim and unacceptable sacrifice of civil liberties, says Lowi. Although he admits that state capitalism, through its generation of economic privilege, itself compromises civil liberties, he fears the socialist deprivation of civil liberties more. It is important, on Lowi's view, to preserve certain niches for purely individual activity, that is, activity structurally unavailable for deployment

as a means to a larger political plan -- and socialism cannot do this.

But from a collectivist perspective, Lowi's understanding of capitalist economics is woefully inadequate. Neo-laissez-faire allows a relatively free reign to private economic units; juridical procedure is supposed to limit corporate political influence. Lowi doesn't see, Habermas shows us, that exposing corporate demands to the light of juridical procedures (while leaving the capitalist structure of the economy intact) may result in the crystallization and justification of corporate demands. They may be justified as necessary to the very existence of the social order rather than, as Lowi hopes, subjected to the independent standards of justice and the public interest and then rejected for falling short of them. The fiscal burden placed upon the state to support sectors of industry vital to the economy may force the state to take measures to tighten up tax collection and to reduce expenditures on social programs less obviously central to the maintenance of the system. If the juridical state allows the economic imperatives of corporate capitalism and these imperatives require sacrifices on the part of certain groups, then juridical democracy might function to specify, clearly and precisely, the ways in which those sacrifices must be enforced and evaders penalized.

Finally, the collectivist takes issue with Lowi's conception of the state itself. Conceiving the state primarily in terms of the laws it makes, his analysis does not give serious attention to citizen-identification with the state or to the role the state may play as a locus of collective freedom. Lowi thus underestimates the modern problem of legitimacy. Lowi identifies two sources of the legitimacy problem, both of which he mistakenly believes his ideal state can solve. The first source is perpetuation of permanent receivership: As the state increases its support to the private economy it will have trouble securing sufficient allegiance from citizens who recognize that their government fosters the private gain of already privileged groups. This source of discontent is to be remedied through neo-laissez-faire, but we have seen how neo-laissez-faire entails a state too weak to control the corporate economy. The second source is ambiguous laws and bad procedures, for when no one can be sure whether a policy has been successful in carrying out an intention, public actions seem pointless or a smoke screen for the real, private sources of power. This second threat to legitimacy can be remedied through juridical democracy, but Habermas teaches us to wonder whether procedures are sufficient to induce allegiance to the state.

The theory of the attuned state concurs with many of these objections to Lowi, but sees the flaws in his

perspective as based in its Promethean orientation to nature. Thus, juridical democracy and neo-laissez-faire reproduce the flaws of the utility version of Enlightenment.

Let us recall the basic defect of utility: After its rejection of religious or traditional bases of value, Enlightenment stumbled upon utility as a standard of value. This standard presupposed the centrality of the human being and required a great faith in the autonomy of reason. The problem with utility was that its realization undermined its presupposition. To determine value through utility is to view the world instrumentally, and this instrumental orientation spread to include humans themselves, the very beings Enlightenment exalted because of their unique capacity for reason. Enlightenment believed that humans were equipped with a reflective reason that prevented the over-extension of utility, that we were designed such that we contained a natural barrier to immoderation. Put as "pure" reason triumphed over traditional supports and limits, the assumption of the self-limiting character of reason was increasingly called into question.

Lowi re-enacts this earlier failed drama in his theory of the state, says the theory of the attuned state. In his shift from the moral level to the political one, the utility standard and the faith in the self-sufficiency of reason become, respectively, the hegemony of economic

imperatives and a faith in a self-correcting juridical procedure. Just as Enlightenment originally sought both utility and respect for persons, Lowi now wants both an expansionist economy and the public interest, both a perfected bureaucracy and limits on the regulation of the private lives of citizens, both a high-tech state and a democratically-controlled state.

Lowi's thought works within the basic parameters of Enlightenment: His legal-procedural approach treats as unproblematic the Enlightenment view of reason; his conception of freedom as mastery has not explored the underside of the attempt to rationalize society; and his commitment to an economy of growth expresses his acceptance of the Enlightenment view of nature and human satisfaction. This latter commitment requires further explanation.

For Enlightenment, nature is disenchanted matter to be harnessed for human goals -- for Lowi the goal of upward mobility and an increasing material standard of living. If nature is matter then the impact the pursuit of growth has upon nature is troublesome only insofar as it interferes with the pursuit. If Enlightenment equates human freedom with being in charge of the world, if the world separate from humans is thought to contain no intrinsic value of its own, and if human well-being is thought to be bound up with the conversion of the natural world into useful objects,

then economic growth is likely to be seen as an essential ingredient in human freedom and happiness.

From the perspective of the attuned state, then, a socialist organization of the economy is just as pernicious as a capitalist one if it is committed to economic growth. Lowi is unaware that the requirements of economic growth, like the standard of utility, tend to infest and dominate other social realms: The standards of efficiency, competition, and profit infect the human relation to natural things as nature becomes a deposit of resources for use; politics as it becomes dominated by questions of international competition and stimulation of consumption rather than the good life to be shared in common; ethical life as commercial success becomes its guide; education as it becomes technical training for employment in "sunrise industry" rather than a study of the liberal arts; play as it becomes "leisure" in opposition to "work," something that should be "spent wisely"; and family and community as their stability is undermined by the geographical mobility that is a condition of employment.

Lowi's commitment to mastery also prevents him from seeing the danger in strengthening the bureaucracy. Juridical democracy takes steps toward a "perfected" bureaucracy: one that runs according to the book, with a minimum of inefficiency, administrative discretion, and loopholes. The Congressional debates fostered by juridical



democracy can result in normative standards for a policy rather than loose and broad sentiments, but the power of bureaucracy has sources other than discretion to interpret policy intent. It stems also from its technical expertise, an expertise difficult to duplicate in Congress people or citizens participating in "bargaining on the rule." This technocratic power, says the attuned state, is likely to increase rather than decrease if we continue to seek technological mastery of the world.

Lowi criticizes pluralism for its technocratic conception of the public interest and for eschewing moral concerns (thus rendering politics incapable of justice), but his own affirmative position cannot redress these flaws. A theory of the state concerned about the antidemocratic implications of technocratic power could seek to reverse the need for increasingly complex technologies, pursuing "appropriate technology," technology more easily controlled, understood and afforded by most citizens while still providing a moderately comfortable life. But this alternative requires changes -- in the goal of economic growth, in the distribution of reduced benefits, in the commitment to the large scale of industrial organization, in the organization of production, and in the acceptability of the largely unhindered accumulation of private wealth and its concomitant social



stratification. And none of these changes are on Lowi's agenda.

The last two, however, are on Habermas'. We turn now to the theory of the consensual state with an eye toward the way it improves upon Lowi's theory and yet succumbs to the critique of a Promethean state.

### The Consensual State

The central concern of Habermas' theory of the state is legitimation. There is a gap between the modern capitalist state's need for justification of its activities and its ability to tolerate the democratic process necessary to produce such rationales. This gap is increasing because the state's implication in economic and cultural affairs is increasing. The new planned and official status (replacing a "natural" or traditional status) of many economic transactions and cultural issues (e.g., educational curriculum, city development, health, family, and sex relations) has thematized them, thus constituting them as conventions in need of justification.

A truly legitimate role for the state in the economy or in cultural affairs would be just, rejecting policies that contribute to the unequal distribution of socially produced wealth. But it is precisely on the basis of this asymmetrical class compromise that advanced capitalism

exists. Hence, the capitalist state must try to install convincing legitimating mechanisms that do not threaten to expose this basis. The state has three interconnected strategies for this: It institutes a formally democratic politics where institutions capable of substantive judgments are replaced by mechanisms that retain only the formal contours of legitimating procedures; it justifies itself on the basis of the material rewards it provides; (but, because rewards can function as rewards only within a cultural context that defines them as such), it tries to foster beliefs and ideologies supportive of capitalism.

The capitalist state is fairly successful in carrying out the first two strategies. But this success is rendered precarious by its failure in the last. The legitimation deficit, then, stems from the capitalist state's inability to fulfill the social need for ideas, beliefs, theories that explain and justify the institutions of the established order and motivate citizens to endorse those personal aims compatible with, and those sacrifices necessary to, the social order that secures a stable environment for them. The state must also provide ✱ understandings that convince citizens that there are opportunities within the established order for a meaningful life, one that includes the possibility of "a mimetic relation with nature;...solidarity outside...the immediate family;...experience...giving scope to imagination as well

as spontaneity."<sup>19</sup> There must be available a rationale that both legitimates the concrete state and provides the existentially comforting hope that self-realization is possible within the social order.

Theories of the state that endorse capitalism do so because of its success in the realm of instrumental, especially economically-rational, action. Habermas, too, endorses a masterful state. But he criticizes those like Lowi who put too much stock in economic success and overestimate the extent to which capitalism can sustain motivational beliefs that legitimate its structures and convincingly portray them as an integral part of a world conducive to self-fulfillment. We turn now to Habermas' account of the problems the capitalist state has in securing cultural meaning supportive of itself.

Allegiance to the capitalist state had been secured previously through two ideologies, "civil privatism" and "familial-vocational privatism." Civil privatism is an orientation to politics where the sufficient condition for a legitimate state is its ability to provide the economic pre-conditions for occupational achievement and private accumulation of wealth. Familial-vocational privatism "consists in a family orientation with developed interests in consumption and leisure on the one hand, and in a career orientation suitable to status competition on the other."<sup>20</sup> Privatism focuses attention toward the efficient

administration of the state rather than toward the legitimization of the system as a center of justice and collective identity.

Allegiance to this privatism depends heavily upon pre-capitalist or religious traditions. "Capitalist societies were always dependent on cultural boundary conditions they could not themselves reproduce."<sup>21</sup> Privatism's indifferences to the substantive ends of a social order relies upon a pre-bourgeois passive obedience to state authority; its attitude toward economic achievement and material accumulation relies upon religiously-inculcated values of honesty, fairness, self-discipline, renunciation of immediate gratification, fatalism, and the saving power of hard work. Habermas claims that because these supportive traditions now co-exist within a relativist and scientific age rather than within the solid worldview of Christianity or even nineteenth century liberalism, allegiance to them and thus to the privatism they engender is fading. Capitalism, then, is losing the cultural and motivational ground beneath its feet.

The dysfunctional implications for capitalism that Habermas draws from the decline of civil and familial-vocational privatism seem today too strong. Developments in the culture of advanced capitalism since Legitimation Crisis was written allow us to revise

Habermas' account. Counter to that account, it seems clear that the educational-occupational system of capitalism is firmly intact. Whether this is due to a robust civil and familial-vocational privatism or to resignation to fate amidst the decline of privatism is less clear, but I will argue the latter.

The clamor to participate in the most lucrative of the available occupational roles seems stronger than ever. But while overt participation in the educational-occupational system continues, the character of this participation lacks elements conducive to the legitimation of the optimal capitalist state. We see a high degree of participation, at least among the American middle classes, but it is a participation without much allegiance to the state. We may be motivated to succeed in existing structures, but we are also motivated to cut corners, evade standards, resist directives, and cheat within them.

Individuals are disciplining themselves to fit a corporate mold and they experience (with varying degrees of self-consciousness) that self-discipline as a reduction of self, as a burdensome imposition, albeit one necessary to get along in this world. In support of Habermas' claim about the legitimacy crisis, it does seem that this self-disciplinary response is itself precarious: Even as many participate in the system, they also have doubts about the meaningfulness of their participation, as the end it is

supposed to serve (a high-paying, high-status job) is either unattained, and recognized finally as unattainable by most, or experienced as unsatisfying by those fortunate enough to achieve it (or demeaned enough to have disciplined themselves so thoroughly to achieve it).

To summarize this revision of Habermas' account of privatism, participants in the occupational-educational system are faced with a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, they experience the economic organization of society as contingent, for they know it to be specific to this historical time and place. On the other hand, this contingency, because it is entrenched (in the consumption possibilities, available occupational roles, advertisements, etc.) acts upon them, for all practical purposes, with the force of a necessity or a fate. Members of the capitalist state respond, then, with the response appropriate to fate -- they grudgingly oblige.

This revision, however, builds upon rather than refutes Habermas' argument as a whole. It fits neatly with his next move, which is to show how the capitalist state has attempted to develop new grounds for the motivation it requires. These substitutes include, on the one hand, modern religion, science, and utilitarian morality; and on the other hand, modernist art and the pursuit of self-conscious norms. All fail, says Habermas, as functional equivalents to traditional meaning-giving



frameworks for capitalism. The first set are inherently inadequate sources of existential comfort and human fulfillment and the second set, while they do provide a reasonable interpretation of the world and outlets for self-expression, cannot legitimate a capitalist state. Instead, they expose the tension between capitalism and the good life possible; the meaning they create is mostly counter-cultural.

We turn now to a discussion of these two sets.

Modern religion, science, and utilitarianism all contain defects which blunt their ability to provide cultural meaning. Modern religion is so rationalized and privatized that it can exist only in the realm of subjective belief. It becomes an ephemeral Deism where God is so removed from ordinary experience that he can no longer provide a reason for being or grounds for action. (Habermas is silent about the rise of fundamentalism religions which do not appear to have these defects.) Modern science, as an even further secularized substitute for religion, aspires to inspire allegiance comparable to the commitment of a leap of robust faith, but unintentionally undermines itself along with its object (religion) in its attack on all dogma as mystification. Utilitarianism was unable to insinuate itself as the modern foundation for ethics, for it was shown to conflict with a respect for persons.



Modern art is available as raw material for the production of capitalist meaning when it is deployed as commercialized mass art. But, says Habermas, modern art as modernistic art has also shown an ability to transcend this deployment and function as a subversive avant garde. Representational (pre-modern) art portrayed the beautiful aspects of the social world in which it was embedded; the representational art of liberal capitalism said that beauty was the constant if often invisible companion (even the promise within) bourgeois society. But non-representational modern art jars with the conventional vision of the beautiful and presents itself as something produced rather than as the mirror of a beautiful nature. This art thereby

...expresses not the promise but the irretrievable sacrifice of bourgeois rationalization... it strengthens the divergence between the values offered by the socio-cultural system and those demanded by the political and economic systems.<sup>22</sup>

The aesthetic meaning of modern art is that bourgeois society spawns a poverty of meaning.

The most important of the attempts by the capitalist state to legitimate itself is the administrative production of norms. Insofar as capitalist state is a modern state with democratic and rational pretensions, it contains in principle a commitment to self-government through rationally-agreed-upon norms. The capitalist state views the demise of traditional sources of meaning as an opportunity to produce new norms that justify the state,

but Habermas argues that this attempt fails because meaningful norms cannot be "produced" administratively but must flow, in the modern age, from truly rational and freely internalized discourse.

