1-1-1990

Nature, freedom, and assertion : the philosophical foundations of organizational reform.

Louis E. Howe
University of Massachusetts Amherst

NATURE, FREEDOM, AND ASSERTION: THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM

A Dissertation Presented

by

LOUIS E. HOWE

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SEPTEMBER 1990

Department of Political Science

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Approved as to style and content by:

Nicholas Xenos, Chair

Jean Bethke Elshtain, Member

Ian Angus, Member

George T. Sulzner, Department Head
Department of Political Science

ABSTRACT

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SEPTEMBER 1990

LOUIS E. HOWE, B.A., THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by Professor Nicholas Xenos

The dissertation explores a postulate common to both Max Weber and Hans Blumenberg that modern organizations gain their intense motivational power from the anxieties created in the modern era by the disenchantment of nature and the death of God. The doctrine of omnipotence gave rise to a modern theodicy problem, experienced as an anxiety that the conditions of goodness must henseforth be self-consciously created by the self-assertion of large associations of interdependent people. This self-conscious forsaking of omnipotence carries with it a high price. In the work of Immanuel Kant natural law ethics and economics are no longer available and our associations tend to be bureaucratic.

The dissertation follows the thought of both practical reformers and philosophers in developing this characterization of modern organization. What emerges, alongside their positive accounts of the relation between freedom and organization, is a darker picture of

profound anxiety and melancholy. Particularly instructive is Kant's interpretive text on Cain and Able in which modern people are identified with the brother who murders. Kant's insights are followed by those of Soren Kierkegaard, Rene Girard, Elton Mayo, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, and others to explicate the structure of mimetic desire as it operates in modern large-scale organizations. These intense mimetic structures do not mean that freedom in large organizations is a myth, but it does mean that the self-conscious assertion of freedom involves a profound spiritual struggle which can result as easily in demonia as in release. Thus the final chapter employs a Weberean typology to show how freedom in its various organizational guises has so far remained elusive while the champions of freedom have tried to embody it in ever more inclusive organizational structures.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores a postulate common both to Max Weber and to Hans Blumenberg that modern organizational life is a response to and accommodation with the disenchantment of nature, or, in another vocabulary, the death of God. I will not so much test this postulate as discuss what it actually means; I will explore it, deepen it, and specify it more closely.

What Weber, emphasizing its negative aspect, calls disenchantment, Hans Blumenberg, striking a positive note, calls self-assertion. This will become clear in Chapter IV. Blumenberg was referring to Heidegger's infamous Rectoral Address, and wished to counter some of the more destructive directions which the doctrine of self-assertion had recently taken, but without for all that giving up on it. Blumenberg especially rejected the notion that modernity needed, through self-assertion, to be ruthlessly destroyed. He argues, first of all, that nothing could be more modern than self-assertion, so that it is a poor tool for defeating modernity. But he argues further that self-assertion is not an optional stance in the world, but follows directly from western civilization's long meditation over the problem of theodicy; how is it that bad things happen to good people, and inversely, how is it that good things happen to bad people? From Blumenberg and Weber we can learn that the modern quest for freedom is deeply rooted in this

question of theodicy. What I wish to understand is how freedom and theodicy have become implicated in the modern large-scale organization and how that entanglement has worked to frustrate our aspirations for both justice and freedom.

This raises clusters of themes which I will explore below. I have anchored these themes in two poles: in the phenomenon of organization and in the later works of Immanuel Kant. These two work in the dissertation as recurring foci, orienting the other themes. But they also take on different persona depending upon the context within which they come up. In the context of civil service reform they seem straight-forward and benign, in a context of organizational pathology they appear sinister, and in a context of philosophical rigor they seem profound. I believe that organization is the way disenchantment or the death of God is actually experienced, and that our experience is ambiguous on this score. I found that this theme comes up and is made especially clear in the works of Immanuel Kant.

Through the focus on organization it became difficult to discuss any one theme without discussing the rest. Kant reinforces the concern with both assertion and with organization, but then further introduces the themes of freedom and anxiety, and through them, returns again to the problem of theodicy. Kant also introduces, through his focus on Cain and Able, the concern with mimetic desire and collective murder and he shows how these things are connected to self-assertion, freedom, and

progress. With these themes on the table, the work of Soren Kierkegaard, Rene Girard, and Elton Mayo all become themes, and they in turn call forth the work of Blumenberg, Heidegger, and Michel Foucault. Each of these thinkers, in turn, implicate Immanuel Kant and especially his relation to objects. The experience of organization is first of all an experience about the modern relation to objects, but also the experience of organizing people in such a way that they can experience this relation properly. What I am trying to understand is why the quest for freedom can so often come down to this search for the truth of objects and of ourselves.

In the first chapter I study a number of American organizational reformers and strategies and their links to the Protestant religious problematic, especially the problems surrounding the question of theodicy. This chapter, while remaining at a fairly pragmatic level, introduces a number of Kantian themes which call for a more rigorous formulation. Thus in the second chapter I study the works of Immanuel Kant, especially Kant's Critique of Teleological Judgment and his very revealing interpretive text on Cain and Able. Kant understood as well as anyone that nature had become disenchanted, and how and in what sense this situation called for something like modern self-assertion. It is my contention that Kant's doctrine of freedom makes no sense without the profound ambiguity he uncovered in the Genesis story and the melancholy he experienced over the French Revolution.

Having articulated Kant's pure theory of a free self-assertion and its relation to organization, in the third chapter I look to Soren Kierkegaard and the humanistic management movement for insights into the pathological potentialities of modern organizations. I briefly compare the religious interpretive mode which I prefer with a secular Aristotelian mode to show why I find mine superior.

The forth chapter overtly addresses the discussions of Hans Blumenberg in order to put pressure on the critical presuppositions of the previous three chapters. In Blumenberg the disenchantment of nature is specified more closely as the history of the doctrine of omnipotence. Once this history is spelled out, argues Blumenberg, one will see that self-assertion in the modern age is a legitimate attempt to assert human goodness against the empty echo of omnipotence. While the point is well taken and appreciated, the discussion of pathological organization makes it impossible to simply endorse the modern era, even when one speaks of potential rather than imperative progress. I therefore engage Blumenberg with two other texts, one by Martin Heidegger and one by Michel Foucault, in order to put pressure on his optimism.

The last chapter pays tribute to a recently retired political theorist, Donald McIntosh. Using McIntosh's discussions of Max Weber, I review in ideal typical terms the organizational strategies put forward in the first and third chapters. Each organizational move, I believe, was an attempt to locate freedom and goodness together and to give them

simultaneous organizational expression. Each successive attempt to do this articulated the point of moral freedom in a more inclusive collective entity; the church, the individual, the college, the profession, the corporation, and the state. McIntosh's work helps us understand, much as Hegel's truth comes finally to that which it always already was, how modern organization always depended on the charisma of weaponry, and finally on nuclear weaponry.

Finally, an earlier reader of the third and fifth chapters has complained that there is nothing here except textual exegesis and little contribution of my own. My method of interpretation is defensive as opposed to offensive. That is, in many sports one defends against the opposing offense by being assigned a "man." One stays with one's man, locked in. It raises the intensity; one loses oneself in the play. Here I try to stay with a thinker, to follow a thought, and to lose myself within it. Thus I seldom lay out a thinker's position and then reply. The purpose was to ask questions whose answers I really would like to know. I would have to admit that I got something less than answers from this study and from my own interpretive techniques. But I have gained a deeper insight into my own questions.

CHAPTER I

NATURE, FREEDOM, AND ORGANIZATION IN 19th CENTURY AMERICA

A. Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the problem of nature, freedom, and organization in a preliminary way by offering an interpretation of three texts: Perry Miller's Nature's Nation, the speeches and letters of the Land Grant College advocate, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, and the speeches and letters of the Civil Service reformer, George William Curtis. The first section will trace what Max Weber called the disenchantment of nature as it occurred in Miller's version of American Puritanism, the second and third sections will discuss two possible responses to disenchantment and their organizational implications. By focusing on Protestant religious disputes I hope to avoid two pitfalls; first, the naive view that science, technology, and organization were simply better ideas whose time had come, or, second, that these things were simply elitist impositions upon exploited people.

B. Faith and Enlightenment in America

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Americans went through their own version of Hegel's Faith-Enlightenment dialectic. The purpose of mentioning it here is not so much to establish the relevance of continental European thought for American political theory as to better appreciate how we came to have the organizations that we do. Hegel's dialectic is quite fair when it deals with faith. Yet somehow when one reads it, it is hard to escape the impression that faith is a moment in the history of Enlightenment. Even though the consciousness which faith possesses is given an internal and completely phenomenological reading, the story is told from the point of view of someone who already knows that faith cannot possibly win. This actually closes off our taking faith seriously. When we look back at the past or try to construct geneologies of present day organizations, we tend to look for the rise of Enlightenment structures, and even when we criticize or deconstruct these structures, it is Enlightenment that we privilege. Whenever we do this, we judge the history of organizations more in terms of their future than their past.

But in their own day Enlightenment figures were actually far outnumbered by people who tried to move according to the dictates of faith. In fact the premise, so familiar to us, that faith's fate was already sealed was simply not available to the participants. That is, faith was not, for its adherents, a historical moment which could not

sustain itself. Faith rather confronted the participants with a range of problems, options, and ways of being; out of which they had to create entire lives. One might, then, ask the questions of Hegel's dialectic at a more local level and with an eye toward discovering exemplary figures who experienced the conflicts of faith and enlightenment but are interesting precisely because they did what world history cannot do, they lived their lives in a state of unsustainable tensions. We judge such people much as we do characters in a drama. We ask whether or not they remained true to their dramatic situation. The obvious point here is just that people do not live their lives at the level of world history, the level of the problem of sustaining an entire epoch, but at the level of sustaining their own best insights, ambitions, plans, and loves. I will now turn to the problem of freedom and hope.

If in philosophy our modernity begins when representations no longer mirror their objects,1 in spiritual things it begins when estrangement from paradise is no longer a sign of our disability, but becomes the basis for our systematic activity. It becomes a blessing.2 Earlier Dante had faced this estrangement but comprehended it as a temporary blindness; what we see is not fundamentally different from what we cannot see. Hope--and Christianity must offer hope--resided in

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1. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith, trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A-34/B-50; A-92/B-125--A-95/B-129; Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
2. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Talcott Parsons, trans., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 88. Larry Peterman, "Machiavelli's Dante and Sources of Machiavellianism" Polity, 20 (Winter 1988) 254.

the faith that ultimately our vision would be made complete. Of course, this means Dante had to be close enough to the Beatific vision to feel its absense; the threat of its being withheld was a compelling experience. It was not totally and simply other. But by the time of the New England Puritans, God had indeed become too radically Other to support Dante's sort of hope. Human and divine vision were in principle incommensurable, and the Puritans did not look in this direction for hope.

In contrast, the loss of paradise in Milton's Paradise Lost sets a different sort of task. The fall from grace opens up opportunities, and it is these which now constitute hope. There are exertions one might make, or rather, that one must make if one does not want to abandon hope. We are placed, Puritans believe, in a wasteland which requires cultivation and improvement,3 and this is the conception of nature through which one best approaches the twin notions of hope and freedom in religious thought. For the wasteland to be a dynamic and compelling image for Puritans, it must be, at least in principle, possible for America to become a paradise. If paradise were not possible then cultivation and improvement would be a merely futile gesture. But the inverse is equally true. The possibility of paradise would move no one unless it were bolstered by our being situated in a wasteland. For the

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3. Peter N. Carroll, Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629-1700 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 14.

formula to work, success must be rather difficult, yet demonstrably attainable.

Two sets of problems need to be mentioned here. The first set involves spirituality, the second freedom. The formula of cultivation and improvement sets a specific context for how these things might be experienced in modernity, while they severely modify our belief in the formula.

First, the formula of cultivation and improvement answers a spiritual insight, yet puts that insight to work in the everyday world of work. The everyday world is held together by a constellation of habits and manners, the highest expression of which--habits informed by spirit--is ethics. But spirituality enters the work-a-day world only at a great cost to itself. It is always the uncanny guest, an outsider. It can not really explain itself in ethical or legal terms.4 It cannot be contained in ethical categories. It sometimes even becomes a sort of scandal5 to the world of habits and manners, and it is certainly possible for habits and manners, including churchgoing, to maintain

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4. Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, Howard Hong and Edna Hong, trans.,(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983). For instance see p. 115, "Abraham cannot speak, because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable): that it is an ordeal such that, please note, the ethical is the temptation."
5. I have borrowed the term scandal from Rene Girard, The Scapegoat, Yvonne Freccero, trans. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

themselves at the expense of the spirituality which animates them.[6] Thus habits and manners might maintain themselves for some time without, for all that, constituting a living ethos. In this situation we would expect manners to resent being reminded of spiritual things; this may be the case in the late 20th Century United States. But earlier the problem was less vicious. One suspects that in the early eighteen hundreds, say, it was more a question of contradictory pressures.

I will mention three instances of such pressure, all of which could probably plague any religion, but which seem to especially plague Calvinism and later forms of American Protestantism. First, things done from spiritual motives can, especially when a religious person personally benefits, always be interpreted as self-serving. Since the spiritual defies rational or ethical language, the believer might feel slandered, but would still be unable to offer a compelling defense. For the same reason, the world which American Puritans created by cultivating and improving the wilderness could never be adequate to the spiritual vision which called it forth. The Christian insight, once gained, inspired people with an intense and simple vigor, yet, its success continually unnerved it. The vision seems to be always turning stale; turning into an array of acquisitive manners through which spirituality could only penetrate in the form of a recitation of formulas. American Protestants recognized this problem early on and

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6. George W.S. Trow makes this point in a very different context in his "Annuls of Discourse: The Harvard Black Rock Forest," New Yorker, June 11, 1984, 44.

much of the history of American Protestantism involves a series of strategies designed to meet it.