In pre-modern times, meaningful norms were the province of the state, but that was because the state was itself grounded in tradition. Such unreflective tradition was the source of legitimacy for the state at the same time that it gave metaphysical meaning to life. The state and tradition conjoined; there was an integral link between the "instrumental functions of administration" and the "expressive symbols that release an unspecified readiness to follow."<sup>23</sup> This holistic integration is precluded for advanced capitalism (and all its contemporaries), for the Enlightenment (1) undermined the notion of a harmonious world and de-legitimized as superstition all less than precisely differentiated unities, and (2) inaugurated modernity as the age of self-consciousness.

This historical advance in self-consciousness, however, makes possible both a democratic state legitimated through rational discourse (Habermas' ideal) and a state where allegiance can be induced through official manipulation of belief systems (capitalism). Advanced capitalism pursues the latter more than the former, or, rather, attempts at the former are ultimately compromised by economic imperatives which demand the latter.

Cultural meaning cannot be produced administratively, says Habermas. A legitimating norm must "guarantee the continuity of a history through which individuals and groups can identify with themselves and with one another," but as soon as a norm is "objectively prepared and strategically employed,"<sup>24</sup> it loses this ability. Two examples illustrate the point. First, attempts to foster the norm "patriotism" through paid political advertisements cannot replace feelings based upon rootedness in the life of a community. They are seen instead for what they are: a manipulation of emotions that renders the emotions evoked empty. Second, the corporate slogan that without chemicals life itself itself would be impossible<sup>25</sup> intends to convey the normative message that there exists a coincidence of corporate actions (the production of plastics, drugs, etc.) and the common good (life itself). But this slogan reaps cynical attitudes and heightens awareness of a particular will seeking to parade itself as the public interest.

Habermas' account of the impossibility of manufacturing "cultural meaning" as a commodity puts in a political context the critique discussed (Chapters II and III) of utility and the conventionalization of the self: When a symbolic or expressive entity, e.g., allegiance to the state, is treated as artifice, its potential as an instrument of coercion is accentuated and its status as a meaning-infused norm is jeopardized.

Although the administrative production of meaning fails, non-traditional cultural meaning is possible, says Habermas. Successful meaning-giving norms must, in modernity, meet two conditions:

First, they must speak to existential fears and doubts. Habermas' sensitivity to the human need for consolation, for "interpretations that overcome contingency," for a comforting and comfortable relation with nature, and for "intuitive access to relations of solidarity...between individuals"<sup>26</sup> displays an understanding of the attractions of holism. He is far, however, from espousing a reformulation of Faith. A return to Faith, while rectifying the strain the modern state puts on cultural meaning, would do so through appeal to elements in tradition or religion that have to remain mysterious, incomplete, and partially unthematized.

And this will not do, for the second condition modern norms must meet is that they be self-conscious, explicitly endorsed, rationally understood. It is obvious why these norms, capable of generating cultural meaning, are dysfunctional for capitalism -- they would subject to political debate the inherent economic injustices of capitalism.

Democratic norms in a self-conscious world (and, Habermas contends, there can be no reduction in the level of self-consciousness in modernity without repression) must

express the generalizable interests of the public, the common good. These interests can be ascertained only discursively, that is, through a democratic discussion that identifies and interprets social needs and comes to a rational consensus about the norms necessary to fulfill and regulate those needs. "Discourse" for Habermas does not refer to every and any form of communication; it is the form whose exclusive concern is to determine the validity of certain assertions and whose participants have agreed that only the force of the better argument should prevail. In discourse "all motives except that of the cooperative search for truth are excluded."<sup>27</sup>

Because in every existing advanced capitalist state the conditions necessary for the emergence of a rational consensus are absent or distorted, the first step toward a legitimate, meaningful society must be a negative critique. Such a critique must be based upon a counterfactual hypothesis, a projection about which norms everyone affected would agree to without constraint if they were to enter into discourse. The key move in Habermas' argument here is that norms formed under these conditions would be rational and not simply those currently acceptable. The requisite rationality is provided by the discursive method -- it is inherent in the structure of undistorted human communication. In other words, the possibility of the

rationality of norms issues from the structure of language itself.

[T]he expectation of discursive redemption of normative-validity claims is already contained in the structure of intersubjectivity...In taking up a practical discourse, we unavoidably suppose an ideal speech situation that, on the strength of its formal properties, allows consensus only through generalizable interests.<sup>28</sup>

In short, the justifiability and therefore the "truth" of norms is dependent upon their generalizability, i.e., their ability to fulfill commonly accepted needs. The possibility of any such universalistic needs across such a diverse group as "humans" is always already guaranteed by the structure of communication. In order to be able to communicate, humans must share an interest in coming to rational agreement.

Habermas' theory of the state acknowledges the need for citizens to identify with the norms that govern them. It aims to close the gap between individual will and social order -- in Habermas' terms to reconcile the tension between private morality and public law. The reconciliation is a consensual one: The products of public discourse are to be internalized as the subjective will of individuals. Habermas' theory also acknowledges that norms are conventional, but rationally-grounded conventions. Discursively-formed norms are conventional in the sense that they are conscious human artifacts (in opposition to Faith) but not in the sense of arbitrary, for they are



grounded in the rationality of undistorted communication (in opposition to relativism). Such norms are meaningful and form the basis of a legitimate state precisely because they are non-arbitrary conventions. Just as Enlightenment reason was believed to limit the overextension of utility, Habermas believes that discursive rationality will limit the overextension of convention.

The Habermasian concepts of rationality, truth, generalizable interests, discourse, internalizable norms and legitimacy are each an integral part of the meaning of the others. Through an understanding of these terms we uncover Habermas' ideal: the consensual state. But there is an important element within this ideal yet to be brought out: The consensual state able to fulfill the coordination imperatives of a masterful state must have an instrumental view of nature. Habermas' defense of an instrumental view of nature is best explained through reference to his theory of the self and of knowledge. I turn now to this theory of cognitive interests, paying particular attention to the character of the technical interest.

In Knowledge and Human Interests,<sup>29</sup> Habermas argues first, that any philosophy of nature that omits the element of human domination is both epistemologically and ethically untenable unless it takes refuge in a re-enchanted ontology, and second, that non-instrumental views of nature deny the politics of technology.



The theory of cognitive interests -- the argument that there is a fundamental link between knowledge and human interests -- arose in opposition to a view of knowledge as the objective description of the universe in its law-like order. Modern science, including social science, readily falls prey to this objectivist illusion

...that naively correlates theoretical propositions with matters of fact. This attitude presumes that the relations between empirical variables represented in theoretical propositions are self-existent. At the same time, it suppresses the transcendental framework that is the precondition of the meaning of the validity of such propositions.<sup>30</sup>

Knowledge can never be objective description but is always mediated through a pre-understanding derived from the knower's initial situation, says Habermas. The subject participates in the construction of the objective world. What makes knowledge possible at all (the "transcendental framework") are the cognitive interests or the specific viewpoints from which we apprehend reality. Human interests

...bridge the gap between the pre-scientific form of life, science and the application of scientific knowledge. "Human interests" are, in the literal sense of the word, the "inter-esse," i.e. the "being-in-between."<sup>31</sup>

Cognitive interests stem from the fundamental conditions of human life on earth -- labor, interaction and power -- and correspond to the technical, practical and emancipatory interests.

First, the practical interest. Because all action presupposes a social and historical context, we have an interest "in the preservation and expansion of the intersubjectivity of possible action-orienting mutual understanding."<sup>32</sup> Because human action implies interaction or coming to terms with other actors, we have an interest in attaining consensus, an interest in communication. This practical interest is rooted in an imperative of sociocultural life: "the survival of societal individuals is linked to the existence of a reliable intersubjectivity of understanding in ordinary language communication."<sup>33</sup>

Although Habermas rejects Geist, he adopts the Hegelian point that the knowing subject must be comprehended in its historical development. The modern subject is the outcome of the self-formative processes of both the species and the individual. Through the historical development of an ever-deepening self-consciousness, the modern subject is the author of both himself and his deeds in a way that could never be for the self of Robust Faith. The modern self is an essentially communicative self. Habermas has a

...firm commitment to the view...that people are the sole judges of their own interests, which are formed and discovered through dialogue on the part of all concerned -- a political commitment to opening up public, democratic processes..<sup>34</sup> described as "the conversation of citizens."

The emancipatory interest is less intuitively available. It is based upon his theory of communication that attempts to show that subjects already have, through language use, an idea of rational or non-distorted communication. We rely on this implicit understanding when we make a distinction, upon reflection, between oppressive and rational social institutions. Our ability to make this distinction expresses our interest in rational emancipation from oppressive social structures. Another expression of the emancipatory power of self-reflection is in psychoanalysis where a patient, through talking therapy, is freed from internal repression. Because we have the capacity for self-reflection and language, we have an interest in autonomy and responsibility that can free us from ideological and psychological illusions. This emancipatory interest, however, can find its ultimate realization only in a social setting itself free from institutions of domination.

The technical interest: The essence of technology for Habermas is domination, for the imperative of human survival requires a defensive stance toward that which poses a threat to it. "External nature" (natural forces, plants and non-human animals) is a source of danger. Because humans must work on the physical environment in order to eat and reproduce, there is a built-in antagonism between humans and external nature and humans relate, in

part, to nature from the viewpoint of prediction and technical control. The history of technology, then, is the history of the process whereby humans have devised means to lighten the burden of work and to improve the yield from nature.

The technical interest is also a precondition for human freedom. The technical interest is part of the self-formative process and therefore contributes to political liberation. It involves more than the mere adaptation of an organism to its environment.

If we reflect on the process of self-formation, then instrumental reason, which leads to mastery over nature, and the practical reason of intersubjective communication...reveal themselves as integral parts of our interest in freeing ourselves from the arbitrary forces of nature and the power structures that inhibit our capacity to understand ourselves.<sup>35</sup>

In response to the holist claim that the technical interest should be subordinated to our interest in preserving, fostering and releasing the potentialities of nature, Habermas replies:

Technology...can only be traced back to a "project" of the human species as a whole, and not to one that could be historically surpassed ...It is impossible to envision how, as long as the organization of human nature does not change and as long therefore as we have to achieve self-preservation through social labor and with the aid of means that substitute for work, we could renounce technology, more particularly our technology, in favor of a qualitatively different one.<sup>38</sup>

Habermas further defends his instrumental view of nature by (1) a defense of the distinctions between subjective nature, objective nature, and nature-in-itself, and (2) a defense of the distinction between work and interaction.

Habermas makes the first set of distinctions in order to avoid both the extreme objectivist position, whereby nature is a thing-in-itself and the ground of subjectivity; and the extreme relativist view, whereby nature is wholly a constituted object. Habermas forges his position by modifying these two stances. On the one hand, nature is

...an objectification of the knowing subject; it is constituted subject to the general conditions of purposive-rational action...as well as to the specific conditions of historically variable systems of social labor.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, the self as subejct emerges only through natural history and the process of biological evolution.

In some sense, nature is thereby the ground of subjectivity. To try to clarify this apparently contradictory position, Habermas differentiates between subjective nature, objective nature, and nature-in-itself.

Subjective nature is what is generally called "human nature." People have a subjective nature because they are embodied, have senses, reflexes and instincts and must engage in social labor. Objective nature is the earth, the physical environment, but only insofar as it exists as a complex of constituted objects, objects ready and available

for use. But, objective nature does not exhaust all that nature is. Evidence of the externality of nature that remains is the world's resistance to false scientific interpretations of it. What we can know of this nature-in-itself is very little, but the glimpses we get of it are enough to justify a positing of its existence.

Nature-in-itself does not refer to unknowable but causally effective things-in-themselves; it refers instead to that moment of knowable nature designated by the terms independence,<sup>38</sup> externality, facticity, and the like.

Nature-in-itself for Habermas is a transcendental abstraction, a requisite of any knowledge of nature. Although we must presuppose this nature-in-itself, we ourselves have access to it (and experience its "resistance") only in terms of its instrumentality.

We do reckon with the existence of a reality that is independent of men who can act instrumentally and arrive at a consensus about statements. But what the predication of properties catches "of" this reality is constituted only in the <sup>39</sup> perspective of possible technical control.

Holists charge that Habermas introduces the concept of nature-in-itself only to strip it of any significant meaning by establishing the technical interest as the one and only power of disclosing nature. Habermas describes the criticism: "My specifications of instrumental and communicative rationality are drawn too narrowly to permit an adequate distinction between external nature as a means for us and nature as an end-in-itself."<sup>40</sup> Habermas then



admits to this and other criticisms: His distinctions between subjective nature, objective nature, and nature-in-itself have not sufficiently clarified the relation between reason and nature, for it is difficult to see how a nature-in-itself that is an "abstraction" can also be a natural process that grounds the subjectivity of the natural being man; he has not provided a good account of how one might relate from a non-objectivist perspective to a "thick" notion of nature-in-itself. However, Habermas goes on to argue that these problems do not stem from any particular weakness in the theory of cognitive interests but are the results of the limitations inherent in human knowledge per se. Habermas attempts an epistemological defense of an instrumental view of nature. Furthermore, the view that nature is knowable only from the viewpoint of possible technical control is the only position compatible with a disenchanted view of nature.

The epistemological defense of technical interest of nature asserts that although we can have moral-aesthetic experiences of nature as a non-objectivated environment, these rapturous experiences must take the form of art, transcendental meditation or unarticulated stirrings within the soul. In short,

...the phenomena that are exemplary for a moral-practical, "fraternal," relation to nature are most unclear, if one does not want to have recourse here...to mystically inspired philosophies of nature.



Any theoretically fruitful theory of knowledge cannot base itself on these non-rational stirrings. Habermas refuses to underplay the extraordinary success of modern science in explaining the natural world and is not now about to abandon its model in the study of the relation between reason and nature. (The participants in the relation are reason and nature for Habermas, not, say, the embodied self and the earth. Humans are so defined by their rational subjectivity that reason can take their place.) The only theoretical alternative to a re-enchanted philosophy of nature is Habermas': The relation between reason and nature must be conceived instrumentally and nature can have only a moment of in-itselfness.