A third pressure, arising, again, from the same source, is that the spiritual project of cultivating and improving the American wilderness actually ruins the wilderness and renders the spiritual project increasingly difficult. This involves social decadence. In, say, their clothing people tend to dress for the work at hand. How everyone dresses to confront a wilderness is usually courser and less pretentious than the way they dress to confront a commercial world or an intellectual circle. As colonial life became more sophisticated hundreds of small nuances in etiquette would reinforce intricate patterns of social divisions and specialized pleasures. All this would make the simple and vigorous piety of the early days much more remote. Already by 1700 the second generation of New England Puritans were bedeviled by decadent temptations. By 1837 Nathanial Hawthorne's allegorical "Celestial Railroad" evoked the specter of a streamlined and easy religiosity through which true pilgrims, like those Bunyan describes in Pilgrim's Progress, might pass only by a heroic, and, the reader suspects, myopic act of will. But along with decadence, many Americans were beginning to sense, in the eighteen hundreds especially, that the lands and forests and rivers were themselves being irrevocably mauled. This line of thought was troubling; it arises from a spiritual insight, but throws into question the most cogent available expression of that same spiritual insight. It thus always manages to sound

righteous and even didactically prophetic when it is uttered, especially by abolitionists, but always remains an other voice, usually romanticism. I will discuss this more below. But this thought was deeply troubling for another reason. The notion of freedom had become implicated in a search for happiness within the bounty of the continent's natural resources. This search was motivated by, and justified itself as, a spiritual insight. Americans could believe themselves to be free, I am saying, only so long as their quest for happiness through cultivation and improvement could be plausibly called spiritual. They could not maintain their self-conception as free beings if they were merely being swept along; the slaves of greed wantonly destroying the continent.

The second set of problems revolve around the issue of freedom. For religious thinkers the problem of freedom often presents itself in one of two forms; the question of the nature of God and the question of the nature of man. If today we have trouble understanding how Calvinists could believe in predestination and still consider themselves free, it is because we think of freedom in terms of the second set of questions. Before the Great Awakening of 1740, and for most people a long time after that, virtually all white Americans posed the question in terms of the first set, what is the nature of God?

If God is all-powerful and all-wise and all-good, then he isn't the sort of God who would create us unfree, or make nature vastly

different from our aspirations and moralities. God's omnipotence is the guarantee of human freedom. The question of whether people are free or not is answered by simply saying that they are certainly free enough and that to have faith is to already believe this. But even though faith and revelation are the courts of ultimate appeal here for Puritans, there needed to be some reference to nature. Nature is where one looks to discover "God in the act of willing,"7 and the early Puritans took this quite literally. They were supported in this by the older science of the Renaissance which involved the notion of a chain of being, and even a sort of prose of the world. There was a space between the dumb animals and the angels where there ought to exist a free creature like man, possessed both of reason and will. Since everything in the great chain supports everything else and nothing is superfluous, if God created the space for freedom, he must be supposed to have created the creature of freedom as well. This doesn't mean God is constrained by his creation, of course. It only means that he is good; as William Ames put it, "not for want of power, but through abundance of his goodnesse: that namely he might communicate a certain dignity of working to his creatures also, and in them make his efficiency more perceivable."8 Theologically, then, the Puritans turned to nature to be reassured of God's wisdom and goodness.9

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7. Perry Miller, The New England Mind, the 17th Century, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1939), 224.
8. Ibid., 235.
9. Mark Taylor, "Itenerarium Mentis in Deum: Hegel's Proofs of God's Existence," in Mark Taylor, Deconstructing Theology, (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1982).

With the introduction of Bacon's science the formula doesn't really change, but it does become more vulnerable. Puritans had never liked miracles and their earlier writings all stressed the regular and orderly course of nature, encouraging believers to perceive God in the everyday. After 1685, however, they became more interested in the unusual. It became more important to demonstrate that nature, as a vast causal system, was not simply indifferent to human concerns. For instance, Increase Mather needed to develop a notion of secondary causes, causes in which God insinuates himself into the natural causal chain so as to change its direction through completely natural means.10 Suddenly an earthquake or illness might show up and change the course of events. Secondary causes are at work when a child of ungodly parents falls into a well and drowns. God nowhere has to suspend physical laws to work His will in these events, and we might read off these events, even in Bacon's or Newton's world, to get a result similar to the earlier one. "The greatest probability of Success," writes Urion Oaks, "is ordinarily on the side of Causes that are most sufficient in their kind of Efficiency."11 But in this formulation we notice two things. First the Puritans are very aware that a causal order, as opposed to a great chain of being, is one laced with radical contingency. There is no necessary connection between, say, heat and flame anymore. Second, this formulation puts heavy pressure on the premise that God is all-good

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10. Miller (1939), 228-29.
11. Ibid., 235.

and all-wise, since the fact that he rules the world in one way rather than another is itself a completely contingent state of affairs. In work-a-day practice, of course, the Puritans had displaced the problem of freedom into diligent activity and industriousness, and faith in God's goodness into the formula "The Diligent Hand makes Rich, but Sloth, and Poverty, and Rags and Shame must be expected to go together."12 There is a work-a-day equation of success with election. This means that the equation of piety with freedom is most sustainable when God's positive lessons outnumber his negative ones, and so long as obviously greedy people are not routinely rewarded with success. As the conditions of piety became more difficult, paradoxically through success, the work-a-day conception of freedom detached itself from its theological foundations. Of course, work itself remained Americans most pious activity.

In 1740 and again in 1800, evangelical revivals spread across America. Immediately a dispute arose over the nature of evangelical conversions. Was it God's hand, or was it rather the rhetoric and charisma of the evangelists which moved people to such fits and convulsions of religious frenzy? The dispute wound up relocating forever the issue of freedom; away from the question of the nature of God to the question of the nature of man.

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12. Ibid., 232.

The older conception could support, as we have seen, a doctrine of predestination. It also supported a covenant theology, the political expression of which was theocracy. The duties of the clergy included reading the natural signs of God's wrath against the commonwealth in such things as hurricanes, droughts, and diseases, but included also establishing the legal code by which the commonwealth might best fulfill the terms of its covenant. This sort of theocratic commonwealth seemed to work best in the small tightly knit colonies of New England where religion was actually a way of life shared in common by most people. Success, while not impossible, was difficult. To have the clergy making civil law in accordance with religious precepts made a certain amount of sense in such circumstances. But few Christians in 1800 believed this arrangement could survive a far reaching and prosperous westward expansion.13 In the West religious factions multiplied at an alarming rate, different geographic sections became bitterly opposed to one another, and commercial expansion created an economically diverse and non-equal population. No one Christian denomination could claim to speak for the conscience of all Christians anymore.14 No one could speak with enough authority to constitute a theocracy. Things actually came to such a pass that when the clergy of one section tried to declare a day of national atonement and prayer, something which had been fairly routine for two hundred years, because the Lord had visited a devastating cholera epidemic on his people, politicians and other

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13. Perry Miller, Nature's Nation, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1974), 109-10; 116-17.
14. Ibid., 110.

clerics actually disputed whether or not the epidemic had been so severe as had been claimed.15 Once such interpretations of God's wrath were open to empirical dispute, theocracy had become impossible.

Furthermore, the American Revolution had been fought in the name of religious liberty and it is instructive to note that evangelists used religious liberty to justify themselves against the more orthodox clergy. Perry Miller relates the following:

> ...Peter Cartwright once found himself forbidden by a Presbyterian minister to form a Methodist society within the area of his church, and to him Cartwright answered, "The people were a free people, and lived in a free country, and must and ought to be allowed to do as they pleased." When the Presbyterian cleric still endeavored to suppress the Methodists, Cartwright relates that members of his own congregation objected on the grounds that he was un-American. "I told them," Cartwright continues, "that my father had fought in the Revolution to gain our freedom and liberty of conscience; that I felt that my Presbyterian brother had no bill of sale for the people."16

Much is being said in Cartwright's reply. Hegel, in his Faith/Enlightenment dialectic, rests much of his argument upon the premise that faith had already accepted all of enlightenment's standards of rationality.17 The empirical dispute about the cholera epidemic and Cartwright's almost utilitarian reply to the Presbyterian minister give us a more local glimpse into how this worked in America. What is being

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15. Ibid., 114.
16. Ibid., 87.
17. Jane Bennett, Unthinking Faith and Enlightenment, Nature and the State in a Post-Hegelian Era, (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 28. G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Spirit, A.V. Miller, trans., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), paragraph 564.

asserted here, says Perry Miller, is the assumption that "men who had fought for liberty in the Revolution were the sort of people upon whom one could evangelize." That is to say, first, that predestination was no longer an operative doctrine. Man's nature was such that he could be reached by evangelism and thereby spurred to action in his own behalf. Further, since authority has collapsed, that no one has any right either to forbid someone to preach, or to tell Christians not to listen. It also means that in times of grave spiritual crisis, Christians don't kneel to pray, nor write fine tracts on theology, they get out and do something. But especially it means people must be such that they can do something about their own salvation, and that no one can deny them all available help in doing so. The new faith, then, upon which both religion and nationhood rested was this: God gave us this broad and rich continent in which we were meant to be free and happy. A free people searching for religious truth and happiness in an extended continent are bound to splinter into endless bickering factions, but it is exactly this fragmentation which, says Miller, constituted national unity.18 Americans could sincerely boast to Europeans that finally there existed a Christian nation. The trick was that man-centered religion looked not to the past, to floods, diseases, or hurricanes for inspiration, but instead to the future; to the promise of future happiness or to the series of crisis which threatened it. "This people," writes Miller, "lived not in fear...before a covenanted Jehova, but as a race who go

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18. Miller (1974), 117.

through sorrow, distress, resources in an ecstatic assurance of 'happiness'"19

But to suggest how much of the Enlightenment has been accepted here we need only note that evangelism's self-defense is practically identical to modern advertising's. Already we see that in a continent available as resources for spiritual and material happiness, available for productive work; already people too become available and on call as means; available to evangelism, available for salvation, and available for happiness. In the same way modern advertising finds them on-call and abvailable, and justifies itself with the notion that people need to hear its messages and no one has the right to tell people not to listen. Utilitarian logic had won the day.

Americans for a long time were touchy about being criticized as utilitarians. To their credit most Christian Americans worked to make sure their works and lives were not merely utilitarian, but inspired also by spiritual concerns. We might even suppose the nation became great precisely because so many people kept this issue so straight for so many years. In the next section I will turn to the thought of one such American, Jonathan B. Turner.

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19. Ibid., 116.

C. Jonathan Baldwin Turner and the Land-Grant College

On December 31, 1866, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, in a letter to the editor meant to accompany the text of his speech from the day before, which the paper was reprinting, wrote that in light of the recent history of negro emancipation, "I think we may safely conclude that the Lord has determined that this shall be a Christian continent. At any rate we are no more competent to take care of Christianity than we are the solar system or the laws of nature."20 The last sentence needs clarification. The dispute here is over who should be in charge of college education funds in Illinois. There were at the time many small religious colleges in the U.S., each representing the doctrine of some one or another religious sect.21 Congress had recently passed the Land-Grant College, or Morrill, Act and the discussion was over whether to divide the proceeds from the act among existing colleges or to found a wholly new State agricultural and industrial university.22 Turner, of course, had been campaigning for such a university since 1851. The argument he answers here comes from religious college presidents who claim that in large secular universities, Christianity will die out. His counter claim is that free people thinking freely do not need classically educated scholars to manage the education of their children

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20. Mary Turner Carriel, The Life of Jonathan Baldwin Turner, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinis Press, 1961), 182.
21. Richard Hofstadter and Walter Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1955) see Chaters 3 and 6.
22. The 37th Congress, The Congressional Globe, 32, Part 2, (Feb-Mar 1862), see House Bill 138.

nor do they require denominational colleges to wet nurse their Christianity. His argument, to a modern reader, is missing a premise, which one can infer by thinking about the previous sentence, "the Lord has determined that this shall be a Christian continent." We know this because everywhere we look we see that despite our best attempts and efforts to thwart it, God's divine purpose and design can be seen realizing itself in our national life. This must not be seen as a purely utilitarian position. Freedom and Christianity and national life can almost be synonyms for one another. In fact we learn that emancipating negroes means that they can finally receive the benefits of Christianity, which nature would have imparted to them anyway, and Turner uses the word 'Christianity' here in exactly the grammatical position where we would probably use the word 'freedom.'

> We shut [four millions of colored slaves] out from all light of the Bible, and from all our schools and literature; we hemmed them in with fugitive-slave laws, and employed the whole force of our courts, our army and navy to crush out all the Christianity that was in them...,we leveled against them the entire force of our arms, our votes, our schools, our literature, our pulpits, and our prayers; we called on our doctors of divinity...; we even, at last, forced our brave boys in blue to stand guard over "this kind of property" and keep Christianity from them at the point of the bayonet.23

In the main body of the speech he is more explicit.

> Mr. President, I am sick and tired and disgusted with hearing about a Christianity that can only be kept in the world in a bandbox or in the care of a dry-nurse. And I wish here to affirm that wherever freedom is, there Christianity <u>must</u> be; and

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23. Carriel, 181-82.

> wherever Christ is, there freedom must and shall be. For this is the everlasting decree of the Infinite and Eternal God; and man can neither revoke nor resist it. You have asked how you could get Christianity into our schools. I ask you in turn how will you get it out of them? And I defy you to do it so long as God lives and freedom exists.

Turner's argument is more interesting than it at first appears to be. To deny that freedom and Christianity are mutually supportive and tightly linked, is to deny God's omnipotence. To deny that we are realizing freedom is to deny that God is wise. The teleological proof for God's existence is being used against the cosmological proof.24 In fact the argument only works if we presume the opponents accepted, and the college presidents probably all did accept, the cosmological argument. The cosmological argument states that because everything we observe is the subject of natural causality, there must be some one thing which is the cause of all the other causes, the cause of nature itself which is not itself subject to natural causality. But such a cause could only be an omnipotent God.

This argument was never considered an adequate substitute for Biblical revelation, but it was believed to be forceful when confined to merely secular studies, like physics. Kant had already pointed out that the argument as it stands does not aid piety since an omnipotent God might still be an idiot or a despot. While he doesn't mention that argument here, elsewhere the despotic argument clearly bothered

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24. Mark Taylor (1982).