If at the level of a theory of knowledge only an objectifying view of nature is possible, can an environmental ethic be had where nature-in-itself emerges? Habermas says no and argues that any ethic must consider only inter-personal relations, i.e., must be a "discourse ethic." Intuitively, the attempt to open up a moral access to nature-in-itself is not absurd, "but we should not permit ourselves to be cajoled by these intuitions into ignoring the difficulties that we encounter [in the attempt]." <sup>42</sup> There are two fundamental difficulties with a holistic ethic:

First, basic ethical concepts like justice, equality and freedom rely on a type of relation that can arise only

between human subjects engaged in discourse and this "in principle egalitarian relation of reciprocity...cannot be carried over into the relation between humans and nature in any strict sense."<sup>43</sup> Participants in ethical relations must by definition have the capacity for autonomy and responsibility. Nature-in-itself may have elements of the former but certainly not the latter.

Second, a non-anthropocentric ethic cannot mediate between the human need to draw sustenance from nature and the obligation to respect it in itself. How is it possible, for example, to have sympathetic solidarity with plants that one must eat?

In sum, the distinction between subjective nature, objective nature and nature-in-itself allows Habermas to show how a non-instrumental view of nature cannot be "adequately grounded today without recourse to the substantial reason of religion or metaphysical world views."<sup>44</sup> The attempt to retrieve the lost unity of reason, and to abolish thereby the distinction between the technical, practical and emancipatory interests, cannot succeed. The best his anti-Promethean critics can offer is a nostalgic appeal to a distant pastoral scene.

The second key distinction in his defence of an instrumental view of nature, the distinction between work and interaction, is made in response to the charge that the domination of nature fosters the domination of humans.

This distinction also allows Habermas to discuss the legitimating function of modern technology.

Work is the sphere of instrumental, purposive-rational action, governed by technical rules, based on empirical knowledge. Interaction is the sphere of communicative, institution-maintaining action, governed by consensual norms, based in ordinary language. Because domination is ineliminable in the relation between reason and nature or at the level of work, Habermas can focus on interaction where a reduction in domination is possible. Indeed, the domination present in interaction is due to the illegitimate extension of the technical interest. Instead of denying the necessity of instrumentality, Habermas tries to explain how the distinction between work and interaction has become blurred in modernity. Habermas sees himself as furthering the "rationalization" of interaction. Rationalization of work involves growth of productive forces and the extension of the power of technical control, but rationalization of interaction involves emancipation and extension of communication free from domination.

A full discussion of Habermas' argument for these claims refers back to the whole of his theory of legitimation. We will mention now only one of his more important conclusions.

The technical interest has crowded the practical and emancipatory ones because it has taken on a new,

legitimizing function for the advanced capitalist state. Whereas in traditional societies technically exploitable knowledge did not threaten the authority of cultural or religious traditions that legitimated political power, in advanced capitalist states technology and science are themselves called upon to legitimate a state whose main role has become the guarantor of efficient production. Although the forces of production once (in early liberal capitalism) functioned to spur changes in outmoded forms of social institutions technology now serves more as an ideological justification of the state than as a critique of state ideologies. The legitimation of technocracy by technology de-politicizes a process that ought to be, in a democratic state, the province of communicative or normative action.

### Habermas, Lowi, and the Enlightenment Inheritance

Although Lowi shares with Habermas an instrumental view of nature, it is clear that Habermas' consensual ideal is a critique of Lowi's theory of the state: Lowi's espousal of neo-laissez-faire misconstrues the economic imperatives of advanced capitalism; Lowi does not delve deeply enough into the issue of legitimacy, which he misidentifies as a matter of defective administration, rather than a problem of cultural meaning or the

illegitimate extension of the technical interest into the realm of communicative action.

Both Lowi and Habermas "thematize" the discord between the democratic rhetoric of modern Western states and their actual practices. For Lowi this takes the form of an expose of corporate influence on public policy, an influence that procedural democracy can bring to light and reform; for Habermas it takes the form of a complex critique of capitalism as a system. The basic problem facing the modern state, for Lowi, is the distance between bureaucratic power and a (severely limited) version of "discursive will-formation" called "bargaining on the rule." This distance exposes the tension between a high degree of administrative discretion and a commitment to representative democracy. Habermas sees the basic problem as the distance between the ability of the capitalist state to provide economic wealth (for some) and its ability to legitimate itself. This distance exposes the capitalist tension between the need to have legitimacy and the imperative to obscure an unjust class compromise. For Habermas, administrative discretion is not the problem that a capitalist state must overcome; it is the solution to its need to distract attention from the question of legitimacy and economic justice. Lowi's "solution" -- juridical democracy with a neo-laissez-faire economy -- participates in this cover-up.

Legitimation Crisis is an account of how the state, as a modern state, must actively seek to extend the reach of public policy; while the state, as a capitalist state, can fulfill its coordination tasks only at the expense of cultural meaning. It shows how the capitalist state requires more legitimacy than it can muster and then goes on to claim that the missing legitimacy could be supplied (through consensual norms) with no sacrifice of coordinating power, that is, with no reduction in the areas of life requiring public organization and control. Like Lowi, Habermas does not thematize the need to relax the drive for social coordination and economic mastery.

The extension of public policy is a requirement of any viable modern state with a self-conscious citizenry, says Habermas. As the homogenization of consumer goods, the increased sophistication of communication systems, and population growth make the world smaller and more interdependent, new responsibilities arise for the state, i.e., the coordination of food supplies, distribution of education and training, and the prevention of nuclear war. Moreover, the modern state can rely only tenuously on the organizational powers of religion, myth or tradition. Habermas believes it imperative that equally powerful substitutes be found. Whereas the capitalist state substitutes technocratic and commercially-controlled policy for these decayed forces, the Habermasian state would



substitute consensual, rational and internalized norms. Like Lowi, Habermas believes that a state capable of extensive planning is a positive good; it enables freedom, where freedom is the ability to exercise self-assertion in a world ordered (individually or collectively) by humans.

"Standard" critiques of Habermas take this view of freedom for granted, focusing on the difficulties he has in bringing his quest for a legitimate state in tune with his theory of communication. The ideal speech situation (or some variant thereof) is the ground of the possibility of the rational consensual state -- but if the quasi-transcendental argument should falter, they say, Habermas' state would lose its prospective ability to spawn cultural meaning, and it would thereby lose the ability to ensure its own legitimacy.

Critics skeptical about the success of the quasi-transcendental argument ask not whether the extensive coordination imperatives of the modern state could be relaxed, but rather whether a general will or a set of consensual norms can be identified with the reach and power necessary to the extensive coordination imperatives of the modern state. In order to differentiate these two different questions, I will give a brief account of the standard sort of critique of Habermas and then turn to a critique wary of the equation between freedom and mastery.



According to an early version of the standard critique, the key flaw in the consensual state was its inability to distinguish between norms that express generalizable interests and those that express exclusive interests. Desiring a democratic state, yet fearful of a consensual fascist one, these critics wondered about the relativism within Habermas' theory. Does not the viability of norms depend upon an essentially arbitrary "decision whether or not to let one's actions be guided only by maxims"<sup>45</sup> in tune with the common good?

Habermas' response to this was to move to the meta-theoretical level in order to find a rational grounding for norms; his answer is the consensus theory of truth. This theory then becomes the new focus of attack: It "understates the extent to which our limited resources of reason and evidence unavoidably generate a plurality of reasonable answers to perplexing practical questions."<sup>46</sup> Habermas' metatheoretical work, according to this critique, encompasses a notion of rationality that is subtle and complex, acknowledging, especially when pressed by hermeneuticists, reason's inevitable blind spots. But he does not seem to recognize the implications of this essentially limited reason for a politics of discursive will-formation.<sup>47</sup>

Habermas, in defense of his notion of rationality, responds with two claims: (1) rational consensus is an

ever elusive, perpetually postponed achievement, a guiding ideal, and (2) the ideal speech situation functions only as proof of the theoretical possibility of consensus. But these claims still leave his theory open to the charge of repressive utopianism -- utopian in that it is an ideal unattainable in principle, repressive in that the attempt to attain it fosters a coercive consensus.<sup>48</sup> Yes, the ideal speech situation is the exception rather than the rule; granted, "negotiated...agreements based on the intersubjective necessity of criticisable validity-claims are diffuse, fleeting...and fragile";<sup>49</sup> agreed, "not all interactions fall into the category of action orientated to reaching understanding"<sup>50</sup> --but more serious indeed is the fact that Habermas' own qualification of the scope and function of "communicative action" reacts disruptively on the theory of the state which provided the initial need for a theory of communicative action. The state is not merely a symbolic locus of intersubjectivity; as Habermas well knows, it is a powerful actor in the world.

An anti-Promethean perspective on the state exempts itself from these debates about the ideal speech situation or the significance of Habermas' move to the metatheoretical level. Regardless of whether a consensual, rational discourse is possible, it asks whether it is in itself desirable. It focuses upon the ways in which the very quest for rational consensus is destructive, with how it

excludes or distorts aspects of life that cannot be expressed within the standards of rational discourse.

This non-standard critique begins by recalling a defect in Enlightenment: The faith in the autonomic ability of reason to limit the overextension of utility was shown to be unwarranted as the world and the self became increasingly subject to the standards of instrumental rationality. This faith, however, still finds expression in Habermas' assumption that a fully normative and normalized social order would be a free society.

Habermas' theory of the state, by focusing upon a critique of capitalism, is designed to distance itself from liberal theories such as Lowi's, but at a level deeper than the economic organization of the state it shares much with Lowi's. In the most general terms, they share a great esteem for human subjects around whom the world must be made to fit. Reason is the primary tool for this tailoring job: Reason applied to will and impulse must discipline inner nature or the instinctual, chaotic self; reason transformed into social science and public policy must forge a social order; reason as physical science and technology must subdue outer nature or the non-human environment; reason applied to collective will must deploy these rationalized materials in pursuit of the common good. Reason, freedom and mastery thus become terms which

engender and sustain each other in the underlying system of thought guiding each theory.

Habermas' theory of the state has helped to expose the oppressive potentialities within Lowi's state: Lowi's restriction of the state to administrative and procedural functions made it too weak to realize the public interest it promised and neo-laissez-faire would allow the corporate structure to set the moral and political agenda for the nation. Lowi's attempt to strengthen the legal powers at the state's disposal, in the absence of a critique of capitalist production, serves only to highlight and publicize the social need (for the sake of the stability of the order) to organize life around the imperatives of corporate capitalism and to specify in detail the punitive measures necessary to fulfill this need. Unlike Lowi's cry for the public thematization of issues, Habermas' discursive will-formation need not have the effect of legitimating corporate imperatives, for the corporate system is itself called into question.

Habermas frees the state from the domination of economistic priorities, but he offers a state so strong and so implicated in social life that it has oppressive potentialities of its own. The discursive state, encouraged to be active and powerful for the sake of fulfilling its role as the locus of collective freedom, also courts authoritarianism. Lowi's commitment to human

mastery took the form of an obsession with a predictable, precise, and legalized social order that left only trivial economic choices relatively unregulated; Habermas' commitment to mastery takes the form of the relentless pursuit of the rational norm-governed state that leaves even fewer areas of life untouched -- one is hard pressed to find areas protected from discursive thematization. Habermas' ideal state threatens to colonize every refuge of cultural protest against the increasing rationalization of life.

Habermas is not unaware of this danger. He anticipates the criticism that when thematized norms cover an extensive slice of life, unorthodox ideas are imperiled by the social tendency to accept "the interpretation of needs...current at any given contingent stage of socialization."<sup>51</sup> Habermas addresses this danger through a distinction between norm and principle (a metanorm from which norms can be generated).

Internalization...would only be complete when the principle of the justification of possible principles (that is, the readiness to engage in discursive clarification of practical questions) was alone internalized, but in other respects the continuous interpretation of<sup>52</sup> needs was given over to communication processes.

The Habermasian state must aim at an unquestioning commitment to the principle of rational discussion, a principle that precludes an unquestioning acceptance of any particular norm. Participants endorse the principle of

rational discourse but their views as to the particular content of a norm must be decided only as the outcome of the communication process. Norms are conventions rightly subjected to constant re-evaluation on the basis of the commitment to the principle of rational discourse. This is to prevent the internalization of norms to such an extent that cultural change or critical thought is precluded.

Still, claims the anti-Promethean critique, according to Habermas' theory, critical thought and cultural change are judged entirely by a standard of what norms are rational in a highly integrated and coordinated society. There is little attentiveness to the limits of rational mastery. From an anti-Promethean perspective, the rational mastery of social life is Sisyphean, not Herculean. Blind to its futility, however, the Habermasian social project seriously endangers cultural protest. Natural holism, in Chapter III, has already shown how the Habermasian conception of nature is destructive of the natural foundation of human existence.

The discussions of the ideal states of Lowi and Habermas and of their flaws have prepared us for an account of the position we have been calling anti-Promethean: Charles Taylor's theory of the attuned state.



The Attuned State

In the conclusion to his book on Hegel, Taylor asks how Hegel's thought has remained important while the Hegelian ontology is quite abandoned. Taylor's answer is, in essence, that Hegel's identification of the basic structure of modern thought was correct even if his philosophy could not transcend it. It is fitting, then, that the last theorist of the state to be considered here is Taylor, for he explicitly understands his thought to be confined/defined by terms that are a development of those portrayed by Hegel as Faith and Enlightenment. And if we draw out Taylor's theory of the state, we see that it too has a Hegelian ring: The subject of the Phenomenology who comes to recognize Geist, the spirit of reason in history, becomes Taylor's embodied self properly attuned to its world. Taylor brings Hegel into the modern age.

According to Taylor, there are two conflicting strands of modern thought. The first strand responds to the disenchantment of nature with a faith in the ability of technical control to re-secure and master the world. We have already spoken of this strand in terms of the Promethean urge. The other strand Taylor calls expressivist. It too faces disenchantment but is critical of the Promethean ideal where "all our acts, objects, institutions have a use, but none expresses what men are or



could be."<sup>53</sup> The voice of expressivism today is protest. Unable to present itself as the voice of an authentic but violated nature, it can only object to the predictable, homogenized, rationally administered civilization a masterful orientation seeks to install. Expressivism protests in the name, then, of a violated, repressed and instrumentalized self.

[I]f the historical experience of objectifying and transforming nature...is too powerful for it to survive as an interlocutor; then the expressivist current of opposition<sup>54</sup> to modern civilization has to focus on man.

But the "focus on man" carries with it the danger that expressivism will become what it protests against -- a masterful orientation (limited only by human will) where the sole standards of judgment are rationality and utility. Taylor attempts to ground his theory of the state in an expressivism where creative and political self-expression requires attunement with (not submersion in or mastery of) the world.