Turner,25 and he probably had it in mind. He does say that when he looks at the natural world he sees not merely a grid of mechanical causality, as in Newton's physics, or Increase Mather's secondary causes, but evidence of a grand and beautiful design, the realization of Christian freedom. This freedom has been coming into being despite the best efforts of religious sects and regional prejudices. One either has to believe this, or give up believing that one can infer anything at all about God from natural events. This wouldn't bother the sectarians theologically. They could still continue teaching their own individual accounts of revelation in their own sectarian colleges. But it would mean giving up on the further idea that here on the North American continent somehow we had at last founded a Christian nation. It would mean admitting defeat in the very cause the sectarians were championing; saving the country from a plunge into barbarous prosperity and secular utilitarianism.

Turner's turn to teleological inspiration goes back to at least 1833. During a horrifying cholera epidemic at Illinois College, Turner, a first year professor fresh from Yale, worked heroically ministering to the sick and burying the dead. A hundred people in the town died; the young man saw ghastly sights and heard grizzly stories. Overworked and exhausted, he kept on healing, but he also found time to write letters to his fiance in Connecticut. Several times he notices in these letters that cholera makes no distinctions as to piety or vigor, two signs, in

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25. Carriel, 56-57.

early New England, of election. On July 15, 1833, he writes of the impending epidemic:

> It cuts down, almost instantly, the most robust and temperate as well as the feeble. Of course there can be no security, only to meet and trust God forever. It is no longer confined to the intemperate; it sweeps all indiscriminately to the tomb by the hundred.26

By August 28 he had lived through the epidemic, but after describing some of the horror and exhaustion he had experienced, he brings up the same theme again:

> ...the most temperate as well as the drunken and worthless are stricken.... Doubtless more than one tenth of the present population have died since I came here; that is, more than a hundred persons. But this does not prove the place unhealthful--not at all; for what place or people are healthy or safe, when God sees fit to scourge them with cholera? But my trust is in Him...alone, not regarding the disease so much as to change or restrict my diet in the least.27

Then follow a remarkable few sentences, considering that this is the close of a long letter detailing the horrors of a cholera epidemic and written by a professor of classical rhetoric. He ends the letter by talking about the abundance of fresh fruit. "The woods have been full of blackberries which the people were forbidden by ordinance to eat." Turner ate his fill, despite the law. "I am sure they helped me; and now the woods are full of plums of all kinds..." Twelve persons gathered twelve bushels in about three hours. The fields are full of

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26. Ibid., 18.
27. Ibid., 22.

wonderful melons "as large as pumpkins," which no one dares eat except himself and a friend; "hence, we live well."

And if we live well, God cannot be unjust. Though clearly Turner finds the indiscriminate cholera epidemic to be a challenge to his faith, he refuses to entertain the thought that perhaps God is unjust. He takes the heat off God by dividing him practically in two; the omnipotent, inscrutable, and even vengeful deity who authored natural necessity; and the wise God whose divine laws of nature shine with intelligent life.

All his life Turner opposed what he called omnipotence. If the omnipotent God himself cannot be thought unjust, certainly priests, dogmatists, and sectarians who make omnipotence the center of their theologies can be called unjust. In fact Turner seems to believe that these theologies are selfish and mean spirited. "[T]hese teachers make God and nature tell us...monstrous and utterly unbelievable lies."28 And the lie seems to be that we are too depraved to make the world any thing more than a valley of tears, and that things can only be better in the after-life, and that such depraved beings as people don't really deserve any better. Turner claims that this view creates hell on earth; it sanctions great evils, like slavery, and because it is selfish it is divisive and leads to distrust. The vision Turner offers instead is to create something more like the conditions necessary to create heaven on

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28. Ibid., 236-37.

earth. The Bible, he insists, "is the sole logical cause and basis of freedom," but for more than fifteen centuries now "Christ's gospel was officially interpreted only in the interest of some despotism, either church, state, or sect." Slavery and the doctrine of predestination are only two examples of this sort of despotism. The following is a recollection of Turner written many years later in 1906 by one of his students. The discussions described are said to have occurred in 1850.

> It was through him in a prayer-meeting talk that I first heard of the Fugitive-Slave law... "We are told this institution of which we are all to become defenders is authorized by the Bible. Well, if this is the Bible, I say, take away the Bible. We do not want it...But, thank God, this infamy is not from the Bible. 'Whom the Son maketh free is free indeed.'" Once in a class he had occasion to denounce fore-ordination, which he characterized as omnipotence, "chaining men down by decree, and then damning them for not being free." "I tell you," he said, "nothing could equal my utter detestation of such a God as that; but thank Heaven, such is not the God of the Bible!"29

With this we begin to understand at least the psychology of the man who, as much as anyone, bequeathed us the modern American University system. His almost breathless energy is involved with a creative anxiety. The vigorous pursuit of justice in America is finally the justification of God. The overcoming of factional sectarianism, the creation of national colleges, and his enthusiastic embrace of science are all finally the overthrow of hell on earth and the creation of a new world with new beings within whom it is possible for heaven to dwell.

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29. Ibid., 56-57.

There is one more place in Turner's biography where the word omnipotence comes up in relation to drudgery and ignorance. Again the quote comes from the 1866 debate over how to best disperse land-grant funds, and Turner is arguing against simply adding an agriculture department to existing colleges, where one might perhaps take courses in agriculture much the way students today take physical education or English composition. Turner here is both replying to a very popular criticism of government help to agriculture in general, while at the same time taking over the argument.30

> When Almighty God created heavens and earth, and ordered man to eat his bread by the sweat of the brow, He created, and most likely endowed, the best possible university for learning all...mere manual arts; and if we expect to supersede Omnipotence by grants of land, for endowments, it will prove worse than the Bull Run defeat; for no institution for teaching arts and the habits of bare manipulation and industrial skill can ever be endowed at all comparable with those which the great Father of all has most munificently spread abroad.... The principles of science, therefore, and not the bare manipulations of art, should form the sole end of industrial universities.31

Earlier in the address Turner had equated learning to plow with becoming a two legged work animal. Nature, conceived as God's omnipotence, yields only an animalistic existence. The implications are that nature teaches hard work, but hard work does not of itself offer an exalted life or even an intelligent being. Drudgery, Turner seems to believe, is not the mother of either freedom or of thought. An American

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30. See the debates over the creation of a Department of Agriculture, Congressional Globe, 32, part 2, p 856, and the comments of Mr. Hale on May 8, 1862, p. 2014 and also those of Mr. Fessenden, p. 2016.
31. Carriel, 202.

farmer content to mimic the ways of his father is a slave, or at least less than free. The argument is radically anti-traditionalist, but what is more revealing is that tradition is understood by Turner as omnipotence, and omnipotence as a realm of drudgery and necessity. Omnipotence cannot be the basis of American freedom because it justifies despotism and unfreedom--hell--on earth. With this in mind, it is interesting to look at Turner's attack on the classical moral curriculum.

The forth Illinois Industrial Convention, meeting in January, 1853, presented a memorial to the state legislature which the legislature in turn sent to the U.S. Congress. The memorial opens with a confession.

> We would respectfully represent: That we are members of the industrial classes of this state, actively and personally engaged in agricultural and mechanical pursuits. We are daily made to feel our own practical ignorance, and the misapplication of toil and labor, and the enormous waste of products, means, materials, and resources that result from it. We are aware that all this evil to ourselves and our country, results from a want of knowledge of those principles and laws of nature that underlie our various professions and of the proper means of a practical application of existing knowledge of those pursuits.32

What might enable such a confession?

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32. Edmund J. James, The Origin of the Land Grant Act of 1862 and Some Account of its Author Jonathan B. Turner, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1910), 90.

It is interesting to notice that J.B. Turner tended to argue against classical education in America in terms very similar to those that some classical theorists today use to argue against scientific education. Turner, and he wasn't alone in this, calls classical education a technology, and to it opposes thinking, that is, science. To make this more plausible to political theorists, and to anticipate a bit, G.W. Curtis, in a discussion of Milton, makes almost the same point. "Technical scholarship begins in a dictionary and ends in a grammar. The sublime scholarship of John Milton began in literature and ended in life." Richard Hofstadter has cataloged the dreary monotonous form of classical education in pre-Civil War America. The method was memorization, pure and simple. A professor typically spent his time insuring that students got every word correct. Turner, a teacher of rhetoric, was no exception. In one letter he mentions that he starts hearing recitations at five in the morning. This method of teaching must have, as Hofstadter claims, done much to deaden the study of the classics. But if we stop at that, then we refuse to ask any serious questions about the curriculum itself, and assume that, taught properly, it could do the work of creating practical reasoners in a democratic regime.

But, of course, we are imagining the curriculum as it is today, something outside the status quo of American education, a form of loyal opposition. In Turner's day, it was, as it were, a minister with portfolio. I suspect that the curriculum's roots in the natural law

tradition will always make it, in power, a defender of whichever specific circumstances employ it. In the modern world, that will always place it in the position of an apologist for regimes which cannot themselves be convincingly rooted in natural law.

Turner might be correct to call the classical curriculum technical since, in the older sense of the term, the curriculum thinks of itself as technical. Techne, says Martin Heidegger, "is a process of reflection in service to doing and making."33 One no longer approaches the classics thoughtfully, as the matter given for thinking, but one rather occupies him or her self with the classics. And this education purports to produce better citizens and practical reasoners. Throughout the debates between Turner and the college presidents, the presidents always seek to show that Turner's sort of education ought to be disqualified; whether because it will be agnostic or will produce people who are unfamiliar with classical questions, or both, or because it will produce a barbarous unreflective nation. They think in terms of valid and invalid. Again Heidegger puts the point best, "When thinking comes to an end by slipping out of its element it replaces this loss by procuring a validity for itself as techne, as an instrument of education and therefore classroom matter and later cultural concern."34 Turner believed himself to be in a strong age which could think for itself. The curriculum is technical, then, in the sense that it forces and molds

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33. Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings, David F. Krell, editor, (New York:Harper & Row, 1977), in the "Letter on Humanism," 194.
34. Ibid., 197.

material in particular ways, and that these ways close off other ways in which the material might be. The other ways here might be thought of poetically as life, religiously as spirit, or philosophically as thinking, but when one uses the term technical as a accusation, clearly it is in the name of something else; an experience of absence, an experience of unwarranted restriction. Thinking, it is declared, has ceased.35

It is notable that Turner opposed the classical curriculum in the same terms he used when he opposed a merely vocational curriculum and dogmatic sectarian religion. In religion he argued against the notion that Jesus was sent to atone for anything in us, arguing instead that Jesus was sent to assure us of God's goodness. He opposes the merely vocational curriculum because of its connection with Omnipotence, necessity, and unfreedom since Adam's fall. He opposes the classical curriculum because it is simply a discipline, unconnected with a living ethos, and because it conceives itself as a dry-nurse, the need for which Americans have outgrown.

The underlying premise, the chief disagreement between Turner and everybody else, is that he doesn't believe in the finally depraved nature of human beings. He seems completely uninterested in the classical problem of how one introduces moderation into human affairs.

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35. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans., (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 43.

He seems rather to worry about the opposite problem, how to awaken vigor and life among free people.

The technical, then, must be understood as a sort of aggressive resignation; a literal cultivation of innocence and ignorance. "[I]t is inconceivable that God would allow for creating a military science of killing but not an agricultural science of feeding, clothing, and housing, and in which <u>most</u> people cannot develop their highest faculties due to their <u>consigned</u> sphere of duty."36 The classical curriculum, of course, helps keep a kind of hierarchy in place, since it has little useful value for farmers, and therefore relegates most Americans to ignorance.37 Turner consistently denies that such a hierarchy can be justified, either in scripture or in nature. Nature may allocate diverse duties, but it needn't consign one to ignorance, subservience, or unhappiness. Without a basis in natural law, it is difficult to see how the classical curriculum could ever maintain a hegemonic place in American education. Without a natural law cosmology, the classical curriculum degenerates into one constructivist alternative among many; that is, it becomes modern. It can only commend itself as a technique for training virtuous citizens. But without its pretensions, it no longer can reply to those who find it boring or irrelevant, except dogmatically. But a dogma can not separate itself from what it excludes. The curriculum offers the experience of absence.

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36. Edmund James, 57.
37. Ibid., 79.

Turner's basic insight is this: We ought to be able to develop a course of liberal education which would do for farmers what the classical curriculum does for lawyers, clerics, and doctors; or what West Point does for military men. This insight rests upon another. The classical curriculum does indeed work, though only for selected people. So the question becomes why does it work when it works, and why can't it work for everyone? To reply to the second question first; there is no longer any one best way to live.

> It is true that the laws of god are everywhere, and to all persons and classes, the same; and that all science is based upon these uniform laws; but it is equally true that their application to the pursuits of life, and the consequent natural discipline and development of mind, is infinitely various.38

If we all agreed on what was the best way of life, we might also agree that the classical curriculum was the best education for everyone. The idea that the classical curriculum somehow transcends particular ways of life, that it speaks to everyone, is an idea so obviously false, that Turner never even gives it serious consideration. He also takes it for granted that the classical curriculum is only one among several ways of educating free responsible people. The classical curriculum does not elucidate Being itself, but only one particular way to be. For Turner, the laws of God do elucidate Being itself, but their applications are too varied to be captured in any one curriculum.

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38. Ibid., 55.

The other question--how is it that the classical education works for the professional classes--is answered as follows:

> So far as discipline of mind is concerned, all know that the greater part of it is procured in all these professions, not at their several schools, however excellent and appropriate in themselves, but by continued habits of reading, thought, and reflection, IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR SEVERAL PROFESSIONAL PURSUITS IN AFTER LIFE; and if not so acquired, it is never, in fact, acquired at all.
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> The young candidate from these schools is generally pronounced green, raw, undisciplined and sophomorical, and shows himself to be so. But his university or school has done one thing for him of immense value and importance, and only one; it has neither duly informed nor disciplined his mind, as it is sometimes pretended; but IT HAS SHOWN HIM HOW THAT MIND CAN BE DISCIPLINED, IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL PURSUITS OF HIS AFTER LIFE.39

The classical background of professional men fits into a general collegiality of their professions. The sun, the light of life, Being, is discoverable in all different ways of life and work, but only from out of those ways. The sublime is disclosed through the mundane, one's daily sphere of action and duty, or it is not disclosed at all. It takes reflection, and every sphere requires a literature, libraries, scientific experiments, and other tools of reflection; but each sphere will require tools specific to its own life activity.

> Is it said that farmers and mechanics do not and will not read?
>
> Give them a literature and an education then suited to their actual wants, and see if it does not reform and improve them in this respect, as it has alone their brethren in the professional classes.

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39. Ibid., 59.

> ....Are these pursuits, then, beneath the dignity of rational and accountable man? God himself made the first Adam a gardener or farmer...The second Adam, he made a poor mechanic, "the son of a carpenter," who chose all his personal followers from the same humble class. The Deity has pronounced his opinion on the dignity and value of these pursuits, by the repeated acts of the wisdom and grace, as well as by the inflexible laws of his providence compelling industrial labor as the only means of preserving health of body, vigor, purity of mind and even life itself.40

Note once again the tension between wisdom and grace on the one hand and providence and compelled labor on the other. Here divine wisdom yields the possibility of transcending ignorance. Farmers are not forever stuck in doxa. Humans are essentially laboring beings--lawyers and clergymen no less than farmers--but no Christian can believe that God would so create the world as to condemn "the vast majority of mankind to live in circumstances in which the best and highest development of their noblest faculties is a sheer impossibility, unless they turn aside from those spheres of duty to which Providence has evidently consigned them."

To assume a natural hierarchy in America is to be blasphemous. In place of hierarchy and omnipotence, Turner next puts forward a Christian American and earthly teleology.

> For what but for this very end of intellectual discipline and development, has God bound the daily labors of all these sons of toil in the shop and on the farm, in close and incessant contact with all the mighty mysteries of his creative wisdom, as

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40. Ibid., 57-58.

> displayed in heaven above, and on earth beneath, and in the waters and soils that are under the earth?41

Why would God have made the principles of pure mathematics so applicable to practical pursuits had he not intended those who labored to derive mental culture as well as bodily sustenance from their arts?

> Why has God linked light, the dew drop, the clouds, the sunshine and the story, and concentrated the mighty powers of the earth, the ocean and the sky, directed by the unknown and mysterious force... connected with the growing of every plant, and the opening of every flower, the motion of every engine and every implement, if he did not intend that each son and daughter of Adam's race should learn through the handicraft of their daily toil to look through nature up to nature's God, trace his deep designs, and derive their daily mental and moral culture, as well as their daily food, from that toil that is ever encircled and circumscribed on all hands, by the unfathomed energies of his wisdom and power?....Was God mistaken when he first placed Adam in a garden instead of the academy?... No; God's ways are ever, ways of wisdom and truth; but Satan has in all ages, continued to put darkness for light...and to fill the world with brute muscles and bones in one class--luxurious, insolent and useless nerves and brains in another class, without either bodies or souls.42

In passages like these it is as though Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar had become an organizational theorist. I have quoted at such length to show how much anxiety lies behind such a radical institutional proposal as the Land Grant College system, and also to show how misleading it is to ascribe the collapse of the classical curriculum in America to greed, utilitarianism, or capitalism, on the one hand; or to a loss of seriousness or vision, or even the admittedly ridiculous memorization method, on the other. American Protestantism had sought freedom in an

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41. Ibid., 59.
42. Ibid., 60.

active relationship to nature, seen as God's Providence. In this project it had found friendly allies both in Newtonian physics and in the classical liberal curriculum. But the view of nature as God's Providence had, by 1850, produced some serious tensions.

For instance, everyone busily ignored the fact that Newton's cosmological proof for God's existence had been rendered unconvincing by Kant.43 There was also the tension created by things like the depletion of soils, destruction of timber lands, and general despoiling of the continent. Everywhere we find agriculturalists apologizing for their past record, even in Congress, and clambering for help in learning to do better. It is as though in the 1630's, Protestants battled against nature only in order to rescue and recognize themselves, but by 1850 they had recognized that in light of what they had wrought, they no longer could believe in their own righteousness.

I have also noted that the covenant theology had crumbled, and that with it had gone many of the settled definitions of the good life, authority, piety, and human nature, and that evangelism had articulated a conception of an active individual capable of hearing the itinerant message of evangelism, and that this individual was thought to be the basis of the first Christian nation, a nation to which God had granted a continent upon whose resources it could flourish and be happy. But if farmers are apologizing and losing confidence in how they exploit

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43. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A592/B627.

nature, then the uneasy alliance between Protestantism and utilitarianism, as articulated by evangelism, was in trouble as well. The happy continent of resources needed better spiritual and philosophical underpinnings. The nature of human activity upon the land is not such that we can, without deeper reflection, establish a righteous, happy, and free nation upon it.

From all these directions the classical curriculum was a problem. For instance, it was completely unequipped to speak to the problem I just laid out, and certainly not to the problems which were most alarming to agriculturalists. In practice, this placed it, as Turner argues, on the side of believing in natural hierarchies of elevated and non-elevated culture. In Christian religion this stance meshes best with the cosmological argument and meditations upon God's almighty powers. But by 1850 this stance implied that people who worked the land are unfree, that they are at the mercy of their own acquisitiveness, that their daily toil has no clear moral or pious meaning except the endless reproduction of the daily round of toil. If zealousness is any measure of one's attraction towards justice, then clearly the twenty year campaign for agricultural universities, championed by so many for so long, is ample testimony that the situation was not only thought to be unworkable, but unjust.

Turner fought slavery, fought to found new specifically American educational institutions, conducted scientific experiments, taught Bible classes, wrote books, and proposed a national system of canals, all in a spirit of zeal and always to correct injustices wrought by the partisans of natural inequalities. Always he argues that people ought to be given opportunities to improve themselves because it is only through such projects that one can discover the one true God. Again slaves are not being denied liberal freedom, but Christian freedom. They are being held in an unreflective relation to nature. As we saw in Turner's discussion of the plague, all of these positions are a response to the theodicy problem. But we also saw that Turner's reply to theodicy is grounded in a practical and spiritual teleology. This is very important and Immanuel Kant will have more to say about it in Chapter II, but first I must explore why the modern response to theodicy must not only be teleological, but organizational as well. I will explore this through the writings and speeches of the civil service reformer George William Curtis.

D. George William Curtis and the Duty of Educated Men

1. Love and the Possible Motivations for Reform

In my discussion of the Civil Service reformer George William Curtis I will, as with J. B. Turner in the last section, not be casting

praise or blame on him for the creation of today's organized spaces. This contrasts with two other approaches. Leonard White in his monumental study of American administration1 termed the reformers public spirited men, selflessly seeking the elevation of American public life. Almost at once writers like Ari Hoogenboom replied by characterizing the reformers as elitists who, finding themselves shut out of politics in the post-Andrew Jackson days, tried to dampen things down, not necessarily to insure themselves jobs, but more to create a world which people such as themselves could recognize.44 Another version of this second thesis, that of Curtis' 1955 biographer, is Gordon Milne's.45 Milne argues that the genteel tradition, though seeming quaint to us today, did once inform certain public spirited men, and help them improve aspects of our national institutions. Elitism, in other words, has its value. I disagree with none of these interpretations, there is textual evidence for them all, but all three seem smaller than the man they interpret. Curtis admits his ambitions freely, but no one could call him self-serving. He turned down too many ambassadorships, nominations, and job offers. But nor was he motivated by ethics, as Leonard White would have it. A purely ethical man would have needed either a more public life, say, in Congress, or a more private one, say, in business. Curtis seems, rather, to always leave and enter the public

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44. Leonard White, The Republican Era, 1869-1901, (New York: Macmillan, 1958).
44. Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1961).
45. Gordon Milne George William Curtis and the Genteel Tradition, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1956).

arena with ease. His family was never asked to become a public family, and his publicness always seems spontaneous and in response to specific events, issues, or situations.

For instance, at the 1856 Republican national convention, his sudden and eloquent demand to reconsider a platform amendment, one which had just been heavily voted down, to include in the platform the words "that all men are created equal," was based simply on Curtis' total dismay as he watched the amendment's sponsor, Joshua R. Giddings, leaving the hall in defeat.

> It seemed to me that the spirits of all martyrs to freedom were marching out of the convention behind the venerable force of that indignant and outraged old man.46

Curtis demanded the floor and after he spoke, and he only spoke after much heckling and noise had died down, the convention enthusiastically passed the Giddings amendment. This sort of spontaneousness, this freshness, even in the service of the public good, does not articulate the shared understandings of ethics so much as it creates new ones. What before was beyond credibility became thinkable.

But perhaps Curtis was a moralist. Curtis himself seems to think this is true, he talked about little else but morality in all his speeches. All his adult life he made arguments which resemble those of

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46. Milne, 109. See also Edward Cary, George William Curtis. (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894).

Emerson, whose books he read at age thirteen and whose friendship he kept all his life. But here I think we need to ask what morality it is which commands him to speak morally. For what does morality provide an outlet? Here I think Curtis' own answer, written to his wife on his thirty sixth birthday, provides as good an answer as I have seen.

> I believe I may sincerely say that while I wish that I were a great deal better man, I do not wish I were a great deal greater one, as we use the word. In fact, I suppose no man who loves as truly as I do you and who knows himself loved as I feel I am, is very much troubled by external ambition. Love is a spur to action certainly, but not to selfish action, which is the law of ambition. A man can be ruled by only one central passion (shades of Pope) and mine, thank Heaven! is love, not ambition.47

Curtis was apparently an erotic man. Prior to his marriage he fell in love often. His Tales of a Howaji on the Nile was considered too candid in its portrayal of Egyptian dancing girls, and I find his treatment of the love between an old bookkeeper and his wife in Prue and I to be so sensitive that it is difficult to believe a young unmarried man could have written it. The bookkeeper is able to see his wife Prue in everything, and he continually rekindles his love for her in everything he does or thinks. In this he uses the method of indirection, so that he, as it were, comes upon her again and again unexpectedly; the beauty and purity he worshiped in her during their courtship, when they were new and beginning--her youth he nearly says, her purity he mentions often.

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47. Milne, p. 107.

Curtis takes up this theme again in all his commencement addresses. It is always June, fields are in bloom, and the earth is rich with a lush promise of fecundity; like the graduates he addresses. Curtis is a consummate lover of youth, beauty and purity. The message is often overtly political, for instance to insight students to abolish slavery, but the vehicle, what makes the speech compelling, is that it insights the graduates to live in such a way that their actions will be a credit to the promise and passions of June, of youth, and of love.48

One advantage to understanding Curtis as an erotic man who uses the the language of morality in order to give himself a sphere of action is that in this field we know we cannot entirely understand or completely capture Curtis' reforms in our diagnostic schemas and categories. The unruliness and open-endedness of this emotion, love, mean he will often surprise us and escape our conceptual frames. A second advantage lies, to the contrary, in our familiarity with eroticism. We are familiar enough that we can make at least some plausible claims about the author's intentions and purposes. We can say, for instance, that he loves purity and that he seeks to insight others to disclose their own buried capacity for purity.

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48. George William Curtis, see, for example, "The Leadership of Educated Men," in Orations and Addresses of George William Curtis, Charles Elliot Norton, editor, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1894), Vol. I, 316-36.

2. Duty and Religion

Before going any further I must turn to a discussion of the relation during Curtis' early life between duty and religion. During the first half of the 19th Century the link between God and nature was changing dramatically.49 Early on New England divines had replaced the Aristotelian and scholastic conceptions of nature with those of Isaac Newton, keeping natural theology in place by relying heavily upon Newton's cosmological proof for God's existence. From nature, says natural theology, one can infer the existence of a supreme being or principle that is good and all powerful. Hence, everyone, even a pagan, is accountable for his sins. Miller makes the point that this view always came in tandem with another, namely, that one can be most directly best informed of the truth through reading scripture. The cosmological proof actually asserts that nature also, though less completely than scripture, can yield a secure foundation for faith. The dilemma here is that neither nature nor scripture can bear this sort of weight. Who, after all, can say, asked Frederick Henry Hedge in 1851, whether the hope a religious man feels in the face of human frailty and death comes from natural or supernatural sources? And Miller adds, who can say whether Hedge's melancholy flows from his loss of faith in the efficacy of natural theology or the efficacy of revealed religion?

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49. Miller (1974), 121-33.

Since Immanuel Kant had written his classic refutation of the cosmological argument,50 the specter of a world not naturally suited to human purposes had appeared. One could not borrow religious insight from scientific systems anymore, since science is finally, as Pascal had warned long ago, at best a temporary systematization made by finite minds in the face of staggering infinities; the Nothing and the All.51 There was also a set of more standard problems connected with natural theology, like, how is it possible, if natural theology is operating in the world, that there remains in human societies, even in elevated ones like Greece or Rome, so much depravity? The degeneration of trust in natural theology tended to also put pressure on one's trust in revealed religion, since, as already mentioned, the direct grounding of faith had itself come under suspicion, and because the discovery that nature was not intrinsically amenable to our categories of thought left one facing an inhuman nature. That meant one no longer knew whether one's insights were products of nature or just human projections upon a radically unknowable material. Hedge no longer could tell how to distinguish a natural from a supernatural grounds for hope because, since he no longer could know the natural, he could not contrast with it the supernatural, and that contrast was central to making the distinction between natural and revealed religion. Newtonian science had confirmed that the cosmos really was the way revelation said it was. But when the cosmos turned out to be inhuman, then it no longer confirmed revelation, and in fact,

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50. Ibid., 128; Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A605/B633.
51. Miller (1974), 130.

left one with serious doubts as to whether one could understand revelation at all. The God of natural theology, therefore, had to increasingly become less and less encumbered with details and specific injunctions. God, to survive, had to become minimalist.

One response to this dilemma was the creation of the new more subject-centered religion of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker. The believers in natural religion had always tended to oppose revivalism. The key to their faith was, first, that nature illustrated an "Elegance & Beauty in all natural things"52 which were not only evidences of the author of nature, but also the basis for moral precepts.53 The other side of this belief was, and again against revivalism, that human beings, through natural reason, could discern something of this author and this moral code. Thus these believers were uncomfortable with evangelism because it seemed to tamper in a rather utilitarian way with natural reason, and again and again preachers like William Ellery Channing, a major figure, along with Emerson, in the religious life at Brook Farm and, like Emerson, a major influence upon George Curtis,54 accused revivalists of abusing human nature.55 Of course the revivalists countered by accusing men like Channing of stoicism and deism, since he elevated human nature to a privileged

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52. Miller (1974), 126.
53. Jane Bennett, "On Being Native: Thoreau's Hermeneutics of Self," Polity, in press.
54. Milne, 15. Curtis during this period also sometimes attended Theodore Parker's church. Parker is discussed below.
55. Miller (1974), 55.

status and there seemed little left for God to do in bringing about human salvation.