I will consider the following dimensions of Taylor's argument:

- (1) The Steady State, an account of the political economy Taylor endorses;
- (2) Promethean socialism, Taylor's critique of a humanist Marxist theory of the state that protests against utilitarianism but nevertheless believes

an authentic human life requires mastery of  
non-human nature;

- (3) Attuned Expressivism, an articulation of Taylor's non-Promethean expressivism through an examination of his conceptions of freedom, ethics, language and natural science.

I end Chapter IV with the identification of some flaws in Taylor's version of expressivism and their implications for the ideal of the attuned state. This is analogous to the critique of natural holism that concluded Chapter III.

### The Steady State

In "The Politics of the Steady State" Taylor rejects the pursuit of economic growth and rejects the vision of the good life that requires "an ever-increasing command over goods and services and an ever-increasing capacity to control nature for individual ends."<sup>55</sup> Instead, the steady state pursues an economy built around recycling technologies and moderate consumption levels, where the normal pattern of consumption is accessible to the least affluent. While there can be minor deviations from the norm, the possessions a normal, decent life requires would be universally distributed. This universal consumption standard need not be a colorless world of utility goods, for once we have abandoned the equation of consumption with

happiness, it should be possible "for people to elaborate new and original ways of living in balance with nature"<sup>56</sup> and to express their creativity in ways other than the multiplication and variation of consumer items.

A universal consumption standard contrasts sharply to the orientation to consumption fostered within an economy of growth. The logic there is "more is better, freer, easier, happier." But in order to evaluate whether one is getting "more," one compares not only what one has now to what one had last year, but also what one has relative to others. Once a society has provided for the essential material needs of its citizens, which the advanced industrial nations for the most part have, the pursuit of further economic growth, because of the pressures to maintain the existing structures of employment, corporate power and international relations, places a higher and higher premium on exclusive goods -- goods that are valued precisely because very few others have them, goods whose enjoyability decrease as they are made more widely available. The private automobile is an example of an exclusive good (its speed, efficiency and convenience decrease as traffic increases).

The relative deprivation factor in the assessment of one's achievement of the good life as socially defined helps to explain why individual economic advance in an economy of growth is experienced as disappointing even as

it remains a compelling goal. If one doubles one's consumption level while others already ahead on the income ladder do likewise, the increase in freedom or happiness will be less than anticipated: "The ever-increasing expectations of consumers outrun the rise in production with relative ease, and there is probably more resentment today...than there was a few years ago."<sup>57</sup> An economy of growth makes the good life ever-elusive except for those at the very top of the consumption hierarchy. Although this relative deprivation factor is operative in all societies, a society in pursuit of exponential growth, by defining the good life so heavily in terms of consumption, exacerbates its socially divisive effect.

Many of the flaws in the existing state that the steady state is designed to redress -- the power of large corporations, the priority of exclusive goods, the reduction of political freedom to the choice among material objects or political candidates for consumption -- are also identified as flaws from within a collectivist perspective. For both the steady-statist and the collectivist, the way to displace these orientations and institutions is through collective effort; so Taylor shares some of Habermas' faith in the ability of self-conscious human agency to foster needed social change.

The universal consumption standard, for example, would require conscious public control of economic production;

those consumption items necessary to a decent life and within the limits of environmental toleration would be established politically and then enforced through a systematic policy of rationing and subsidies.

The goods of the standard would be available to everyone's budget, but...the goods and services outside this range, being relatively starved of resources and <sup>58</sup>unsubsidized, would be much more highly priced.

The problem that arises for Taylor at this point is that a state strong enough to shape the modern economy is also a state susceptible to the authoritarian abuse of political power, especially as it finds expression in the over-regulation of its populace or the subjection of more and more areas of life to bureaucratic regulation. The paradox of political freedom rears its ugly head again.

Acknowledging that conscious coordination of the economy is a form of power, Taylor attempts to diffuse the danger of authoritarianism by making that coordination a function of deeply felt norms rather than officially imposed regulations. All norms are connected to the identity of citizens; steady-state norms must be tied to an understanding of citizen-identity that acknowledges the self as essentially situated in a cultural context that enables it and gives it bounds. This self can live in harmony with its world if it respects these boundary conditions. To have such an identity would entail the recognition that the enforcers of social boundaries, i.e.,

norms, are a reflection of and consonant with the limits inherent to an embodied, finite, historical being.

Allegiance to norms in the ideal steady-state is not because they are the product of a reflective, rational, collective will (as in Habermas), but because they are attuned to the limits imposed on the self by its very being. The human ability to adhere to norms (or regulations) finds its limit in the requirement of a cohesive, wholesome identity. Such an identity accounts for all parts of the self: The will-full, intentional, mastering self that imposes its own useful regulations upon the social world and the embodied, context-bound, historical self that is only through its life-world, limited by it in ways never fully susceptible to explicit articulation.

Although a political economy of growth also attempts to preserve a specific identity of its citizens (i.e., the conception of self as a self-dependent being who can shape nature to its freely chosen projects and who is entitled to ever-increasing property), this understanding of self is, for Taylor, narrow and alienating (lacks wholeness). In contrast, a steady-state requires that citizens have a conception of themselves, their goals and their potential good as essentially and integrally tied to the goals, potential and good of the community.



The attuned state requires a vast amount of civic virtue. Through his emphasis on social identity and the cultural meaning derived from it, we see that Taylor (like Habermas) insists that any state worthy of endorsement be grounded in the reflective allegiance of its citizens, even though the attuned state does not require the endorsement to be as explicit as it must be in the rational-consensual state.

How does one begin to replace the social identity supportive of an economy of growth with one where "we accept, and hence come to value, a balance of some kind with our surroundings";<sup>59</sup> where we have "a very strong sense of common purpose";<sup>60</sup> and where we "respond to the end of growth...as a challenging common task which binds [and not as]...a disaster in which each must scramble for safety on his own"?<sup>61</sup> The communitarian element within Taylor's steady state embroils him in a classic dilemma: To foster a social identity of civic virtue it seems as though one requires beforehand the very condition that is sought. While Taylor is by no means confident that this dilemma can be overcome, he does not rule out the following optimistic scenario (most likely to emerge in "small societies or societies which can be meaningfully decentralized"):<sup>62</sup> The initial transition to a steady state where the consumption level is radically equalized is forced upon us through a resource or population crisis.



Through "a kind of Dunkirk spirit,"<sup>63</sup> we weather this transition with free institutions intact and a universal consumption standard tentatively in place. The very experience of a universal consumption standard might then evoke the civic virtue necessary to its institutional and psychological perpetuation and refinement.

"The Politics of the Steady State" is the most explicit statement of the political economy Taylor endorses, but it alludes only darkly to the philosophical convictions that ground this endorsement. What we learn of these convictions comes from a vocabulary which insinuates into discourse a respect for natural limits. We move now to a discussion of socialism, for Taylor's critique of the Promethean urge clarifies the philosophical basis of a steady-state.

### Promethean Socialism

Socialism has been a major vehicle of protest against a wretchedly contented civilization in its capitalist form. The humanist Marxist tradition has opposed the commodity fetishism and alienated worker-self of capitalism and has been a witness for the possibility of an existence that reconciles the instrumental with the expressive, reuniting humans with themselves, their fellows and their natural surroundings. Socialist theorists of the state who endorse

this humanist Marxism, and this includes Habermas, acknowledge that the reconciliation between the part of the self that can act strategically and the part that longs for creative expression necessitates a larger reconciliation -- integrating the self with "nature." In order for the self to be whole, to experience fulfillment, the individual must be able to locate its self within the generally accepted definition of "human nature," identify with the social roles available, and see its self as somehow connected to the natural environment.

This idea of socialism is Promethean in that it seeks to situate humans in the larger scheme of things by humanizing the larger scheme. Personal and collective identity are established by reshaping nature and society to conform to the contours of human aims. Harmony with nature is achieved through molding it. Promethean transformation of the world becomes the solution to the expressive deadness of modernity.

To aim to transform the non-conscious aspects and elements within nature is not exactly the aim to master them. Habermas is not reducible to Lowi. A transforming is a conversion, implying a change fitting something for a new or different use, an alteration in its outward form. Transformation requires a more subtle relation to non-conscious things than does mastery; the conscious self must invest itself creatively in the object to be

transformed and it usually does this through labor, as a woodworker transforms a tree into a table. In contrast, to master is to dominate, to overcome, to pre-empt, to command. To master a tree would entail razing it, digging up the roots, and paving over the soil.

In practice, however, this distinction between transformation and mastery is easily blurred, for transformation and mastery have this in common: neither fully acknowledges limits to change inherent in and particular to the things to be changed. These limits provide, as we shall see, the linch pin of Taylor's affirmative position. Within the transformation/mastery orientation, limits encountered stem only from the will of the subject to carry out its intention. So transformation slides over into the insistence that non-conscious elements be made over to resemble the self-conscious subject of use.

So Habermas does share the fundamental drive of Lowi: to make the world over and make it our own. We must transform our instinctual, passionate, or irrational selves, our faction-ridden society, and our dangerous, resistant natural environment to fit that part of the self most under the control of reason or will. Thus, the aim to transform nature in order to express the self entails a science of self, society and nature that investigates in order to devise techniques of control. The Promethean

reconciliation of the instrumental and expressive strands of modern thought fails, says Taylor.

A note on this science of self: Although Habermas has certainly tried, he has not come up with a convincing way to confine the Promethean or technical orientation to non-human nature. While "the example of the sculptor certainly shows that man can have both an expressive and an objectifying relation to nature at once"<sup>64</sup> (the clay is transformed through the imposition of creative will and the sculptor finds his realization partially through the sculpture), humans are not clay and socialism is a social theory not an aesthetic project. A "science of man in society which identifies the determinants of people's behavior [means that]...some men are controlling or manipulating others."<sup>65</sup> Thus, the expressive dimension of Habermas' theory is still always in danger of being swallowed up by the instrumental; his distinction between the technical interest on the one hand and the practical and emancipatory interests on the other cannot save him.

Socialist expressivism, then, releases human creativity from the bounds of utilitarian work and instrumental thought at the price of a conception of nature as material upon which we work our will and express ourselves. It exposes the natural environment to the destruction characteristic of post-Enlightenment

civilization and it cannot prevent this destruction from spreading to humans.

While the proposals of Taylor's steady-state have significant elements in common with Habermas' state, it is this Promethean element he seeks to correct. Taylor strives to articulate an expressivism that can foster self-realization and a certain sensitivity to the natural bent of things. The manipulation of nature which governs the Habermasian ideal gives way here to a quest for attunement to nature.

A second difficulty Taylor has with socialist expressivism is the view of freedom subsumed in its Promethean stance. Freedom is the ability to assert one's will and express one's self creatively through transformation of nature. Freedom is situationless, requiring the release from the constraints of the world; "to be free is to be untrammelled, to depend in one's actions only on oneself,"<sup>66</sup> for only then can alienation be overcome. But this self-dependent self-assertion is not a sufficient conception of freedom, even in socialist terms, says Taylor. It neatly captures one dimension of the freedom of an isolated individual, but it fails to consider the political dimension of freedom. And socialist freedom aspires to collective self-expression which requires dialogue, political discourse, i.e., more than the technical proficiency of labor or craftsmanship. Socialist

freedom, the Habermasian variant included, cannot respond to this question: "What constraints, divisions, tensions, dilemmas, struggles and estrangements will replace those we know today?"<sup>67</sup>

Socialist freedom, in order to fulfill its own collectivist aims, must come to grips with the limits to sociality, to human communication, to a rational society. Even if some see the masterful, rational state as an ideal only, theoretical accommodation to limits is fundamentally at odds with a Promethean orientation to nature. The pursuit of a situationless freedom, says Taylor with Hegel,<sup>68</sup> will ultimately compromise any concern about a state with which citizens can collectively identify.

Taylor insists that freedom be situated. But what is the "situation" that "sets goals for us...imparts a shape to rationality and provides an inspiration for creativity"?<sup>69</sup> To explore what Taylor means by "situation" is to give content to his claim that there is a natural bent in the self and in nature to which it is politically possible to be attuned.

We turn now to an account of Taylor's affirmative position, an expressivism of attunement.

## Attuned Expressivism

The expressivism of attunement shares with all expressivism a holistic conception of self. The self is not a composite of "faculties," nor a compound of body and soul, but a unified, integrated whole. Now, anything as non-arbitrary as all that has properties and functions proper and internal to it and properties and functions alien and external to it. A holistic approach to the self, contrasted to an atomistic approach, exposes a certain telos in the object of inquiry, where telos is defined as a tendency toward certain natural characteristics. To understand holistically is to seek out interconnections between the self and its social context; thus, different ways of life can either enable or distort what we authentically are.<sup>70</sup>

An authentic life does not work against the grain of "identity," against the bent of what it means to be a human person.

Our identity is therefore defined by certain evaluations which are inseparable from ourselves as agents. Shorn of these we would cease to be ourselves, by which we do not mean trivially that we would be different in the sense of having some properties other than those we now have... -- but that...we would lose the very possibility of... our existence as persons.

What are these "certain evaluations" that define personal identity? Taylor has in mind a specific set of



background understandings and abilities ineliminable to human personhood; his argument is not simply that some understandings, which could vary according to cultural context and to the degree of political assent given to them, are essential to a human identity. In his critique of situationless-freedom, too, the "situation" that limited/defined the common good of a society was not arbitrary but linked up to a certain notion of the highest human good. Taylor's "certain evaluations" include the ability to judge and be motivated by the difference between "noble" and "base"; the capacity for responsibility, agency, reflection; the pursuit of integrity (the integrated-ness of the self) and its consequence, dignity.

Who is the "we" whose identity depends upon these "certain evaluations"? The "we" seems to slide among (1) "we who actively and self-consciously endorse these certain evaluations," to (2) "we who are responsible, modern selves regardless of any explicit endorsement of a holist theory of self," to (3) "we who are intelligent heirs of our historical situation," to (4) "we who are modern humans," to (5) "we who are humans."

These are not exactly "slides," for there is a way in which all of the "we's" coincide for Taylor -- humans as such (#5) are today more authentic the closer they approach (#1) on the scale, the more they understand themselves to

be what they have already become -- deep evaluators on the expressivist-holist model.

An important second feature of Taylor's discussion of "situation" is the role articulation (or, more broadly, language) plays in human identity.

The linguistic facet of "situation" enables by providing a shared background of concepts and terms with which we can communicate. But it also limits, for we can never be the masters of this rich and deep thing called language. In his discussion of the self, Taylor develops his position primarily through a contrast with atomism; here his opponent is the designative theory of language.

Language is not an assemblage of separable instruments...which can be used to marshall ideas, this use being something we can fully control and oversee. Rather it is...a web... Because the words we use now only have a sense through their place in the whole web, we can never in principle have a clear oversight of the implications of what we say...Our language is always more than we can encompass.

The inexhaustibility of language stems both from its historical-cultural density and from the finitude of the individual self. Language expresses. But what does it express? The first answer is the self or rather the highest human self, for the optimal self clarifies and thus brings into being different human feelings or experiences. It is a self that can discern, upon reflection, the differences between embarrassment and annoyance or between fatigue and discouragement. The second answer is the

world, for in expressing/realizing our selves we are at the same time "responding to the reality in which we are set, in which we are included, of course, but which is not reducible to our experience of it."<sup>73</sup> By including the second answer, Taylor attempts to correct for the human-centeredness of the Promethean form of expressivism.

When we use language to interpret an event or to make a moral evaluation, we express neither subjective preferences nor objective descriptions. Rather, articulations "are attempts to formulate what is initially inchoate, or confused...[T]his kind of formulation... doesn't leave its object unchanged."<sup>74</sup> Put neither does it wholly constitute it. That "initially inchoate" stuff is what we seek to attune ourselves to. One clear thing Taylor can say, then, about "the bent of things" is that humans help bring it into being by articulating it. We real-ize it by recognizing it.

This view of language and the role of humans as interpreter of the world resonates with Robust Faith's view of the world as text. Language doesn't simply refer to something it "represents"; rather, it manifests something, a something that can be called being. "[T]here is a distinction between distorted and authentic self-understanding...the latter can in a sense be said to follow a direction in being."<sup>75</sup>

"Situation" then, for Taylor, has not only a human facet, i.e., what is required for human identity and by an intersubjective linguistic community, but also a non-human facet, i.e., what is required by "the world," or "reality." We explore further this super-individual and super-cultural evidence for a "direction in being" as it emerges in Taylor's view of natural science.

Taylor acknowledges with Kuhn and others that interpretation is involved in natural science, that all natural science explanation rests upon a background of not fully articulated pre-theoretical understandings about the natural universe, what it is and how it exists. Still, claims Taylor, that is not to say that reality is subjective, or even intersubjective. "[I]t has seemed a sound principle of scientific explanation since the seventeenth century that the world should be accounted for in absolute terms,"<sup>76</sup> that is, terms not dependent upon the meanings the world has for human subjects. For Taylor, natural science "really illuminates the natural universe."<sup>77</sup>

The reason the Galileo-Descartes model of science triumphed over the world-as-text model, says Taylor, is because the former fit the universe better.

It might have been the case that the theories of the high Renaissance...would have turned out to be better science...but that would have been because the way in which things react and relate to each other would have been of the kind which is characterizable in the concepts of

correspondence, meaning, and so on.<sup>78</sup> The universe would have been very different.

Human powers of perception are better in tune with the universe when they employ the Descartes-Galileo model of science. Evidence of this is that it works better. Attunement between science and nature is not a product of convention for Taylor -- modern science did not triumph simply because the scientific community came to a consensus about it. Rather, nature allows and disallows a range of scientific interpretations. There is a primordial, albeit murky, connection between the world and us, between the world and the appearance given to us.

Although Taylor rejects the pursuit of a purely objective social science, where the social scientist seeks a language that segregates "reality" from "experience," he understands its appeal. "[A]bsolute description...seems to offer the hope of intersubjective agreement free from interpretive dispute."<sup>79</sup> Objectivism is one way to avoid relativism in social theory; Taylor offers an expressivism of attunement as another.

In summary, the expressivism of attunement had to convince on several fronts.

First, it had to show that any meaningful human existence requires a "situation" -- a background context of "certain evaluations" of language, of a cultural orientation to the natural environment.

Second, it had to show that this "horizon of the implicit, of unreflected life and experience"<sup>80</sup> is not fully amenable to human manipulation (resisting some human actions and interpretations and amenable to others), but nevertheless is one to which we belong. He must articulate a "situation" with which we can be attuned but never with which we coincide, and provide a "notion of a freedom rooted in our nature, and yet which can be frustrated by our own desires."<sup>81</sup> Taylor attempted to do this through a holism that exhibited a certain telos in the self and through an appeal to the superior explanatory power of modern science.

Third, Taylor must convince us that the best way for us to relate to such a world is to make ourselves consonant with it. Taylor's strategy for this task is to eschew logical argumentation for suggestive metaphors. Because it is in our best interest, we must seek:

- "a deep endorsement of the course of things"<sup>82</sup>
- "an affirmation of this defining situation as ours"<sup>83</sup>
- "the notion of a bent in our situation which we can either endorse or reject, re-interpret or distort"<sup>84</sup>
- "a conception of man in which free action is the response to what we are -- or to a call which comes to us"<sup>85</sup>

It is my contention that although Taylor succeeds rather well with the first two tasks, he fails with the last. But that is the one in which he must succeed to vindicate his theory. We now examine critically the expressivism of attunement.

### A Critique of the Attuned State

On the one hand, Taylor's formulations strive to evoke the resistance or moment of otherness of the world. He wants to retain an absolutist moment in natural science because there must be a world "out there" in some sense for us to be attuned to. So when some philosophers of science dissolve the world into intersubjectivity, Taylor is concerned to preserve the moment of truth in the objectivism of the logical empiricists: Natural objects are independent enough to resist or stimulate us. Thus, when Taylor speaks of "the appearance given to the world,"<sup>86</sup> he offers a carefully crafted phrase. He does not say "the appearance of the world," for that could imply the existence of a full-fledged independent "reality" behind the "appearance." Nor does he say "the appearance we give to the world," for that could imply that we create the world ex nihilo and the world is but the "appearance" we give to it. To say that there is a peculiar appearance given to the world is to suggest that although we



participate in the making of the world (the world is made real by appearing to or being perceived by us), the world is also in a sense already there, given to us with a certain appearance, presented to us with a specific face.

On the other hand, Taylor believes that this recalcitrant nature need not remain alien and can be transfigured into an amicable companion for humans if only we give it its due, acknowledge it, and respect it in our interactions with it. Ultimately, an attuned orientation to the world can enable us to "straddle the gap between things and our experience of them."<sup>87</sup>

Here we see what a fine line Taylor's expressivism must walk. He is concerned to defend a moment of resistance in nature, a moment indicative of the presence of an inherent order in nature, but his assumption that we can harmonize ourselves with this order without much violence done to ourselves or to nature makes the quasi-independence of nature's structure weaker and weaker and more and more human-like. Taylor's expressivism, exemplified by the phrase "the appearance given to the world," implies two potentially incompatible claims: (1) the world is other to us, partly opaque and (2) the world is accessible and can be in harmony with us.

This tension is neither resolved nor further refined by Taylor. He convinces us that the world is never transparent to us, but when we ask why the correct response

to the world is attunement, he cannot provide a definitive answer that would rule out all other orientations. It is crucial for his theory of the state that Taylor supply such an answer, otherwise the attuned steady-state cannot generate the civic virtue necessary to it.

Why ought we pursue an expressivism of harmonization? Why do we "need" notions like "a natural bent to the world"? And what in the world speaks to that need? Taylor's answer seems to be that harmonization is superior because all other modern orientations have serious problems. Taylor argues by elimination: (1) The unconscious unity of self and nature of Robust Faith is impossible once the level of self-consciousness passes a certain point in its historical development; (2) The instrumental, utilitarian orientation of Enlightenment destroys nature and leaves humans alienated and open to manipulation; (3) The pursuit of an unsituated, self-dependent existence through Promethean transformation reduces to (2) and carries authoritarian tendencies. We are left, then, with an expressivism of attunement and this approach alone holds the promise of an authentic existence: We will be most free if we acknowledge our situatedness and attempt to harmonize ourselves with it. The same structure of persuasion applies to all of Taylor's articles, whether they address the question of the best ethical theory, the ideal state, the most defensible concept of the person, the

relation of language to being, or the structure of the natural and social sciences.<sup>88</sup> Taylor's critique of alternative approaches to these topics evokes our sense of their inadequacy and leaves us with the implication that an orientation of attunement is the only viable path open.

But, even if Taylor could destroy all possible opponents, the argument by elimination would not necessarily establish Taylor's position. It could be that the opponents foster faulty understandings of freedom and politics even while Taylor's alternative is incapable of realization. Perhaps Taylor's expressivism expresses a longing rather than a real possibility.

Perhaps the persistent urge in the self to be at one with nature, the longing to believe that the world has an inherent structure with which we can be in harmony and which can guide an authentic human life, need not imply anything but a human need. Perhaps it does not imply a natural bent in the self or in the universe that can satisfy that need.

Taylor first established a moment of objectivity, a bent, in the self and the universe in order that there be something non-subject-derived to guide subjects. Put that non-subjective something, while real, may be incapable of the degree of guidance "attunement" implies; it might be touchable by human reason or unreason only sporadically and incapable of unifying human existence. There is, as Taylor

himself admits, a "gap between things and our experience of them," but that gap is not necessarily the exclusive product of non-attuned orientations like utilitarianism.

Promethean theories of the state deny the integrity of nature and the resistance of self and society to rational organization. They are like lions devouring their prey. The attuned state also denies the otherness of self and world. But it is like an amoeba suffocating and incorporating its victim into a larger unity. In the theory of the attuned state, telos, perhaps nothing more than a longing that there be a telos, has moved from belief in a divinely inspired nature to belief in the possibility of self-conscious harmonization of self and nature.

The expressivism of attunement underlies Taylor's steady state. Is there a theory of the state that neither gives free reign to the Promethean urge nor seeks to incorporate the world into higher and higher levels of rationality? It is to this inquiry that Chapter V is directed.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Paul Ricoeur, "The Paradox of Politics," in Legitimacy and the State, ed. William F. Connolly (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>William E. Connolly, Appearance and Reality in Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 165-6.

<sup>3</sup>Theodore J. Lowi, The End of Liberalism, second edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1979), p. 196.

<sup>4</sup>Lowi, p. 307.

<sup>5</sup>Lowi, p. 305.

<sup>6</sup>Lowi, p. 311.

<sup>7</sup>Lowi, p. 276.

<sup>8</sup>Lowi, p. 296.

<sup>9</sup>Lowi, p. 298.

<sup>10</sup>Lowi, p. 312.

<sup>11</sup>Lowi, p. 289.

<sup>12</sup>Lowi, p. 285.

<sup>13</sup>Lowi, p. 291.

<sup>14</sup>Lowi, p. 292.

<sup>15</sup>Lowi, p. 292.

<sup>16</sup>Lowi, p. 293.

<sup>17</sup>Lowi, p. 293.

<sup>18</sup>Lowi, p. 293.

<sup>19</sup>Jurgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 78.

<sup>20</sup>Habermas, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup>Habermas, p. 76.

<sup>22</sup>Habermas, p. 85-6.

<sup>23</sup>Habermas, p. 70.

<sup>24</sup>Habermas, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup>The claim is really that without humanly-devised pharmaceuticals the medical and consumption goods of modern life would be impossible. There were, of course, no such things as "chemicals" until recently in human history.

<sup>26</sup>Habermas, p. 78.

<sup>27</sup>Habermas, p. 108.

<sup>28</sup>Habermas, p. 110.

<sup>29</sup>Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests  
(Poston: Beacon Press, 1971).

<sup>30</sup>Habermas, Knowledge, p. 307.

<sup>31</sup>Henning Ottmann, "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," in Habermas: Critical Debates, p. 81.

<sup>32</sup>Habermas, Knowledge. p. 310.



<sup>33</sup>Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), p. 68-9.

<sup>34</sup>Steven Lukes, "Of Gods and Demons: Habermas and Practical Reason," in Habermas: Critical Debates, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), p. 137-8.

<sup>35</sup>Jurgen Habermas, Toward a Rational Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 83.

<sup>36</sup>Habermas, Rational Society, p. 87.

<sup>37</sup>McCarthy, Critical Theory, p. 111.

<sup>38</sup>McCarthy, Critical Theory, p. 118.

<sup>39</sup>Habermas, Knowledge, p. 130.

<sup>40</sup>Jurgen Habermas, "A Reply to My Critics," in Habermas: Critical Debates, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), p. 241.

<sup>41</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 244.

<sup>42</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 248.

<sup>43</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 248.

<sup>44</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 248.

<sup>45</sup>Lukes, "Gods and Demons," p. 145.

<sup>46</sup>William E. Connolly, "The Dilemma of Legitimacy," in Legitimacy and the State, ed. William E. Connolly, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 237-8.

<sup>47</sup>Habermas, again when pressed, likewise speaks of an irreducible moment of otherness in nature, but his theory of the state assumes a technologically dominated nature. Lowi shares Habermas' views of reason and nature without the benefit of philosophical second thoughts.

<sup>48</sup>Rudiger Bubner elaborates this point in "Habermas' Concept of Critical Theory," in Habermas: Critical Debates, eds. John R. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), p. 52:

Even if one concedes that an ideal does not always correspond to reality, the ideal must nevertheless be meaningful as an ideal. That is, it must be an appropriate criterion for testing whether a reality is inadequate, insofar as the reality must correspond to the ideal, at least in principle.

<sup>49</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 235.

<sup>50</sup>Habermas, "Reply," p. 236.

<sup>51</sup>Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 89.

<sup>52</sup>Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup>Charles Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 544.

<sup>54</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 546.

<sup>55</sup>Charles Taylor, "The Politics of the Steady State," in Peyond Industrial Growth, ed. Abraham Rotstein (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 53.

<sup>56</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 66.

<sup>57</sup>Charles Taylor, "Socialism and Weltanschauung," in The Socialist Idea, ed. Leszek Kolakowski and Stuart Hampshire (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 56.

<sup>58</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 60.

<sup>59</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 53.

<sup>60</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 63.

<sup>61</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 63.

<sup>62</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 64.

<sup>63</sup>Taylor, "Steady State," p. 63.

<sup>64</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 552.

<sup>65</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 552.

<sup>66</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 556.

<sup>67</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 558.

<sup>68</sup>See Taylor, Hegel, p. 558:

Marx's variant of 'absolute' freedom is at the base of Bolshevik voluntarism which...has crushed all obstacles in its path with extraordinary ruthlessness, and has spawned again that terror which Hegel described with uncanny insight."

<sup>69</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 561.

<sup>70</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 540.

<sup>71</sup>Charles Taylor, "What is Human Agency?" in The Self, ed. Theodore Mischel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p. 124-5.

<sup>72</sup>Charles Taylor, "Language and Human Nature," A. P. Plaunt Memorial Lecture, Carleton University, 1978, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup>Taylor, "Language," p. 22.

<sup>74</sup>Taylor, "Human Agency," p. 126.