To us today the believers in moral nature seem romantic and sentimental. When the romances of Walter Scott and James Fennemore Cooper are wonderfully lampooned in Huckleberry Finn we usually side with Mark Twain. But their important political insight was that there must be some limits upon the evangelical manipulation of people's physiology and psychology. There is a basic insight that the unlimited and noisy over-stimulation of men and women is unhealthy, and that a society which needs so many stimulants is probably sick. This almost defensive reaction to American busyness seems to me to be at the heart of the attempts to anchor morality in the dignity of an autonomous rational subject, one which must never be treated merely as a means, as in revivalism, but as an end as well.

Perry Miller makes much of Melville's reversal of the American romantic style; Moby-Dick is a romance that dissents from romance.56 "Call me Ishmael," begins the book, and the implication is that finally the true outcast has appeared. The romantic view of nature, the move to create a breathing space for a free individual, is declared just another noisy orthodoxy. Similarly and only a year after the publication of Moby-Dick Theodore Parker, the nonconformist preacher, announced in the Boston Music Hall:

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56. Ibid., 136.

> With such views, you see in what esteem I must be held by society, church and state. I cannot be otherwise than hated. This is the necessity of my position--that I must be hated.57

This sort of self scapegoating is, of course, mawkish and embarrassing, but I think what we see both in Melville and in Parker is a sort of wrenching away of a laudable set of ideals from a discursive home which can no longer support them. Parker was in fact treated shabbily by the Boston liberal Unitarian clergy, but one suspects that the fight would not have been so bitter had the participants not shared many of the same visions and insights. Parker's change, it seems, is to move away once and for all from any version, no matter how enlightened, of utilitarianism.

> Poor dear father, poor dear mother! You little knew how many a man would curse the son you painfully brought to life, and painfully and religiously brought up. Well, I bless you--true father and most holy mother you were to me: the earliest thing you taught me was <u>duty</u>--duty to God, duty to man; that life is not a pleasure, not a pain, but a <u>duty</u>.58

Duty is nearly synonymous with conscience, and it serves God and man. At this point it is completely negative, and James Russell Lowell's poem, "A Fable for Critics," captures both Melville and Parker.

> I think I may call
> Their belief a believing in nothing at all
> Or something of that sort; I know they all went
> For a general union of total dissent:

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57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 138.

> He went a step farther; without cough or hem,
> He frankly avowed he believed not in them;
> And, before he could be jumbled or prevented,
> From their orthodox dissent, he dissented.59

Duty as conscience and the individual as dignity were formulations meant to speak to failures in liberal theology, but without caving in to revivalism or Calvinism. They are above all an attempt to rescue the insights of natural theology from its own wreckage. Like all critical movements, as soon as one tried to embody liberal dissent in positive institutions, whether in romances or in Boston churches, dissent became an apology for a new status quo. Nor did Parker or Emerson or Channing or Melville succeed in this regard any more than had the liberal Boston clergy, and for a long time the advocates of dignified self autonomy were very leery about institutionalizing their insights.

All this granted, and as dreary as his conception may seem today, Parker's conception of duty must have struck many young American intellectuals as an astonishing innovation; a sort of leap into new possibilities of being. It gave one a basis for moral action, albeit negative dissent, while avoiding the pitfalls of utilitarianism and sectarian religious dogma. But mostly it gave one a language and standpoint for criticizing the worst tendencies of the commercial ethos.

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59. Ibid., 135.

That George William Curtis shared these convictions is very clear from his lectures and letters. In a letter written to Edward Cary in 1860, Curtis summed up his religious beliefs as follows:

> I believe in God, who is love: that all men are brothers; and that the only essential duty of every man is to be honest, by which I understand his absolute following of his conscience when duly enlightened. I do not believe that God is anxious that men should believe this or that theory of the Godhead, or the Divine Government, but that they should live purely, justly and lovingly.60

In all of Curtis' orations, this religious notion lies behind much of the argument. He generally invokes the authority of conscience and duty as a reply to the American ethos of political moderation and commercial compromise. We can call Parker's conception of duty an astonishing innovation because with it Curtis inspired his listeners to oppose slavery, favor civil service reform, and champion women's suffrage. And Curtis was one of the most popular speakers in America.

This religious doctrine was obviously called into being partly by fifty years of the noisy sectarian feuds. In the face of so many sects all claiming to have the true reading of scripture, what thinking person could with confidence claim to know which, if any, was correct? But when one answers this challenge with a doctrine of individual conscience, it becomes internally necessary to the doctrine that God

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60. Cary, 7; 334.

remain fairly remote.61 To rely on conscience means that each person must be the best judge of what is and isn't duly enlightened. This necessarily implies that churches are not the medium through which one learns God's purposes and commandments. Churches are themselves institutions within the world which offer authoritative interpretations of scripture and natural events. They are based on the claim that some, perhaps the regenerate, the blessed, or the clergy, can make sense of the world and the scriptures, such that the members can know how they ought to live in the world. Thus churches need to make some claim that 'God is a least' close enough that we can know his commandments in some detail and that these commands, because God designed the world with us in mind, can be readily carried out in the world He created. For churches to prevail there needs to be some very close affinities between God, nature, the church, and human beings. And it is the role of preachers to help believers appreciate these affinities and to act upon them.

But once believers turn to the more transcendental duty of conscience, they are under pressure to reject institutionalized ways of belief as unreflective and dogmatic. To listen to an official church doctrine is to abandon one's own thought processes. Thus these believers will need to also insist that God's detailed will for humans on earth is unavailable to us, and possibly irrelevant.

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61. William E. Connolly, Political Theory and Modernity, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 142.

Like the classical tradition in education, religion grounded in natural causality had somehow ceased to speak to common experience. Now it was possible to experience those theologies which claimed to be able to explicate God's will in detail as unwarranted impositions. Emerson, Channing, Parker, and Curtis all stave off this problem by keeping their faith very sparse. Not much can be said about God, we know very few details about Him, and He isn't too anxious about just what we might actually do to worship Him. Furthermore, the older liberal theology seemed unable to offer any compelling reason to oppose slavery, though it acknowledged that slavery was an evil. What was needed was a religion capable of reaching the world.

It is into this void that Parker hurled the word duty. And when Curtis took it up, he was able to inspire young audiences at Union College, at Brown, at Cornell, and at Dartmouth with a sense of excitement. The excitement extended even to such, for us, dry subjects as civil service reform. Edward Cary mentions several times that the men and women who worked on the Civil Service Commission, though poorly paid and overworked, were still deeply enthusiastic.

> But it was a happy quality of the reform to excite the most generous devotion in all honest persons who had to do with it, and it immediately entered upon a career of practical success that has steadily gained with every passing year.62

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62. Cary, 278.

Leonard White reports a similar attitude among the bright young people who flocked into the Department of Agriculture during the same period. Far from experiencing transcendental duty as cold and remote, a whole generation of young Americans found in it a spiritual and practical standpoint from which they might live out the possibilities of their era.

3. The Duty of the American Scholar

In 1856 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow left the country to live for a time in Europe. George William Curtis had actually tried to dissuade him:

> ....Couldn't you postpone until after Christmas?
> Ah yes! I know; we are all dirty and degraded enough. But now comes the struggle, now we are going to see how dirty... If the Union is not a machinery for the protection of Liberty, but of slavery, what decent man is not a disunionist?
> Well, you are going to let this hubbub die behind you and sink in a watery horizon. How can you do it?63

Curtis had been trying to arouse all the great American men of learning to join him in actively supporting the Fremont campaign for the presidency, this being the most practical way of openly and actively opposing slavery. Curtis believed men of conscience ought to support the new Republican party. But it must have seemed to him that all the best minds had given up on American public life. Many people in his

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63. Milne, 91.

circle of esteemed friends, and for three years he himself, had gone to Europe in search of beauty, culture, and a cosmopolitan attitude: Margret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Elliot Norton, and Curtis' brother Burrill, for instance.

This clearly bothered him. In Prue and I, he had given half a chapter over to wondering what a writer could bring back from Europe, and his answer was; only the delusional scents and smells, such as might come to passengers on a ship passing by a tropical island in the fog, or perhaps through a haze of opium smoke. In Prue and I one is left thinking that this is enough, but in that book Curtis is interested in how someone like an old bookkeeper might maintain, even in America, a high quality of private life. In 1856 he was thinking of public life, and travel to Europe is judged much more harshly.

By 1856 Curtis is making heavier demands upon authors. No more could an author be like a large clipper ship from which one might get inspiring whiffs of far away places; of nutmegs, molasses, or fruits.64 Indirection was no longer enough, and no more was it permissible for intellectuals to set sail just because the hubbub of America smelled so nauseatingly rotten. At this point, 1856, Curtis' biographers usually say that politics came to take up more of his time than literature.

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64. Cary, 66.

I suggest it is helpful to see this change as a shift away from, if not the philosophy, at least the strategy of Curtis' mentors, Emerson, Channing, Longfellow, and Hawthorne. To see how complete the break is, we can compare Curtis' statements to his friend Isaac Hecker in 1843 with what he was saying in 1856. In 1843, praising individuality in Emersonian terms, he wrote:

> Thro' me does not a higher judge give judgment?....
> Do you not find it more and more possible to go outside yourself and look at your own individuality?....Every man, tool like, carries a jewel somewhere, but few men are able to find it in themselves."65

The trap to be avoided in 1843 is dependence. Even friendship interferes with true nobility. And the duty of the individual, if duty is the correct word in this period, is to facilitate, by indirection and exemplification, the showing to each individual of the jewel which resides unseen within him or her. "Trust thyself," Emerson wrote in 'Self-Reliance,' "and every heart vibrates to that iron string." Emerson himself did tend to be active in public life, especially on the public lecture circuit, and all the issues I am raising here were probably known to him, but never satisfactorily settled.66 Still, the inference the young Curtis drew from all this was disengagement.

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65. Milne, 15. For the impossibility of this two way journey away and towards oneself, see Mark Taylor "Corporality," on Merleau-Ponty in Alterity, (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 61-82.
66. Miller (1974), 206-207.

> Reform becomes at last a practical atheism and so far as organized loses soul... and the wise man lends himself to no organization.... He is his own society, his own reforms.67

The harvest is said to come in the form of educated men, "this is the house of the sphere of our duty." "Vigorous living" is the medium of reform.68 Or, again, to his father from Brook Farm, he wrote:

> Reform is organized distrust. It says to the universe fresh from God's hand 'You are a miserable business; lo! I will make you fairer! and so disputes some Fourier or Robert Owen to improve the bungling.69

Curtis even goes so far in one letter to Hedge as to say that the way to oppose slavery is to grow inwardly and intellectually. When the good man changes on the inside, the effect cannot fail to show in his surroundings. Of course Emerson would say that institutions are but the shadows cast by actual people, and improving the character of people will ultimately affect the character of institutions. And the mature Curtis probably understood this relationship as well as anyone ever has. My point is that in this early period, he has a very naive, or perhaps mystical, understanding of this issue. He was more concerned about how a private person lived a good and vigorous life than about how a public could do the same thing. Later, events in Kansas had made him worried about the latter.

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67. Milne, 16.
68. Ibid., 19.
69. Cary, 125.

Curtis in 1856 is perched at the break between two modes of individualism, that is, two ways of realizing subjectivity in the world.70 The first mode Curtis learned at Brook Farm, where he lived for eighteen months. It is a pure subjectivity, that is, it knows itself immediately, it seeks to see itself without reference to community norms, standards, or traditions, and, in fact, spends a great deal of time purging itself of all such old dead weight and noise, especially of religious sectarianism and dogmatism. Unitarianism and transcendentalism are its creeds. Curtis never became an atheist, but to preserve his faith he, much like J. B. Turner, had to shun most of organized religion. And in much the same way and for pretty much the same reason, he also avoided politics.

Curtis' religion was based completely upon individual conscience and honesty. But for Curtis this stance hit several snags. First, the one already alluded to, that a purely literary approach, informed by even the best European traditions, was difficult to communicate to American audiences. It was unclear whether the insights gained in Europe were transferable to America, and it was unclear whether they even could address the American experience. Curtis put this in terms of noble sentiment, apparently after a study of Plato. Commenting here on democracy in America he says:

> The theory of democracy is noble. It asserts the majesty of human nature. It is the wise man governing himself. It implies

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70. Connolly (1988), 100-02.

> moderation, abstinence, temperance, heroism, and religion...but when it is not so--when it becomes among wild and sensual people the popular creed, then the majority governs, whether it orders the canonization or the martyrdom of the best men.... Now I do not find in the American people that virtue which alone can render democracy either politic or just... It is plain enough that we are not a people actually capable of self government, however fair may be our theory.71

Curtis was not a mean-spirited man and he could not for long personally sustain such a low estimate of his fellow Americans. He was erotic and he needed a sphere of action. But this pompous paragraph is interesting for its mixing of Emerson's imagery with Plato's; the tensions between the two seem to be resolved by interpreting Plato's wise man as though he were Emerson's. The wise man here, governing himself, who the majority might, as in classical political theory, either make a demagogue or a scapegoat, is not a classical hero, but a transcendentalist. But the classical statement of the political problem doesn't really cover the American case. Noble American intellectuals were in danger, not of being made into demagogues or scapegoats, but of simply being ignored. And most often they preferred it that way; they purposely remained detached.