<sup>75</sup>Charles Taylor, "Connolly, Foucault and Truth," Political Theory 13, August 1985, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup>Charles Taylor, "Understanding in Human Science," Review of Metaphysics 34, September 1980, p. 32.

<sup>77</sup>Taylor, "Human Science," p. 53.

<sup>78</sup>Taylor, "Human Science," p. 48.

<sup>79</sup>Taylor, "Human Science," p. 36.

<sup>80</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 569.

<sup>81</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 564.

<sup>82</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 563.

<sup>83</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 563.

<sup>84</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 564.

<sup>85</sup>Taylor, Hegel, p. 571.

<sup>86</sup>Taylor, "Human Science," p. 34.

<sup>87</sup>Taylor, "Human Science," p. 34.

<sup>88</sup>See Taylor's Philosophical Papers: Human Agency and Language, Volume 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Philosophical Papers: Philosophy and the Human Sciences, Volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) for essays on these topics and the structure of argument they share.

C H A P T E R   V  
UNTHINKING FAITH AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Summary

This study was based on the assumption that Hegel's account of the dialectic of Faith and Enlightenment correctly identifies two recurrent orientations to the modern world and contains profound insight into the play between them. It has sought, therefore, to explore the possibility that the terms of the dialectic continue to set a frame for contemporary political discourse. What insights and unusual kernels of understanding drop out as a result of interpreting contemporary discourse as the heir of the Faith-Enlightenment struggle? To pursue this lead, the study has probed the environmental debate and some contemporary theories of the state. Let us see where this exploration has led us.

It has exposed limitations in each of the proffered perspectives and interpreted these limitations as a function of the dynamic between them -- each set of flaws is constituted in conjunction with the other set. The deficiencies of Faith prompt replies by Enlightenment that become the strengths of the affirmative position of Enlightenment; the inadequacies of Enlightenment are noted and remedied by Faith and become the "moments of truth" of



Faith. Put more broadly, each position crystallizes in response to its opponent as each dramatizes elements of an orientation to the environment or to the state needed but unavailable to the other. By focusing on the dynamic between them, we reveal affinities and connections between mutually acclaimed adversaries.

Toward this end, the analysis had to shift from the domain emphasized by each theory to the "ontological space" they share. The phrase "ontological space" is meant to suggest the broad historical context -- the unthought -- that allows one complex of competing ideas and practices to emerge and makes another nearly unthinkable. Thus, the enchanted world of Robust Faith constitutes a different ontological space than the holist-Promethean complex of modernity.

One way to map this space is to bring the orientation to nature implied in each perspective to the surface. The difference in conceptions of nature goes a long way toward accounting for the differences in environmentalist perspectives and ideals of the state: To conceive nature as raw material to be used and mastered is to be able to advocate environmental management, juridical democracy and the rational state; to conceive nature as ordered in fundamental harmony with human needs is to be able to advocate ecological holism and the attuned state. I do not say that the conception of nature determines the

conceptions of self, knowledge, politics and freedom associated with it; but, first, it helps to enable them, and, second, it is the one least thematized in contemporary political thought and therefore most interesting to pursue. The conceptions of nature, self, knowledge, etc., together create a porous setting which enables and disables political discourse.

Chapters JII and JV contained the following structure: A critique of a Promethean perspective was followed by a critique of the ontological assumption of harmony of natural holism or the attuned state. Let us review the findings of these two sets of critiques.

Natural holism, the critique of the Promethean posture toward nature, explained the inability of even the most sophisticated version of environmental management to reverse the trend of environmental deterioration and linked this to the management view of nature as standing reserve. The management framework cannot generate a respect for nature, a respect for its mysteries and unintelligibilities. When it does begin to recognize the difficulties in its conception of nature as standing reserve, it elaborates an ethic of "responsibility" for the environment. Yet this environmental ethic affords respect to animate life only to the degree that it approaches the standard of human subjectivity and physiology. In short, environmental management pursues the audacious project of reorganizing

nature, denaturing those beings and processes amenable to domestication and humanization, and extinguishing those that are not. It fails as a ethic of being in the world, claims natural holism, in that it cannot engender care and respect for those elements of nature not easily explained through modern science.

The expressivism of attunement offers a similar critique of the Promethean understanding of the state. Such an understanding tries to surmount the paradoxes of politics by believing in the sufficiency of a legal-rational framework; and its tendency to identify political repression with pre-modern societies blinds it to the alienating elements in its own practices. In its insistence upon judging dissension and protest against the narrow standard of instrumental rationality, it delegitimizes them as "nostalgia" and "romanticism." Masterful theories of the state do not explore the suspicion that the increasing rationalization of social life alienates, divorcing us from the spiritual, imaginative and other non-rational aspects of ourselves and our world. And a state that fosters alienation is a repressive state: The untoward elements of the self, the social order, and nature are smothered in a sticky web of external (technocratic) or internal (socialized) control. The masterful theories, claims the attuned state, aim to install respect for persons, but their passion for

coordination results in disrespect for those modes of self-expression that do not or may not live up to the narrowed standard of rationality. Enlightened theories of the state require such extensive management of its citizenry that the commitment to people as ends-in-themselves is jeopardized.

The main thrust of the holist critique of Prometheanism can now be stated more cogently: Prometheanism first denies and then attempts to dominate that which does not quite fit its categories.

This study has also explored and criticized holism's attempts to remedy the flaws in the Promethean orientation to the non-rational. It claims that with philosophical subtlety and existential humility the non-rational need not be mastered but can be accommodated. But we saw how more than subtlety and humility was required to sustain the holist positions -- the assumption of an ontological harmony was also needed. And the holist project maintains an eerie affinity with the Promethean one: neither aspires to let otherness be, to tolerate it even after it has come out of the closet, to allow it to find expression in its own way. For holism, there really is no such thing as "otherness" in its radical sense, there are only aspects of being that lie beyond the limits of our capacity to know. While there are aspects of being that modernity tends to treat as "other" -- spirituality, imagination, mystery -- these are at base integral parts of a world to which we can

somehow be attuned. Holism says: Although alienation will always exist, it is an epistemological, not an ontological, condition. If Prometheanism wants to master otherness, holism wants to bring it into attunement with an enriched self and a more responsive social world.

Chapters III and IV, then, left the reader with the suggestion of this affinity: Prometheanism seeks to impose human form upon otherness, first denying and then suppressing it; holism seeks to cajole it into binding its identity to that of a larger unity, first assimilating it and then defining resistance to assimilation as inauthenticity, as an expression of "subjectivism." This too is an imposition of form, if it is true that otherness is ineradicable and that the world was not designed to human specifications. Chapters III and IV proposed that holism, while correct in its expose of Promethean hubris, is itself not nearly humble enough -- or is capable of humility only on the assumption of a beautifully designed world. Natural holism and the theory of attunement seek to identify otherness but not to let it be. While asserting that the domination of the unordered remainder -- the non-rational -- can only drive it underground, they themselves propose a method for truly reducing it.

For example, in Chapter III, holism accused environmental management of respecting nature only insofar as it approached the standards of human rationality -- the

sin of anthropocentrism. It was difficult for environmental management to defend a non-destructive orientation to that which lay beyond these standards and refused to be humanized. But we saw how natural holism's "respect" for nature depended upon the view that nature is designed for us and we designed to fit it. It can defend a non-destructive orientation to nature only on the condition that it be ontologically a place where humans are at home. Is this not another version of the insistence that humans be at the center of the universe? If the world were not predisposed to us, if its face were illegible, could natural holism resist the slide to environmental management? Does its resistance to management not depend on its slender faith in attunement?

For another example, in Chapter IV, holism charged the masterful state with denying, and thus responding inappropriately to, the limits to the orderability of the self and the polity. The shadowy land beyond these limits is what in another vocabulary is called otherness. The theory of attunement is less likely to pretend that otherness can be eradicated through knowledge. But we saw how its acknowledgement of otherness was a targeting of that which is in need of reconciliation with the natural bent of things. Its (admittedly always incomplete) project is to create a self that listens to a world that by definition knows what is best. Self-fulfillment lies in



making ourselves as congruent as possible with this natural structure. Its presumptuous demand is that humans inhabit a world ontologically predisposed to them.

This concluding chapter asks whether the holist and the Promethean orientations to nature and to the state, and thus to otherness, exhaust the realm of the possible orientations available in modernity. At minimum, we can say that they are deeply entrenched orientations. This study has not attempted to establish that contemporary political discourse is sterile, oscillating between two untenable positions. It has claimed, rather, that two of its major voices interact in a predictable pattern: Each side asserts and re-asserts its primary thesis, each continues to make the same critical points about the other, and neither has been successful in articulating a position that can address its limitations without compromising its own primary insight.

Because we have explored a likely possibility rather than offered proof for a thesis, it is still an open question whether or not contemporary political discourse should (or can) move beyond holism and Prometheanism.

The interpretation and analysis pursued here suggest more than one project. One might take issue with the Faith-Enlightenment framework and develop a different interpretation of these issues; another might accept the terms of the framework but reject the claim about the



ultimate insufficiency of holist or Promethean stances, pursuing further one of them. The version of this latter project most likely to succeed, it seems to me, is one following the lines of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. By focusing on the essentially ambiguous relation between a self simultaneously subject and object, and a world simultaneously human-made and other, it may avoid the teleological drift of other holist positions.

In this concluding chapter, however, I mean to pursue a path leading beyond the debate between holism and Prometheanism. Here, their debate sounds like an overplayed hit song -- once full of promise, now annoyingly predictable. This path has only recently begun to be cleared; it is only after working through Hegel's dialectic that we can discern its existence at the edge of our thought. (This is revealed by the fact that all of the leading clearers have been involved in the study of Hegel.) I cannot now guarantee that this path leads anywhere one might want to go, but its appeal lies partly in the fact that its promise, still bathed in the shadows, has not yet disappointed.

In contrast to the thought-experiment that gave primacy to the holist-Promethean representation of modernity, I will refocus the picture a first time and look at modernity after all traces of harmonious holism have been erased by Michel Foucault. From such a perspective,

the categories of the Promethean and the holist appear less encompassing than those content to remain in them would have us believe. This loosening of categories allows me to refocus the picture a second time and ask a question of ethics: Can there be an orientation to the self, others, and nature that is not destructive of the non-rational, non-rationalizable and non-intelligible elements therein and that does not, implicitly or explicitly, assume the world to be user-friendly? My response is a "fractious holism."

### The First Refocus

While Robust Faith was able to enchant the world, giving it a harmonious coherence with a divine source, it could not sustain itself. From a Foucaultian perspective, it was a fanciful superimposition upon a world not designed to fulfill human fantasies:

We must not imagine that the world turns toward us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favor.

The flaws in Robust Faith identified by Enlightenment -- its confusion of the material and the immaterial through a system of resemblances, its adoration of historically contingent forms -- were not taken by Enlightenment as evidence of the world's recalcitrance to human knowledge

and control, but as evidence of a too passive and naive attempt to read a world inherently legible through careful observation and the slow accumulation of scientific knowledge. Enlightenment itself was not ready to draw the more radical conclusion that world and self are multiple and would resist secular as well as religious unification. (Despite its retention of a basically creationist ontology, Enlightenment was a turning point: By clearing away the decaying remnants of Faith, it began a new order of things enabling those like Nietzsche and Foucault to assert their thesis of radical disharmony and explore its implications.)

The post-Enlightenment self became self-assertive. The old confidence in God was replaced first by an equally comforting self-confidence and later by the chilling conclusion that self-assertion was the only thing available in a world indifferent to our needs, opaque to our quest for knowledge, and resistant to our control.

Modernity, then, is an attitude of engagement with the present, a self-assigned task, as well as a context to which one belongs. The essence of this engagement is thematization. Always alert for signs of that which lies below the threshold of awareness, moderns forge "topics," "fields of study," "subject-matters." Modes of relating to self, others, nature, are transformed from underground wanderings to categories and theories, for only so enclosed can these dangerous elements be brought in the open. The

relation between generalized understandings and idiosyncratic thoughts can become the struggle between "tradition" and "liberty"; group labor using available instrumentalities can turn into the "relations of production" and the "mode of production"; notions of death or the gods can be tested for the efficacy of "myth" or the coherence of "theology." Thematization permeates modern life: "For the first time in history...the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its fatality."<sup>2</sup> The biological bases of human existence -- human bodies, their collaboration as pairs and as a species -- can form a "sexuality" and a "population."

Of course, non-modern thought too placed life within some frame, but the intensity (perhaps desperation) of the modern attitude and the extent of its thematic reach into life set it apart. The Enlightenment debunking of Faith's tradition, its application of what Hegel called negative critique to religion, superstition and custom, entailed the crystallization of "religion," "superstition" and "custom"--for "tradition" itself is seen as the product of a certain thematic incorporation from this Foucaultian perspective. In contrast to Platonic or Christian systematic thought, modern thought employs a veritable methodology of thematization -- no longer imperative to deploy critique in the service of some ideal, digging up

ground becomes liberating in itself simply because it may open new possibilities.

But Foucault shows us that thematization is a two-edged sword.

First, the surgical cut. To clarify or give specificity to a process or an entity is not to leave it unchanged, but to make an intelligible form out of a liquid one. Organizing a diffuse or loosely conglomerated mass into a system, identity is bestowed, producing as an individuated unity that which was inchoate or perhaps stable but unrecognizably so. Moderns have raised thematization to an art, addressing the need to have a comfortable, comforting world clearly related to us. Thematization has also extended the realm of public action, enhancing the possibility of social change. Gender, race, the organization of the economy, the environment -- phenomena formerly the province of fate or the reflection of non-generalizable interests -- have been organized into political issues. Both the cause and the effect of this politicization is an increasing awareness that the categories and beliefs we employ, the roles we play, even the cultural and natural objects against which we define our selves, are significantly human-made. And if human finitude and fallibility are insinuated into the very structure of our world, then that structure can be altered. It is possible that new social constructions will be more

equitable or just or less dangerous. It is in this sense that the modern world is artificial, although real enough. It is an artificial reality.

Now the wound. Let us recall the attuned expressivist protest against thematization before we explore the Foucaultian position, for the latter is a critical response to expressivism.

Thematization, cries the theorist of attunement, fosters an anthropocentric humanism; too much in modernity rides on human reason! Understood throughout history as a difficult and elusive power, Enlightenment tried to transform reason into an edifice of rationality with precisely distinguished compartments. Reality would thus be filtered through a grid and emerge neatly ordered, the relations among phenomena rendered predictable once again.