But this strategy, which had worked in the lives of Longfellow, Hawthorne, and others of that generation, did not work for Curtis. Where the older men had sought individuality as a space beyond the busyness of American life or the boredom of the Customs House, Curtis sought out the community and the political as arenas in which his

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71. Milne, 26.

individuality could find expression. His formulas and references to individuality never change; in 1882 his vision of the educated man's mission still rings with notes first rung by Emerson:

> ...[E]ducated intelligence...asserts the worth of self reliance and the power of the individual. Gathering the wisdom of the ages as into a sheaf of sunbeams, it shows that progress springs from the minority..."72

It is not that he abandoned the visions of Brook Farm, but that he sought to fulfill them within society rather than away from it. What changes most dramatically in Curtis is his attitude towards the fitness of Americans to rule themselves. From 1856 on, if Americans are too venal for democracy, it is not the fault of the common man, but the cowardice and aloofness of intellectuals. In the "Duty of an American Scholar"73 address, he makes this the starting point of his whole public life. He opens by quoting Milton's, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue..."

The Longfellows had been in Europe only a few weeks when these words were spoken, and they must have been on his mind as he worked on the speech, systematically revising his earlier thoughts on reform, action, organization, and duty. The speech was a resounding success, it was reprinted in the New York papers the next day. The American scholar's duty is to be the conscience of the nation. The end of all

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72. Curtis, Orations and Addresses, Vol. I, 332.
73. Ibid., 9-35.

scholarly attainment is the same, " to live nobly." But the harvest is different now. Even if "the man be a hermit, his mind is a citizen of the world." It follows, Curtis says, that "the fundamental law of his life is liberty" and that a thought which will help the world is useless if one can not tell it to the world. Scholars must introduce:

> ...thought and a sense of justice into human affairs. He was not made a scholar to satisfy newspapers or parish beadles, but to serve God and man. While other men pursue what is expedient and watch with alarm the flickering of the funds, he is to pursue the truth and the eternal law of justice.74

In a republic especially, educated people must participate or else the politics of expediency and flickering funds will eventually eclipse the very principle of liberty. He means this quite literally. In other speeches Curtis worked out more clearly how the commercial spirit could lead the nation, in the name of union and prosperity, to compromise far too much with slavery.

> Our commercial success tends to make us all cowards....Are we satisfied that America should have no other excuse for independent national existence than a superior facility at money making? Shall it have no national justification to the heart and intellect? Does the production of twelve hundred million pounds of cotton fulfill the destiny of this continent in the order of providence?75

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74. Ibid., 13-14.
75. Ibid., 58.

Slavery annihilates self respect, "the basis of manhood." "Moral self respect is the first condition of national life; but the laborer cannot have moral respect unless he be free."

Slavery and commerce are the one-two punch which threaten true individuality in America. Slavery, because it must expand, because it must subvert through fugitive slave laws the very principle of liberty and dignity for all, and because it must demand, as all oligarchies do, the support of the state, would literally demoralize the country. And commerce tends to make us slaves to prosperity, replacing industriousness with busyness, the endless pursuit of mere life. "Commercial prosperity is only a curse if it be not subservient to moral and intellectual progress, and our prosperity will conquer us if we do not conquer our prosperity."76 Slavery and commerce in league with each other are a threat to America itself.

It may be important to note that Curtis is not advocating an Aristotelean ethical order. The images he uses are never any naturalistic right-ordering of the polity. He explicitly unhooks America from any understanding of natural law,77 and he certainly didn't believe in natural hierarchies. The role educated men are supposed to perform is never justified as in any way naturally superior, but merely different and extremely important. Furthermore, American morality needs

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76. Ibid., 57.
77. Ibid., 41.

to be created on purpose. The model is not Aristotle, but Thermopylae, and of Leonidas holding the pass against Xerxes' hoards.

The cloistered virtue of Curtis' youth could not sustain itself under the hustle of American commercial life, nor in the face of slavery. This is the necessity that Curtis feels. It leads him to reverse his earlier stand on organizations. He reinterprets the Pilgrim fathers as though they were pragmatic transcendentalists. "From the love of liberty, and from what is rarer the ability to organize liberty in institutions, sprang the America of which we are so fondly proud."78 But the point is not to discover in institutions our common understandings and then have individuals take part in a common ethical life. Rather the individual has been discovered to require organizations and the sphere of activity they provide in order to realize himself, or give himself a content. There is never any question of which takes precedence; the individual always has primacy over the organization, and is in fact the only court of appeal beyond the organization.

One forms organizations like the Republican party because that is the only way, in a republic, to do great things. Taking a practical and active interest necessarily leads to party affiliation. "Great public results...are due to that organization of effort and concentration of

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78. Ibid., 51.

aim which arouse, instruct, and inspire the popular heart and will."79 But the problem in the United States is that people easily come to mistake the forms of freedom for freedom itself. The New Testament pharisees performed all the forms, "yet lacked the very heart of religion." And Julius Caesar became emperor under a republican government. Therefore, the duty of American scholars isn't merely to hold office or to vote.

> By public duty I do not necessarily mean official duty, although it may include that. I mean simply that constant active practical participation in the duties of politics without which, upon the part of the most intelligent citizens, the conduct of public affairs falls under the control of selfish and ignorant, or crafty and venal men. I mean that personal attention--which, as it must be incessant, is often wearisome and even repulsive--to the details of politics, attendance at meetings, service upon committees, care and trouble and expense of many kinds...in a word, all those duties and services which, when selfishly and meanly performed, stigmatize a man as a mere politician; but [when done honorably] is the gradual building...of that great temple of self sustained liberty which all generous souls mean that our government shall be.80

Intellectuals are tempted to disdain politics, but only intellectuals can insure that political banality does not rule our institutions. First against slavery, and later against party spirit and the spoils system, Curtis always held up the enlightened moral individual. The educated man must fight the withering spell and "assert the independence and dignity of the individual citizen, and to prove that party was made for the voter, not the voter for party.81 But to

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79. Ibid., 272.
80. Ibid., 266-67.
81. Ibid., 279.

make this difference, to insure that the United States was a moral republic first and a commercial republic second, to be an experiment in liberty more than in business, intellectuals had to participate. Otherwise their freedom was empty at best and endangered at worst. Put into more philosophic terms, subjectivity could not be realized negatively as an earned escape from busyness and noise; it could not define itself over against the commonality without making the commonality part of its self definition. Brook Farm is simply Wall Street inverted. Before 1856 one could evaluate American institutions positively or negatively, grub in the market or breath the rarefied pure air of subjectivity--and Curtis actually did try both options--but one could not be both a subject and a participant in American daily affairs. One's subjectivity could not make any difference. The young Curtis, whether at Brook Farm or on Wall Street, must have felt half deadened, even given his native enthusiasm and good humor.

After 1856, Curtis turned his eroticism on American public opinion. He sought always to bring out its best and he always had a lover's insecurities about its potential for the worst. But if the people, through public opinion, can be active in the strong sense of agency, then there is strong pressure in his position to regard institutions as finally neutral. The Supreme Court, for instance, will always be glancing towards public opinion when it interprets laws, and the long debates over slavery had convinced Curtis that the Constitution could be plausibly interpreted to defend even slavery if the people were

inclined to live with it. With the Dred Scott decision still fresh on everyone's mind he said:

> There is no universally recognized official expounder of the Constitution. Such an instrument, written or unwritten, always means in a crisis what the people choose. The people of the United States will always interpret the constitution for themselves, because that is the nature of popular governments, and because they have learned that judges are sometimes appointed to do partisan service....Therefore our Constitution will always be the measure of our morality.82

Again these themes recur throughout Curtis' life. In 1882, claiming that it is no stigma when limited men label one a visionary, he says that:

> A visionary is one who holds morality to be stronger than the majority.... Cobden felt that the heart of England was a gentleman, and not a bully. So thinks the educated American of his own country. He has faith enough in the people to appeal to them against themselves, for he knows that the cardinal condition of popular government is the ability of the people to see and correct their own errors.83

And in 1877, on the same subject he said:

> It is especially necessary for us to perceive the vital relation of individual courage and character to the common welfare, because ours is a government of public opinion, and public opinion is but the aggregate of individual thought. We have the awful responsibility as a community of doing what we choose, and it is of the last importance that we choose to do what is wise and right.84

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82. Ibid., 92. Note, by the way, the two constitutions here; the written and the unwritten, denoted by the upper case and lower case 'c.'
83. Ibid., 331-32.
84. Ibid., 280.

"Technical scholarship," Curtis had announced in 1856, "begins in a dictionary and ends in a grammar. The sublime scholarship of John Milton began in literature and ended in life." With this, I have tried to show, the duty of the educated man to his country changed. One must participate in public life, and the older aloofness could only appear selfish. Without the participation of the educated and intelligent members of the nation the dream of liberty would never be realized. And with this insight Curtis opened his long erotic affair with public opinion. His orations all read like an uneasy mixture of Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Plato's "Symposium," both of which he read and admired when he was young. At the level of systems, a Kantian individualism such as Curtis' can be called too abstract and too universalistic. But when we descend to the level of a man trying to live out a coherent standpoint, we find that at least for one man at one time, it also could accommodate and put into practice a sensuousness not usually associated with such a philosophy. And of course all this should be a warning not to interpret Curtis or other reformers of this period through preconceived notions of what we believe about the later Progressive period.

4. The Decline of Manners and the Rise of Organizations

Everywhere Curtis looked he saw a general tackiness taking over the United States; it seemed to prevail in manners, in morals, and in

politics. The best New York society was devoid of taste or intellectual eminence,85 slavery was tolerated because to oppose it made a commercial union impossible, and politics were in the hands of men like Stephen Douglas and, later, Roscoe Conkling. Much of this he lays at the door of the commercial ethos, which is both a blessing and a curse. He makes this clear in two speeches, "New York and it Press" and "The Spirit and Influence of Higher Education." The commercial spirit provides "tolerance, slowness to extremism, a certain liberality," and not least important, a system of education. All of these things are necessary but insufficient conditions of freedom, which without them destroys itself, but which also always runs the risk of being forgotten in their presence.

The problems with commerce, then, stem from its ability to limit certain excesses of democratic politics while encouraging others. Business men "pursue what is expedient and watch with alarm the flickering of the funds," but easily lose sight of justice and freedom. "[Our]...wise shrewdness and great aspect of action harmonize with an absence and postponement of art."86 There is, then, a general forgetfulness of freedom and justice, taste and eminence.

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85. Milne, 13.
86. Cary, 43.

Probably no one anymore should try to ground manners and taste in objective criteria.87 Along with religion, morality, and classical education, manners could not survive the ontological shifts of the early nineteen hundreds. If nature can no longer be assumed to have been created with humans in mind, then there can be no inherently correct behavior for people, anymore than there can be a universally recognized expounder of the Constitution. Furthermore, utilitarianism tends to view the earth and the people upon it as infinitely available for development and change. In the absence of universally recognized standards of behavior, any manipulation of people which can plausibly be said to contribute to their well-being is justifiable. Evangelism and political parties would be cases in point. If genteel behavior could no longer speak with authority to the needs of Americans, and if there were no grounds for limiting the demands a party might make upon its willing participants, then, since party was by definition good, the party could ask anything of its members, including tithes for office holding. The linchpin of the argument for leaving the party alone in this ultimately rests on the old relation to nature which I discussed under the concepts of natural theology. To say that there is nothing in nature which prohibits these behaviors is to first of all recognize the old standard as the only viable one, but then to deny in every specific case that the

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87. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, (New York: Crossroad Press, 1982). See especially Part I. Jean Bethke Elshtain has reminded me that, of course, Alan Bloom does attempt just such a natural grounding of taste and manners in his Closing of the American Mind. I take up this problem more rigorously in Chapter II through Kant's discussion of Spinoza's natural teleology.

old standard can actually speak to us. This seems particularly nihilistic in America where it seems to have led people to discount the value of morality completely, since it never helps in any specific cases, while still holding on to morality as though it should be operative. And I think this accounts for some of the viciousness with which reformers were attacked; for instance Roscoe Conkling's savage two hour denunciation of Curtis, and Curtis was present, at the 1877 New York State Republican Convention. Conkling referred to Curtis as the "man-milliner" and as the "carpet-knight of politics."

Curtis' moralization of America circumvented this sort of moral double bind. He did not, like J. B. Turner, locate God in the objective wisdom of the natural causal order. He entirely relocated the ground of virtue and purity outside of scientific nature altogether, placing it instead in the subjective conditions of rationality. He thereby, at least in principle, saved manners from a crass materialistic fate. But at the same time he sought to save Emerson's vision of Nature as the light through which God shines in everyone. Viewed practically, in Curtis' hands the sources of morality, virility, purity, manners, and action were all more immediately available to individuals than they had ever been before. Nature also is more directly available. These things are not mediated any more through preachers or party bosses. We have already seen how the concept of duty and the subject it implies, in the hands of Parker and Emerson, acted as a means to save natural theology after Kant and Hume and American commerce had discredited its basis in

science. But Curtis reversed their earlier strategy. Rather than trying defensively to preserve some relation to nature against the hubbub and noise, Curtis tried to take the offensive. He attacked the hubbub and noise with the insights he had gained from Nature and learning. Subjectivity was empty if it could not act in the world, and the only way it could act in the world was to open the way to transforming the hubbub into at least a higher quality hubbub. But, as already noted, this required organized action. Curtis succeeded rhetorically because Americans had always sought, as I have tried to show throughout this chapter, to ground their freedom in nature, and Curtis offered a new albeit pared down version of a natural ethic. This move solved some of the older problems with morality, but it also had some important institutional implications. It is to these that I will now turn.

Curtis was a reformer. He was not an organizations theorist. So near as I can tell he never thought critically about the institutional legacy he was leaving. Still I don't think it is unfair at this point to note some of the drawbacks of his moral formulations.

First, nature had to become a sort of Real World, that against which we measure human institutions and find them wanting. As such it can never be an actual nature. This means that reform, for instance, can have no end, and no amount of political victory is enough to declare oneself the winner. Liberty, like art, is always postponed. And

subjects tend to be stuck in the psychological double bind of believing themselves the underdogs, no matter what happens. Second, the concept of an individual who is now mature enough to make his own autonomous decisions implies both a period of tutelage and a tutor. The individual, for Curtis, clearly begins life at college commencement, or upon leaving Brook Farm. One returns to one's alma mater in order to confront one's own earlier purity and youth. The trick is to have lived in such a way that you will not be embarrassed by either your youthful idealism or your later experience. Truth is forever young.88 So some institutions are good tutors and some are not. Colleges are certainly legitimate, but parties are not. But such claims, while seeming self-evident to intellectuals and college trained people, will always be perceived as arbitrary by some members of the population.

Third, the approach is always, in a sense, dethroning the arbitrary power of kings.89 Curtis sometimes defends civil service reform on the grounds that political parties have become a modern version of an executive with too much arbitrary power. This seems to strain things a bit. In fact, the executive branch has never been weaker than it was during the post-Civil War period, and the Republican party, though very powerful, was never so monolithic as a king. Yet only this model of power will fit with Curtis' understanding of freedom,

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88. Curtis, Oratations and Adresses, Vol. I, 316. This is also a major point in Prue and I.
89. Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in Power/Knowledge, Colin Gordon, trans.,(New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

which he always defines as the release from arbitrary authority, the asking of tradition and power for reasons. For instance in the case of parties, what he thinks is wrong is that there is an arbitrary aggrandizement of the party boss, and this results in demeaning those who hold political patronage positions. Curtis feels he only needs to read off a list of the gross inefficiencies and subservient behaviors of office holders to show that the system of spoils is too rotten to tolerate. Since the party boss can be given no natural justification, and since, therefore, others are obeying his arbitrary will, party workers are denied access to their own conscience and morality. Viewed from the point of view of the common good, nothing in the spoils system can allow for the voice of the whole to speak. The unexamined assumption here is that if we didn't have the king, if people were freed from the boss's arbitrary personal bondage, individuals would be able to hear the voice of a universal conscience within themselves. Curtis can't imagine that much of the party's power might be arbitrary, yet impersonal. Thus one is compelled to interpret all threats to morality and freedom in terms of arbitrary authority, and this blinds reformers to the power structures that don't fit this model, for instance, those they set up themselves, like tightening the discipline in the New York State University system, or the aspects of self-surveillance that must accompany a heavy emphasis on individual conscience. But primarily it blinded them to seeing how the reform did not so much abolish authorities as replace them with others.

Reiner Schurmann has coined the term "speculative custodial agencies," meaning mostly Kant's transcendental ego.90 These internal agencies act as fiduciaries of reason, once reason has deconstructed other authorities and exposes their irrationalities. Curtis' conscience and the self it requires are certainly candidates for Schurmann's term, but Curtis, in order to make the self extroverted, had to create agencies of government which have a very similar function. What the metaphor of the king did to Curtis was to leave him unable to comprehend that these agencies of self and government might also be barriers to freedom, might still act, to keep the metaphor of tutelage, to keep us immature.

D. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to view the rise of modern meritorious organizations from the point of view of an American Protestant problematic. In the first section I discussed what might be called God's withdrawing His hand from nature, such that His will could no longer be authoritatively read in detail from natural events. I also noted some early religious responses to this, like evangelism and natural theology. In the second and third sections I discussed two other responses; the Land Grant College system and the articulation of public duty by a civil service reformer. These responses are somewhat

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90. Reiner Schurmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 8-9.

different, yet both seemed to contain an internal organizational imperative. Jonathan B. Turner locates a source of virtue in the natural laws by which God wisely governs nature. To be enlightened about these laws is be opened to a liberality equal to that which classical education used to impart to the professional classes. But the only way to make such a relation to natural laws possible is to form large State university systems. George William Curtis sought in a rather different way to add a spiritual dimension to American public life. Unlike Turner, he celebrated the value of classical learning, but insisted, like Turner, that it not be used in the service of mere scholarship or by clerical functionaries as a way of keeping people subordinated to unquestioned dogmas. But Curtis locates the source of morality in a conscience which, when properly enlightened, can guarantee the highest principles against the hubbub of American democracy. The difference between the two responses resembles in many respects the difference between Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar and Kant's cosmopolitan man.

By mentioning the names of Rousseau and Kant I have tried to call attention to two versions of the doctrine of self-legislating freedom as it applied in America. Thoughtful Americans had come to believe, once the prose-of-the-world standpoint was abandoned, that freedom hinged on subjugation only to laws one gave oneself.

Turner's might be thought of as a physical solution, based upon simple concepts generally understood by all members of the community, and articulated in a day to day working ethos; agriculture. However, unlike in Rousseau's Social Contract, the necessary concepts were largely undiscovered and extreely conplex. In J.B. Turner's scheme, then, the university system functions as a second ethos, adjunct to the first. The second ethos is necessary largely because traditional agricultural knowledges could, by his day, sustain neither themselves nor American agriculture. Traditional agricultural knowledge is, in Turner's view, ignorance and ruin. Turner sought to maintain the element of simplicity and equality in the second ethos by designing his ideal college as an interdisciplinary hands-on and, though highly structured, at least loosely scheduled institution. Like Rousseau, Turner had no qualms about disciplining those whose behavior disrupted self-legislated freedom. Only hard working highly motivated people who shared the general vision were truly welcome. The second ethos, of course, never did do what Turner intended. Its scientific discoveries were too minute and too complicated and took too much extended concentration for undergraduates to easily uncover them in the course of a year or two, and its discourse quickly became too technical and cumbersome to form anything like a community of shared concepts.

From the perspective of this study, by turning to science at all Turner has already become more Kantian than Rousseauean. As soon as one admits that the natural scope of man's powers are insufficient to his

highest moral and physical needs and that knowledge and reason need to be cultivated, that "he is indebted for the use of his powers not merely to natural instinct but rather to the freedom by which he determines his scope," one has forsaken Rousseau and entered a Kantian world.91 Thus, regretfully, J.B. Turner loses his existential interest for this study, since he is unable to either maintain his standpoint or hold together its tensions.

The analogy between G. W. Curtis and Immanuel Kant is meant to highlight the doctrine of self-legislative freedom in its intelligible, as opposed to physical, form. The advantage of this version is that it needn't give itself a specific place, any specific set of circumstances, nor provide any specific ethos. In a highly integrated extended commercial republic, this version needn't become very specific about how one ought to live and can even appeal to people with very diverse ways of life. In an intelligible version of self-legislated freedom much of J. B. Turner's discipline can be relaxed.

The doctrine of intelligible freedom insists that people are endowed with and enjoy "active and spontaneous faculties which are not reducible to the the dictates of sensuousness. We have interests and needs as understanding and reasoning beings which often directly

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91. George Armstrong Kelly, Idealism, Politics, and History, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 95.

contradict our interests as sensuous animalistic beings.92 All other versions of freedom--Rousseauean, traditionalist, utilitarian and Liberal--tend to subordinate these faculties and interests to the needs of the whole, but in doing so wind up defeating precisely the notion of freedom they claim to celebrate. This is because true freedom cannot be the result of natural causal necessity, whether that be family, tradition, organism, or sensuous desire. To be subject to natural causality is to be thinglike. Every natural action is a reaction to a prior action. Thus nothing in nature can be said to be truly spontaneous. A free being cannot be one subject to such things. Thus literally no thing can be prior to a free action as its cause. Thus, the intelligible formulation of self-legislating freedom claims that it is only to the extent that we clearly mark ourselves off from things that we can be free. Respect people; that is, don't use them as elements in a causal chain. All other versions of freedom wind up violating this precept.

This implies that people must become the sort of beings who can hear for themselves the voices of reason and understanding. Only such people could ever hope to choose to bring themselves, one at a time, together to form the community of intelligible freedom, the community in which everyone obeys the laws they have made for themselves. This being is properly called a subject, and certainly Curtis can be seen

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92. Gilles Deleuze, Kant's Critical Philosophy, Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, trans. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 30-31.

constantly exhorting people, as had Emerson before him, to achieve a more and more refined subjectivity.

It is easy to see how such a disembodied stance might lead one to a form of disengaged politics, that of the spectator. Curtis strove to overcome this problem through educating public opinion and through creating organizations. The Civil Service Commission, however, seems to be an essentially negative institution, charged with clearing away social structures like party patronage which block subjectivity. In Weber's terms, Curtis opposes patriarchical institutions but accepts, with little reflection, bureaucratic institutions, seeing clearly the problems of personal domination, but seeing not at all those of impersonal domination.

If the new institutions, the Civil Service Commission or the Department of Agriculture, say, are understood as attempts to establish self-legislated freedom, then the ground of that freedom will need to reside in the institutions' ability to organize an arena of intelligible freedom, a site where an intelligible community could, if it did ever in fact come to exist, flourish. In practical terms this means that the institution must not be self-defeating, a test which the spoils system could never have passed. Nor would it build personal empires or establish natural hierarchies, since these violate the community's requirement for equality and the personal voice of reason present in each member, that is, the requirement that no member be treated merely

as means. This would mean that the member could subordinate him or herself to the organization and remain free, provided he or she believed in the organization's goals and procedures, and that they are not self-defeating, and that it allocates work on the basis of rationally tested and universally acceptable standards of merit. This is clearly a tall order and I will have to return to it in Chapter II.

Both Turner and Curtis, despite their personal uniqueness and creativity, succeeded in creating organizational solutions which are unlikely to produce men such as themselves. It therefore is largely irrelevant whether they were personally elitist, or ethical, or self-interested. We can also say that modern organizations are in large part attempts to fill a vacancy left in our spiritual lives by the withdrawal of God's providence from our immediate lives. They insure behavior, an arena of action, and a link with goodness which would be unavailable otherwise. That organizations cannot fulfill the terms of this promise will be the subject of much of the rest of this dissertation. But for now we ought to say that modern organizations grow out of our most worthy aspirations and sentiments; freedom, dignity, love, and spirituality.

Any great object we undertake today will have to be done as Curtis says, "in combination," and also without final reference to any recognized authority. I have tried to show that his consequence follows from a history of religious concern over the disenchantment of nature.

This history involved the play of the problem of theodicy with the problem of freedom. For the Americans in this chapter, one could not be free unless one were also good. These two aspirations--to be both free and good--working in tandum and in tension, led through a long series of strategies, but finally leave us in the following situation. We have laudable aspirations, and these aspirations lead us to found and join parties, interest groups, universities, and other complex modern organizations. The problem, then, becomes how to maintain freedom within a complex and interdependent life.

Both Turner and Curtis failed to appreciate that it isn't only private and personally based motives which present this problem; it isn't just a problem with utilitarianism. It is also a problem in even the most meritorious government agencies and even the most open modern universities. Thus we can learn a great deal from Turner's critique of classical education and his critiques of the older American relation to the land. These critiques should alert us to the fact that some options of the past, say an Aristotelean ethical relation to the world, are probably closed to us. And we can learn much from Curtis' condemnations of party spirit, and be alerted to why it is that such recurring attempts to revitalize American spirituality as evangelism, commercialism, and discipline will never satisfy the best aspirations of Americans for freedom. But we do not have to conclude that the problems they uncovered are solved in their own solutions.

CHAPTER II

IMMANUEL KANT: FREEDOM AND THE TELEOLOGY OF SELF-ASSERTION

A. Abstract Interdependence and the Modern Situation

The purpose of this chapter is to try to make some headway for a critique of organizational freedom. I will explore, through the works of Immanuel Kant, some of the salient features of such a freedom: why we need it, what it expects of those who enjoy it, and, finally, its limits and failings.

There is a difficulty about the relation between a philosopher's works and daily life. Clearly I wish to claim that Kant's philosophy is not irrelevant to modern organizational life, yet I do not believe that his philosophy is the cause of those organizations within which the philosophy is practiced. We should not blame Kant for actual institutions or governments. In fact I will assume the opposite; Kant found himself in a world where freedom as material independence was impossible, and articulated instead a philosophy of freedom for extremely dependent people. I will refer to this condition as radical interdependence.

Kant himself had achieved his eminent position in German philosophy through perseverance and hard work, and it should not surprise anyone that merit was a very dear concept for him. He also spent his life working as a professional philosopher in a large university, he often ate lunch with officers who served in one of Europe's largest and most disciplined armies, he corresponded with churchmen in hierarchically organized churches, and they all lived under the bureaucratic governing institutions of the Prussian state. And Kant never doubted that he was a relatively free man.

Kant's moral and political philosophies presuppose a radical interdependence, not merely among members of the same community, but also among regions, peoples, and nations. The natural world is also characterized by minute interdependencies, all governed by the natural laws of mutual attraction and repulsion, and yet somehow ingeniously organized so that Eskimos might actually burn firewood which had been carried by the Gulf Stream all the way from the interior jungles of the Amazon.

Communities of people had become commercial unions where "each member...has constant relations with all the others." Kant refers to this as a community of reciprocal action1, which works more like the natural realm of attraction and repulsion than like any traditional

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1. Immanuel Kant, Metaphysic of Morals, No. 62, in Hans Reiss, editor, Kant's Political Writings, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 172.

system of natural law. The difference between these two would be in the continuous, even, and global nature of the reciprocity in the first, and the more discontinuous and local character of the obligations and privileges in the latter. Kant wrote, then, against a background of scientific and social interdependence. In a world where no one is self-sufficient--no one; no individual, no family, no city, no nation--there is a problem about freedom.

Friedrich Hayek has put the problem this way.2 In John Locke's world, producers are no longer self-sufficient since they are largely governed by markets, yet they are still in principle free because no one tells them what to produce. One chooses how to spend one's own days. Society comes along only after the fact to judge whether the product is socially useful or not. Thus he or she is rewarded or ignored, but never told beforehand what to do, and socially useful people are still in principle free. But this model presupposes independent producers. What happens if one is working as, say, a file room manager in a large cookie-making corporation?

It is impossible, first of all, to objectively ascertain whether and how much any one person in the corporation has contributed to the cookie. This means that there is no direct confrontation between our manager and the market, and the decision about whether the manager's

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2. Friedrich A. Hayek "Equality, Value, and Merit" in Michael J. Sandel, editor, Liberalism and its Critics, (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 80-99.

work is useful or not is decided by other managers. These managers may not be using social criteria, but rather corporate or even departmental and personal goals and agendas to decide what will be done, how valuable it is, and how it will be rewarded. Therefore, if freedom is thought to require independence, socially useful people in large organizations are in principle unfree.

For Hayek this is really no problem so long as different organizations are significantly different and people are sufficiently free to change jobs and choose among them. Perhaps to be, like Hayek, a happy conservative Kantian today one would need to convince oneself that not all microchip companies are the same, and perhaps they arn't. But it seems to me that Immanuel Kant takes a more courageous look at the problem. Kant does not a assume that society is massively mobile, so, even though it is true that the job-search has become a crucial institution and the site of much political debate, Kant allows us to focus more on the scenario of someone stuck in a tolerable but less than compelling position.