But Enlightenment, and we as its heirs, have stretched reason to the breaking point, say the expressivists. Straining to cover the expanded terrain, it shed some of its substance, trimming itself down more and more to its instrumental and procedural functions. The pursuit of a society thus rationalized led to the supremacy of a technological and utilitarian mentality. According to Enlightenment's plan, reason's jurisdiction was to include all phenomena, but it could achieve universality only by restricting its clientele. Spiritual, aesthetic, or non-cognitive dimensions of life that could not be covered



by the terms of this reduced rationality were ignored or repressed. The not clearly intelligible became the irrelevant, the unreal, and modern life lost much richness, color and meaning. Enlightenment's rational solution to the retreat of Faith failed to re-integrate the world.

The loose thematization of Robust Faith did not have these problems, the expressivist continues, for it integrated the non-rational as a cosmology. This solution is not available to us in its robust form, for the belief in a divinely ordered nature is incompatible with the acknowledgement, made necessary after Enlightenment's success, of the extent of human participation in self and world. But Faith is not dead! cries the expressivist as he seeks to replace a Robust Faith with a more modest successor. I will conclude the summary of the attuned expressivist critique of thematization with an account of the differences between this more modest successor and a robust teleological position.

First, the attuned expressivist says, although telos cannot be understood as an actuality, it can be conceived as a possibility. And why foreclose the possibility that there is a direction in being capable of some degree of discernment and guidance? This possibility "doesn't seem...to be in worse shape than its obvious rivals."<sup>3</sup> Second, the locus of telos must shift from an enchanted nature to a self with an inherent bent. For is it not the



case that we can discern a difference between more and less authentic interpretations of self? Third, while this telos may be even more difficult to divine (since nature is no longer filled with the signs of God's will), our articulation of it must be clearer and more self-conscious. That is, because moderns are no longer content to explain the vagueness of an ontological bent as an inexplicable mystery, expressivism must show how a weak telos in the self is compatible with some version of science and rationality.

We are now in a position to continue the Foucaultian critique of thematization, aiming eventually toward a second refocus and the articulation of an ethics of otherness.

For Foucault, the theory of attunement misunderstands the underside of thematization: The defect is best understood not as an instrumental rationality gone wild, but as the subjugation intrinsic to the quite sane pursuit of self-conscious thematization. Thematization enlightens and politicizes, extending the realm of conscious human management; thematization enlightens and subjugates, torturing the space for the non-rationalizable. Enlightenment and holist modes of thematization both cut two ways, and neither is sensitive enough to the wounds it creates.

Thematization is an imposition of form, doing violence to the otherness that resists the mold! cries Foucault.

Life in the enchanted world required loose thematization only, for its organizing categories were divine thoughts already in place. The thinness of human thematization made it less likely that otherness would stand out starkly, for what appeared as heteroclite was as much a part of God's plan as any other phenomenon; oddities that did exist, and they always do, could be marvelled at as mysteries, excluded, ignored, punished or exalted. When life was only superficially and sporadically brought into the sphere of human administration, that which appeared anomalous, while present, was subject to less interference.

The effect of the Enlightenment canonization of reason was not simply the devaluation of emotion or imagination, as attuned expressivism implies, but the incitement of otherness, the insistence that it expose itself to punishment or reformation. Unreason, the non-rationalizable, was not unclarified being, the victim of benign neglect, but the irrational in need of prevention, detection, inspection, intervention, treatment, defeat. Thematization exacerbates otherness. In its insistence upon locating otherness within the categories of rationality and normality, Prometheanism does not explore the suspicion that the increasing rationalization of social life helps to foster more forms of deviance in need of regulation. In its insistence upon extending the sphere of

legality into new areas of life, it helps to foster new illegalities in need of apprehension and punishment.

The Enlightenment expansion of thematization was not the wrong means to the right end of re-integrating otherness. It was the targeting and subjugation of an otherness that would refuse to go away even were spirituality and aesthetics to be valorized. The expressivist critique is on target with its focus on Enlightenment rationalism, but fails to develop its understanding of the link between rationalization and normalization. This link is a product of the fact that life and world are always partially other to us and that otherness is not fully susceptible to containment or assimilation.

Foucault's account of the modern deployment of "sexuality" exemplifies this counterthesis. "Sexuality," an embodying construction that codifies the body and its multiple pleasures, attacks the recalcitrant material within. "Sexuality" disciplines and normalizes a desiring body conceived as "organs, somatic localizations, functions, anatomo-physiological systems, sensations, and pleasures."<sup>4</sup> The history of modern treatment (both sensationalist and therapeutic) of bodies and bodily desires that fall outside the norm -- gays, hermaphrodites, nymphomaniacs, neuters, dwarfs, giants -- is a history of the violence required by the institutionalization of "sexuality."

"Sexuality" normalizes the self but leaves "sickness" and "deviance" in its wake. And the subjugation involved in "sexualization" is not confined to maltreatment of those who do not fit. Even those who apparently do are interned, for all are condemned to a wild goose chase in pursuit of a true nature, an authentic self that has been repressed. "Sexuality" subjugates because it is false, or rather, falsified because its status as historical construction must be hidden for it to do its dirty work. Through an intricate system of psychiatric, therapeutic, medical, commercial and religious institutions, we are lured to the belief that "sexuality" is a political prisoner and that an authentic existence depends upon its liberation from the confines of Puritan morality, Victorian prudishness or bourgeois superficiality.

For Foucault, however, there is no true self to be found, if truth is the discovery of some self-essence that finally enables a harmonious identity. The wet dream of "sexuality" is that all the pieces of the self are inclined to fall into place. Through its deployment,

...we have arrived at the point where we expect our intelligibility to come from what was for many centuries thought as madness; the plentitude of our body from what was long considered its stigma...; our identity from what was perceived as an obscure and nameless urge.

"Sexuality" is a fictitious reality with imposing effects. because no natural harmony exists, any imposed harmony must

be enforced by strategies like the Lowian, the Habermasian, the Tayloresque -- by detailed and proliferating laws and regulations and by insidiously internalized norms. The latter are especially pernicious, for in modernity norms, like rationality, do not rest but constantly seek to expand their terrain.

Foucault agrees with the expressivist that the Robust Faith orientation to otherness entails too little self-consciousness to be tenable today. A level of thematization, once achieved historically, cannot be dismantled without self-deception. But the theory of attunement misidentifies the source of Robust Faith's non-violent orientation to otherness: It believes that Robust Faith was able to integrate and thereby dissolve otherness into a harmonious cosmology, leaving nothing to violate. In reality, claims Foucault, otherness, recalcitrant material, was not absent from the enchanted world -- it was simply less thematized. Thematization increases the need to "do something" about otherness, it does not cause otherness; Robust Faith allowed otherness to roam a little, it did not resolve it.

Expressivism's misinterpretation of Robust Faith gives it hope that some semblance of attunement can be recaptured. While Foucault shares a certain admiration for Robust Faith, he cannot endorse any version of it today. And despite its divergence from a strong teleological

position, attuned expressivism still clings to what is most in need of critique: the notion that "self" and "nature" are unifiable and truth-revealing. It still conceives life too much in terms of

...man's concrete essence, the realization of his potential...The "right" to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs...beyond all the oppressions or "alienation," the "right" to rediscover what one is and all that one can be.

### The Second Refocus

Robust Faith's modest thematization allowed its harmonious holism to stand and this in turn protected otherness from the ravages of the Promethean urge. For post-Enlightenment selves, however, the problem of otherness cannot be solved that way, says Foucault. Drawing loosely upon, but not confining myself to, this Foucaultian critique of attunement, I seek to develop a more viable response to the problem of otherness. The question that guides my attempt is this: How can we relate ethically to otherness once we eschew teleological pretensions and discern the ambiguous character of modern thematization?

My concern is primarily with developing an ethic, a moral stance of greater tolerance for otherness. But an ethic connects with a view of the possibilities for ethical

action given by the structure of the world, i.e., with a set of ontological assumptions. I call the set postulated here "fractious holism."

Why holism? I endorse the view that the human and non-human, illegible and legible, elements of the world form a whole, a web where a shift in any one element will have its effect on every other. This study has tried to exhibit some of the ways in which we are engendered and constrained by our linguistic, cultural, institutional, bodily and natural context and how that context in turn is drawn more deeply into existence through our work upon it. Kohak, Compton and Taylor are right to insist on this point. Neither do I want to lose sight of the fact that we can speak, very generally, of persistent always already there conditions of human existence -- the need to feel at home in the world, the sociality and technology it spawns, the bodily-perceptual field that is the condition of possibility of time and space and subject and object.

Why fractious? The ontological view I play out is of a world far from chaotic, but perhaps even further from a state of harmonious integration. Thus, a modifier that spoke to the existence of otherness, of recalcitrance within the world, was needed for the term "holism." The runner-up was "entropic," as it is used in thermodynamics to mean "descriptive of a quantity that is the measure of the amount of energy in a system not available for doing



work." Energy in a system not available for doing work was, I thought, an apt description of that which escapes our categories, refuses to be disciplined to our satisfaction, and walks out on the job of meaning-provision assigned to it. But I feared that the term "entropy" would suggest also to the reader this sense: "The tendency toward uniformity, toward homogenized disarray." This connotation is inappropriate, for it insinuates a world both too disordered and too docile, lacking a sense of the defiance, dissonance or indomitability of elements within the whole.

Thus, the ontology I assume is a fractious holism, for it always includes elements that "tend to cause trouble by opposition to an established order," "interfere with its smooth operation," "are likely to function in unpredictable ways." To be fractious is to be disposed to make breaches, to interrupt good feeling or harmony. An ethic of otherness would have to abide by this ontology, in a sense be expressive of it. I turn now to an attempt to articulate such an ethic.

An ethic compatible with a rejection of telos could try to ground itself in an awe inspired by that which is radically other. Otherness in the self and in nature might be sought out and endorsed as such. This reliance upon awe assumes, first, that humans are drawn to things strange and this attraction manifests itself in moods of fascination,

wonder, awe; it assumes, second, a potential link between fascination and respect, between wonder and admiration, between awe and reverence. Such an attempt must evoke the first set of moods and enable their development into the second, morally pertinent set of traits.

An ethic of awe can evoke the experience of strangeness by identifying people, things, feelings, that do not seem to fit any scheme, but surprise, defy or resist interpretation. Here, morbid fascination with weirdness must be converted into a respect for otherness. Or, it can evoke strangeness by encouraging contact with nature in the wild, allowing us to see gigantic mountains, to feel the power of a mighty waterfall, to note the eccentricities of Einstein's brain. Here, it is necessary only to enhance typical responses: Wonder at nature, an awe that strikes us dumb, demands from the beholder a certain respect or reverence, for stuff able to silence the locquacious animal is powerful indeed.

Because I will not assume a neat fit between those who have the most power to act -- humans -- and that upon which they act -- bodies and nature -- one response to the utilitarian ethic (i.e., We cannot understand nature in itself, so we value it according to its usefulness), might be an ethics of awe (i.e., We cannot understand it, so we value it as alien and as an index of the limitations of human understanding).

But although awe can be an element in an ethic expressive of fractious holism, it does not suffice. First, it is precarious: Awe and wonder must be momentary experiences; although potent they are too rare and unpredictable to sustain ethical action. Awe does not suffice to inspire tolerance of otherness, for the experience of awe can be awful; things strange can repel and disgust as well as fascinate and attract. Thus, the link between the experience of strangeness and respect, admiration or reverence is quite tenuous, and it is not clear why or how an ethics of awe would triumph over an orientation of disgust and mastery once the insistence on assimilating unharmonious elements was relaxed.

Second, an ethics of awe exaggerates the autonomy of otherness, for it tends to understate the human contribution to the production of otherness itself. And yet we have seen how, in order to live in a world not designed to fit, humans must impose an alienating order upon it. When the raw material of the body or nature shows signs (natural catastrophes, madness, sexual oddities) of escaping our best attempts to order it, we see how thematization has helped bring otherness into being. Otherness is both a product of and in conflict with the human need for order.

What is more, to be modern is to accelerate this drive to thematize and manage life, and so it seem that an ethic

of awe demands a backward turn to a pre-modern innocence, to a more mysterious stance to things and events. But because thematization is necessary and desirable in a world no longer infused with intrinsic meaning and telos, buttressed by secure traditions or authored by a caring Designer, the ethic of fractious holism argues that tolerance for otherness lies within the very heart of modernity.

The first step is to turn thematization back on itself, making the essence of the modern project the object of critique and politicization. The capacity for theoretical self-consciousness nourishes the insight that thematic and categorical unities contain artificialities. Not only does the modern attitude involve more imposition than did the attitude of Robust Faith, it can involve a greater recognition and appreciation of that imposition. Thus, it can and does, as Foucault's genealogy of "sexuality" has shown, disassemble the fixtures it installs.

Once we have exploited the constructive/deconstructive potential of thematization, we can see the way in which thematization is necessary to modern life. The second step, then, is to affirm the dual nature of thematization. We sculpt a niche for ourselves in a world partly at odds with our projects and thus generate otherness in the self and the world which resists the design. Otherness becomes

recognized as the inevitable product of life, of the human attempt to live by creating unities. It is an effect in which we have a share of responsibility.

Responsibility, combined with an acceptance of the inevitability of otherness, can foster tolerance. For example, we give our selves an identity by regimenting a diverse and conflicting set of desires, drives, impulses, thoughts, intentions. "To be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of the passing moments; it is to take oneself as the object of a complex and difficult elaboration."<sup>7</sup> But if the identity of such a Foucaultian "work of art" is understood as an edifice constantly under artist-imposed and material-imposed renovation, not the expression of a naturally solid essence, we will be able to appreciate it for its refreshing changeability as well as for its comforting dimensions of stability. No longer able to base tolerance of otherness in innocence about otherness, a measure of tolerance can be had through self-conscious acknowledgement of our unavoidable role in engendering it.

A politics follows from this ethical orientation to the self. The social order is a collage whose mortar contains sweat and dirt. We never know precisely where the mortar might crack or where it can be made to crack, so an experimental attitude is best. We cannot know in advance the concrete political consequences of a political theory

or agenda, for "the 'best' theories do not constitute a very effective protection against disastrous political choices; certain great themes such as 'humanism' can be used to any end whatever."<sup>8</sup> Whether one's aim is to tear down old institutions or foster new ones, we can express the fractious world best through an engaged attitude that creates unities, judges the extent of the damage, and begins again. To treat the political order as a work of art makes possible a lively, restless, contestable and open politics.

Although this politics has in some ways out-grown the holist-Promethean dynamic, it also grows out of it. It does not repudiate all prior political tacks, but does seek distance from the claim of all to be cohesive, coherent orientations. The political stance of this new path dismantles the old systems, takes some elements almost whole, gives others a new twist, and introduces elements formerly considered illegitimate or not considered at all.

A political stance in a world of fractious holism must be experimental and tentative if it is to acknowledge that any political stance enables as well as subjugates. Thus, it should be reluctant to elaborate its governing principles beyond the requirement to act locally, experimentally, and tentatively. At the same time, the desire to tie a political stance very closely to specific issues and to eschew universalistic claims of general



principles is always betrayed in a world of fractious holism, for all concrete action is and must be guided by some principle. The following discussions of freedom and environmentalism exemplify this complex play between articulating this ethic as a politics and not fixing it so firmly that it belies the specific density of the political issues it engages.

Freedom in a world of fractious holism involves breaking up reified unities like "the responsible agent" or "the sexual person" and transgressing historically-imposed limits to what we can be. It is concerned with the possibility of uncovering the particular, the contingent and the finite in limits defined as universal or necessary. It deploys a genealogical rather than a transcendental critique. But to deny all limits to action or will, or to reduce them to error, would open this freedom to Hegel's critique of absolute freedom or Taylor's critique of unsituated freedom -- the ideal of the general will makes any affirmation, necessarily an instance of a particular will, a threat to consensuality that must be destroyed. For fractious holism, the assumption of the possibility of a general will is a political manifestation of the ontological assumption of harmony. The experimental stance we seek shares with the ideal of the general will a desire to expose social institutions as constructions and to remold them, but diverges from it by seeing remolding as



always incomplete, as never resulting in a neat fit between the self and the social order, and as involved in the production of new otherness in need of remedy. To express fractious holism, we must insist that any newly imposed social structure will also have effects threatening to or exclusive of or violent toward some aspects of some of the entities enclosed within.

Thus, freedom in a world of fractious holism requires taking responsibility for the edifices we are only in part responsible for creating. We are only in part responsible because some terms of our action have been set by history and others by the recalcitrant material worked upon -- bodies, nature. Limits are not denied, but the particular readings we give of them are problematized. The appropriate ethical orientation to this recalcitrant material, then, is to place it within some frame while trying to keep that frame loose and fluid enough so that that which does not fit has room to create space for itself. The ambiguous commitment to ends and agendas and to that which strains against them provides the modern space for freedom.

What can we make of this responsible dimension of freedom? It is clear how an ethic expressive of fractious holism can, through genealogy, seek out and expose contingencies and arbitrary constraints; it is less clear what is meant by the term "recalcitrant material." What

can we say about the status of the raw material the human artist has to work with? What can we know about the form or structure of the world that humans seek to act upon, harmonize with, control or use?

It is difficult for the ethic I seek to speak in general terms about the contours of the "raw material" of the self and world. Its holism demands that it say something in order to distinguish it from radical subjectivism or the empiricism of discrete facts; its understanding of the inevitability of otherness demands that it not say so much that it lapses back into harmonious holism. Perhaps we can take a cue on this issue from Foucault:

...there is always something in the social body, in classes, groups and individuals themselves which in turn some sense escapes...something which is by no means a more or less docile or reactive primal matter, but rather a centrifugal movement, an inverse energy, a discharge.

In opposition to harmonious holism's view of the raw material as "being," as having a definite, discernible and intelligible bent, Foucault can say that it has a diffuse resistance discernible only negatively. That is to say, the limits to molding this raw material, while having a certain definitiveness, are usually recognizable only after they have been violated -- after it is too late for attunement. I will say (although Foucault might not) that the raw material has a resiliency even within its bent.

When speaking abstractly, resistance is a force, an unnamed blockage to will; this blockage receives a name only when we move from a philosophical discourse to a political one -- then it becomes "gays," "feminists," "mental patients," "rednecks," "fate," or "accidents" and "contingencies."

From within an ontology of fractious holism, any ethic that seeks "respect" for the raw material of life, then, is inappropriate, for it asks too much of us to "respect" stuff whose accessibility is only diffuse resistance. Human subjects are capable of regard for non-rationality and non-humanity, but this capacity must dwindle the more the object of that regard is understood as alien, other.

The environmental ethic I endorse must not deny this resistance or the necessity of the technique it engenders. Habermas is right to insist upon the "technical interest," even if his version of it resides within a rationalistic philosophy of nature. Because nature is not designed to mesh perfectly with our needs, no matter how carefully and closely we listen to it, there is always a gap between the hospitality of nature and our demands as guests. This gap makes necessary at times an orientation to nature from the point of view of technical control.

The fate of the environmental management attempt at environmental ethics is predictable: To insist upon an ethical orientation that instills "respect" and "intrinsic value" for those aspects of nature (or self) radically

other engenders the opposite orientation -- the further humanization of nature or the rejection of an ethical orientation in favor of an orientation of mastery. To ask "How can we generate respect for nature?" is to ask "How can we have order without otherness?" and to put the question in this way implies two equally unsatisfactory answers: Faith's dreamy response that we can assimilate otherness if only we believed in telos; Enlightenment's pragmatic response that life requires order, order generates otherness, thus mastery is justified. I ask instead: "What is the best way to have order with otherness?" and answer that we must acknowledge the gap between self and world, take responsibility for it, and seek to tread lightly upon nature where and when possible.

But why? What justification can an ethic that seeks to express a fractious world give for its desire to let nature be? Unlike the ethical systems generated from within Faith or Enlightenment, it must admit that only partial justifications for its moral stance are possible, justifications that lack the force of a moral imperative.

We should let nature be, I claim, because it is the wisest orientation to a world upon which we depend but cannot fully comprehend or control. Even after the accelerated modern attempt, we have not mastered nature, so why not relieve ourselves of the dangerous and maddening Promethean obsession? Unless we do, we will continue to

risk nature's revenge in the form of environmentally-induced cancers, water and soil crises or a nuclear winter. Human existence upon the planet is precarious, not guaranteed by nature or providence; so it is only politic to tread lightly. The judicious attempt to let otherness in nature be is the only sense in which we can "respect" it, for it is foolishness to exaggerate the extent to which we either belong to it or can dominate it. The notion of an Environmental Impact Statement is a good one precisely because it discourages this foolishness. Despite its amenability to manipulation by foes of the environment and its implication in bureaucratic webs of control, the requirement that nature be acknowledged as an affronted party encourages us to recall both the otherness of nature and our dependence upon it.

An ethic expressive of fractious holism furthermore moves us away from a political economy dedicated to the pursuit of limitless growth and consumption. If the theory of the steady-state could be detached from its harmonious longings without then adopting a technocratic denial of otherness, it would be a more powerful critique. Taylor's steady-state relies too heavily upon the internalization of civic virtue and/or the commitment to the ideal of community, and these draw too heavily upon faith in our harmonizing capacities. An experimental attitude cognizant of the normalizing effects of this ideal could not place as

much weight upon moral sentiments and would not always seek to deepen and extend them. We ought to reject community as a global aim, a universal desiderata, and deploy it instead as a guide in specific political actions. We should muster up this thing called civic virtue when we can, but do so with the acknowledgement that we lose as well as gain by mobilizing this ideal. Moral ideals can form a part, of course, of the motivation for a shift in the priorities of the political economy. But their normalizing and totalizing tendencies can be mitigated by the acknowledgement that they are prudent illusions.

Natural holism's call to "experience nature" has elements in common with the reliance upon awe that enters into my position, but it focuses too much on the attempt to attune the self to a natural bent and not enough upon the political redesign of institutional/architectural/employment forms. For example, public buildings designed to open to the outside, with natural lighting, would encourage us every day and in a non-extraordinary way to face the resistance that is nature. Windowless, temperature-controlled rooms are more costly than the heating bills they are designed to reduce. And the price tag for the vast infrastructural support for private automobiles should include the social cost of discouraging another opportunity to experience the resistance of nature: bicycling. The obsession with comfort, with protection from the elements,



has too often prevented an experience of otherness and of our contribution to it -- experiences that could engender more tolerance.

Alongside the project to change the structure of the growth- and consumption-oriented political economy, I believe that the attempt to enforce and create pollution regulations and pollution-reduction incentives must continue in some way. The bureaucratizing effects of environmental regulation are less pernicious than are those of regulations regarding criminality, madness, sexuality, deviance. The espousal of environmental regulation must be accompanied by a call for the decriminalization of victimless acts of abnormality.

Our claim that we are on our own to do the best we can strikes a responsive chord in modern politics. This is, I think, the source of the endurance of versions of the "muddling through" thesis in political science literature. It speaks to the contemporary experience that patriotism, community, family, love are not unqualified goods -- that there is chauvinism in patriotism, authoritarianism in community, neurosis in family life, and jealousy and rage in love. We may be ripe for an ethic that explicitly acknowledges that allegiances to country, community, individuals (or schemes, theories, beliefs) can never be absolute, never quite as fulfilling as anticipated. And yet the ethic appropriate to fractious holism is doubly



reflexive, confessing that we lose something by self-consciously acknowledging the underside of our ideals -- we lose the ease of our conscience and the freedom to act without tortured consideration of possible implications, long-term effects, dangerous consequences.

### Harmonious Holism and Fractious Holism

For harmonious holism or attuned expressivism, the foregoing discussions of freedom and environmentalism don't wash. The attempts to give content to a limited but genealogical freedom and a respectless environmentalism are duplicitous: they require a conception of self and nature as multiple, as essence-less, and to conceive self and nature in this way, to be so reticent about inherent properties that pose limits to self-invention or nature-invention, disqualifies a theory from the right to speak of recalcitrant material.

According to these critics, a fractious holism underplays the solidity of personal identity. Evidence of this solidity is our ability to recognize gains in self-understanding, for this identification would be impossible were there nothing substantial to use as a standard of judgment. Thus, the very rejection of the possibility of harmonious integration is at odds with lived experience. But the position I have developed here affirms

that we can distinguish between better and worse self-interpretations, even while denying that we must judge them against an ideally-fulfilled self. Rather, we judge a self-interpretation good if it contributes to an appreciation of the artful character of our achievement; if it supports a work of art whose standards of beauty are not confined to "balance," "cohesion," "harmony," but include also "eccentricity," "hilarity," "vivacity," "things out of place." These latter elements form part of the ideal self of fractious holism.

Neither can my position distinguish between better and worse social orders, claims harmonious holism. If, for example, it endorses a less disciplined, less normalized society, it can only mean that such a society is truer in the sense of being expressive of, having a deeper affinity for, the essential characteristics of human being. And it does not have access to this standard after a repudiation of telos in self and nature. I reply that we can speak of better or worse modern societies, according to whether or not they provide enough space for humans to be even though their order can never be attuned to them. A less normalized relation to the state, to the Earth, or to one's body is "better" precisely because no relation can ever be deeply attuned, because the perfection of self and society are impossible and destructive dreams. Only perpetually incomplete self-creation is possible, a self-creation that

is limited by the felt resistance of recalcitrant material and by an ethical concern for the otherness we help produce. So a society that admits this can challenge the hegemony of (but not destroy) the imperative to concretize the self and itself. This is a better society, although not a truer one.

In short, the debate between a harmonious holism and a fractious holism is a debate over the degree to which the world is unified and the degree to which we can recognize inherent limits to action and will. My study does not settle this debate, for it cannot determine the truth of ontological assumptions. But it can explore the ethical-political implications of each. And saying this, I can agree with harmonious holism that the radical anti-harmony thesis exaggerates. Much of Foucault's work deploys such an exaggeration, thinking it necessary for playing out "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, think,"<sup>10</sup> i.e., for drawing us away from the worn paths of Faith and Enlightenment. But fractious holism diverges from the strong version of the Foucaultian ontology. The orientation to otherness endorsed here is disharmonious in its espousal of the view that humans are incomplete beings in a world not created to complete their essence or fulfill their needs, and expressivist in its view that the affirmation of this disharmony can inform life ethics, and politics by giving otherness more space to be.

An ethic of disharmony alone would magnify the extent to which self and world and self and self are incompatible. Otherness within the self, i.e., thoughts that take one by surprise, socially unacceptable urges, moods, rages, unexplained pains and depressions, would appear as wholly disconnected from that within the self better subject to will and intentionality. Likewise, the social order would be able to fulfill collective aims only by chance and nature would be a bizarre set of processes indifferent to the survival needs of humans. Such a picture of modernity would be so clear that it would distort; for the non-intentional and the prediscursive coexist with intentions and language and are still identifiable as "self"; pains and moods are still the pains and moods of beings human; the social order does touch and enhance (even if it does not complete or give ultimate meaning to) human existence; the Earth is quite hospitable to perception and bodily functioning when compared to the alternative natural environment of Mars or the sun. But these compatibilities ought not to be construed as evidence of design or of the possibility of overcoming or assimilating otherness.

We have found it necessary to modify the anti-harmony thesis, for harmonious holism is right to call any talk of freedom non-sense from within a theory where the raw material of life is wholly unintelligible: Could we then be blamed for any harm done to it? How could we take

responsibility for our imposing creations? Even Nietzsche is not wholly committed to the radical version of the thesis.

One thing is needful. -- To 'give style' to one's character -- a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan...Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed -- both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable.

Nietzsche's call to give style to one's character appreciates the way we both belong to and deface the world. And the ethic of fractious holism seeks to gesture in the same direction, believing that we mess with the world, constrained by "original nature," but never conquer it. The beauty of this position is that it accepts that which is vague and resistant to shaping while giving it a place within the work of art -- as a reminder that the self is not self-contained or self-sufficient, but exists within a context that includes "the far and immeasurable."

It may turn out that harmonious holism is right that an ethic of fractious holism fails, that the desire to "let otherness be" cannot be embodied within a view of the world as ultimately intractable, that there can be no expressivism that is not attuned to a world ready to be

heard. But I have pursued the possibility that there is some ground between harmonious holism and the radical anti-harmony thesis, hoping that challenging the theory that lends the status of truth to our need to be at home in the world might make us more at home in a world inherently resistant to us.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse" in Untying the Text, ed. Robert Young (Poston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 67. Thanks to William Connolly for drawing my attention to the importance of this quotation.

<sup>2</sup>Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume I (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Taylor, "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth" in Political Theory 13, August 1985, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Foucault, Sexuality, p. 152-3.

<sup>5</sup>Foucault, Sexuality, p. 156.

<sup>6</sup>Foucault, Sexuality, p. 144-5.

<sup>7</sup>Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 41.

<sup>8</sup>Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview" in The Foucault Reader, p. 374.



<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), p. 138.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault, "Enlightenment," p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 232.

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