To be free in modern life, Kant believes, takes a great deal of cultivation. Cultivation must be aimed at creating a subject, and freedom becomes the subjective act of choosing. One chooses to endorse the ends and goals of other subjects, thus people freely unite in common endeavors. This is the principle of love, the principle of social attraction. It sets up a world of freely chosen interdependencies;

those who one loves, whose projects one has freely accepted, are obligated to show gratitude, that is, respect. Respect is the principle of distance. It is the free act of a self-limitation. I limit my own frontiers by respecting the autonomy and freedom of another subject, and allow the other to be an entity for itself. Love integrates; respect individuates.3 Love is a freely chosen subordination, while respect is a freely chosen check upon megalomania. What keeps this from being simply the endorsement of one's chains is that one chooses in light of an overarching moral principle. This principle turns out to be teleological. One endorses the end toward which modern life is heading, and believes one's voluntary involvements in organizations, one's efforts at self-development, and one's commitment to a vocation all enhance and further progress towards this end. Further, in order to better comprehend this end, one requires a certain amount of leisure, freedom of thought, and a minimum of affluence. Throughout Kant's works, actions can be at times legitimately coerced, but minds and intentions must be left completely free. This is so that the system of interdependencies can incorporate a mechanism for self-criticism, to prevent its becoming a simply dead routine. One way to sum all this up would be to say that our organizations would have to be voluntary, as opposed to instrumentally rational, or, in Kant's famous phrasing,

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3. Immanuel Kant, Metaphysic of Morals, Part II, Elements of Ethics, Part 2, Nos. 23-25, in James Ellington, trans., The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue, (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1964), 112-14.

people would never be treated merely as means, but as ends in themselves.

This is a rather long list and one might be justifiably skeptical of our being able ever to achieve it. Yet all of its elements appear in the self-understandings of people we all meet all the time. Rather than ask whether these conditions are ever objectively met, I will treat this list as a text to be interpreted. Most ordinary men and women today work in large organizations: academic, governmental, corporate, or collectivist. Whether they cling to items in the list because these ward off anxiety or because they really do choose their situations, either way, people today rightfully guard their freedom, and it is my purpose here to further their aspirations. This critique of organizational freedom is meant, then, to light up, as it were, from the inside, this formula for freedom, to see what else it commits us to. Some of these unseen commitments, I believe, are self-defeating for the aspiration of freedom, and yet they are implied by it too. The purpose for exposing these other commitments is to ask whether and to what extent they might be revised, loosened up, or even, perhaps, acknowledged as necessary, though unwelcome and transient, evils.

1. The Other Kantian Ways

I find over and over how features of the modern age seem pre-set in advance by Immanuel Kant. In Nietzsche, for instance, it seems to me

that the doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same is nothing less than a way of taking up Kant on a dare which he often hurls out of his later works. In the Critique of Judgement Kant puts it this way:

> The value of life for us, measured simply by what we enjoy (by the natural end of the sum of all our inclinations, that is by happiness), is easy to decide. It is less than nothing. For who would enter life afresh under the same conditions?4

Or again, when Michel Foucault discovers the self as an artificial construction created out of a multiplicity of drives, urges, impositions and thought, he is perhaps taking a path which Kant, in the Critique of Pure Reason, often noted, but refused to consider.5 In fact all that stands between Foucault's multiplicity and Kant's transcendental unity of apperception is universal reason. Neither a unified self nor a unified field of objects are ever said by Kant to be directly known. The unity of experience itself is, along with the self and its objects, an imposition upon material which may or may not resemble our knowledge, our concepts, or our aspirations as free beings. Kant, of course, claims we act as Reason's agents when we do this, but were we to become unconvinced of this claim while keeping the rest of his philosophy, the result would look very much like Foucault's multiplicity. Kant himself often points this out, and usually dismisses it with the argument that we can not coherently think of ourselves other than as coherent

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4. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part II, No. 22, James Creed Meredith, trans., (Oxford: Oxford University Press , 1986), 97.
5. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith, trans., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), B131-B136.

experiencing rational beings and that neither can we think of nature as being other than a systematic unity available for our scientific enquiries. But he always insists that for all we know things in themselves could be completely otherwise.

This list could go on. Martin Heidegger discovers that Kant, despite himself perhaps, owes his best insights to an essentially phenomenological, rather than his avowed epistemological, mode of enquiry.6 Certainly few phenomenologists have penetrated deeper into our experiences than did Kant in the first critique.

I have selected these three examples, first of all, because I intend to follow them somewhat. Patrick Riley has recently written that in the face of Kant's later political writings no rigid distinction between deontology and teleology ought to be attributed to Kant.7 I have already taken this one step further by assuming that deontology is a necessary fiction for people living in a situation of radical interdependence. A second reason to note these three examples is that they allow us to see the curious way in which modern thinkers have so often come back to Kant. They come back by the other road, the other Kantian way, the one he indicated but did not pursue. In so honest a

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6. Martin Heidegger, What is a Thing?, Barton and Deutsch, trans., (Latham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985).
7. Patrick Riley, "Autonomy and Teleology in Kant" review essay, The Review of Politics, 50, (Summer 1988): 490-95.

thinker's books we should expect to find the excluded thoughts, the other conceptions and the proscribed words all clearly marked.

2. The Death of Abel

I will begin by exploring one of Kant's later occasional pieces, "The Speculative Beginning of Human History," read here as a sort of geneology of the modern need for organizations. As in all his late works, Kant's piece on history gives a fleshed out discussion of many important parts and premises in the earlier critiques. In the earlier critical philosophy these later discussions of history, or religion, or Enlightenment, or progress are mentioned as presuppositions. Likewise, everything in these essays presupposes the conclusions of the earlier critiques.

Reason is a great joker. It gives us science, but leads us astray also into metaphysical presumption. It is thus the precondition for both scientism and pseudo-mysticism. It makes us free, but in doing so makes us anxious and, together with imagination, renders us slaves to acquisitiveness and greed. It destroys the innocence of natural man, but only to render him guilty. It destroys paradise, but makes us free by making us work. It is the fall of man and the hope of salvation. As in Rousseau it intensifies sexual desire, and thus renders love and marriage possible, but at the same time, introduces infidelity into human relations. Reason allows one to plan for the future and render

life more predictable, yet it only does so by making one homeless and insecure, splendidly miserable. Reason displaces instinct and converts its natural longings into voluptuousness, then creates the realm of refusing the voluptuous impulses it has created.

> Refusal was the feat whereby man passed over from mere sensual to idealistic attractions, from mere animal desires eventually to love.8

Since instinct is largely silenced, it might be worth mentioning that instinct is "that voice of God that all animals obey," which permitted natural man, Adam perhaps, "to use several things for nourishment, but forbade others." Thus when "reason soon began to stir and sought by means of comparing foods..." to eventually "cook up desires for things for which there is not only no natural urge, but even an urge to avoid,"9 we not only became voluptuous, we lost the only direct voice with which God speaks on earth. Rational beings cannot be at home in the world the way sheep and cows can, and those who seek, once they have surveyed the "glistening misery" which our reason builds around us, to return to some state of natural equilibrium are simply being nihilistic.10

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8 Immanuel Kant "The Speculative Beginnings of Human History," in Ted Humphrey, trans., Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 52.
9. Ibid., 50-51.
10. Ibid., 59.

Man has made himself bad despite a good creator and creation. This remaking of ourselves was a bold but foreboding act of self-assertion in which man made himself unworthy of his rightful place in the creation as the designated ruler of the earth, but also rendered himself perpetually discontented, and thus incapable of living "in bovine contentment and slavish servitude." Thus unworthy and discontented, man knows himself as neither master nor servant. Men know they are too corrupt to command. In Kant this always means they know they should bring about a state of affairs in which the cultural world, which men build in place of their instinctual one, would reflect and make natural our highest moral aspirations. But because we are unworthy, we cannot trust one another enough to create such a world. The unworthiness of individuals is our daily experience, and the unworthiness of states is the experience of every war.

Yet if in the name of natural existence we abandoned the aspiration to rule our world, if we tried to recreate the bliss of Haiti or Romanticism or the polis now, that would be, in Nietzsche's phrase, to try to be stones in a great edifice. Kant says we could not be happy natives in Haiti, nor really even happy subjects in a modern state. Thus Reason has placed us in an existential bind. In terms of Aristotle's well known phrase, modern people can neither rule nor be ruled. We cannot rule because we are limited by the difference between our moral aspirations and our moral capacities. We are unable to be

ruled because we are unable to confine our aspirations, desires, and imaginings within the limits which civic virtue would require.

I would also add, in light of Kant's imperative never to treat people as means, since such an imperative makes sense only in a world in which treating people as means is incredibly tempting, that anyone today practicing civic virtue, say an American steelworker who accepts a pay cut from $16 to $9 an hour because he understands the country needs to be more competitive in international markets and because he believes union demands since 1945 have hurt the U.S. economy as a whole; such a person will simply be used. Few of us today could accept such a pay cut without feeling degraded. In a realist world one must either artificially keep oneself in "bovine contentment," or defensively refuse to practice civic virtue. Either way, we prove ourselves unworthy of our best aspirations, whether of ruling or being ruled.

In Kant's myth of human beginnings, when reason began to displace instinct, the first human development was the nomad. The nomad led a simple life; he required only mobile families to sustain himself. He was not permanent, required no absolute property rights, and therefore no systematic exclusions or enclosures. He was rough, but relatively self-sufficient. However he was already a reasoning being who wanted more than mere survival. Some nomads, perhaps some of the women or younger brothers, began to practice agriculture.

Agriculture requires more elaborate cultural and social systems. Farmers must enclose land, demand water rights, and develop economies of exchange. They require more security since their holdings are more vulnerable. Villages arose and the nomad became a problem. The nomad and the farmer disagreed completely over justice and property. In fact, the farmer formed villages in order to "remove himself as far as possible from those who followed the herding life (Gen. 4:16)" They did this "in order to protect their property against wild hunters or hordes of wandering herdsmen."11 It is the agriculturalists, says Kant, who developed culture, art, industriousness, civil constitutions and administrated justice.

> From this first crude structure, all human arts, of which sociality and civil security are the most worthwhile, could gradually develop, the human race could multiply and from some central point, like a beehive, already educated colonists could be sent everywhere. Inequality among men--that source of so many evils, but also of everything good--also began during this period and increased later on.12

But to backtrack a little, we need to remember that Kant's task here is an interpretation of Genesis. The farmer and the herdsman are none other than Cain and Abel. Kant says:

> ...[T]he herdsman...hates property ownership because it limits his freedom to pasture [his herds]. The farmer might seem to have envied the herdsman as being more blessed by heaven (Gen 4:4), while in fact the herdsman annoyed the farmer enormously as long as he remained in the neighborhood, for grazing cattle do not spare the farmer's crops....(Because these incidents could not be

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11. Ibid., 56.
12. Ibid., 56-57.

altogether stopped) it was probably the farmer who first used force against such invasions, invasions that the herdsman did not regard as forbidden.13

Finally the farmer separates, removes himself, from those who follow the herding life. After a long time, the herdsman succumbs to the sensuous allurements of the village and the nomads are finally completely assimilated.

But the Bible uses stronger imagery. Cain murdered Abel, and Kant, while seeking to rationalize the passage, actually illuminates some of its dreadful implications, since we are the heirs, not of Abel, but of Cain, the agriculturalist who slew his brother the herdsman. Kant's myth of our beginnings only barely conceals a collective murder, and one based in resentment. Abel's offering had seemed more acceptable to God. Again Kant offers a clue. The nomads "acknowledged God alone as their ruler" while the farmers and villagers recognized "a man (government) as their ruler (Gen 6:4)" In the footnote Kant explains that since nomads have no fixed property to protect, families are free to leave whenever they feel dissatisfied. It is impossible to impose a strong ruler over such people. We can imagine nomads, then, as less diffident, less circumspect, and more self-confident than the villagers14 who had to care more for their neighbor's good opinion of

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13. Ibid., 55-56.
14. Kant mentions this attitude of savage superiority rather often. In Part I of the Metaphysic of Morals, at No. 53, he puts it this way: "...citizens will not intermix with any neighbouring people who live in a state of nature, but will consider them ignoble, even though such savages for their own part may regard themselves as superior on account

themselves and who had to discipline themselves to good manners. Besides, the herdsman would have had no respect for how hard the farmer had worked. When a nomad did have to work, had acted as though he were being punished for something. In fact, both Kant and the Bible refer to agricultural work as punishment, and the nomad's manner probably constantly reminded the farmer that he lived a life of adversity. The nomads would certainly have scoffed at such a heavy life. But the farmers knew that they were more complex, more sophisticated, more cultured, more mannerly, more developed, and less barbaric than the nomads. How could these savages lead such charmed lives? How could they presume so much? How could they enjoy the favor of God?

Clearly Kant identifies with Cain more than with Abel. To understand this we must remember that Abel is a younger brother, and thus Cain is not overthrowing traditional or patriarchical authority as in, say, Freud, though herding is in some sense older and prior to agriculture. On a developmental scale, herding is more childish and agriculture more adult. Thus, there is a teleology at work, and in terms of teleology Cain must supersede Abel, the older must replace the younger. Thus, even though the parents may have been happy herdsmen, by the time the children approach adulthood, the situation may have changed. If the first agriculturalists were simply herdsmen who allowed their reason to expand their desires, and if herdsmen are not simply

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of the lawless freedom they have chosen." In Reiss, Kant's Political Writings, 164.

instinctual beings, then the happy innocence of the herdsmen, who now know about and probably trade with the villagers, might be more feigned and studied than it was for the parents. Thus the herdsmen might not be really so separate and superior as they pretend, and the problem about the herds eating the farmer's crops begins to resemble the modern problem of the economic free rider. In the parent's world of nomadic independence, herding could plausibly maintain itself as a form of happy innocence taking its direction only from the immediate voice of God in nature. In the interdependent world of the children, however, the claim to hear only the direct voice of God in nature has become indistinguishable from a license to plunder. Viewed from the nomad's side, innocence might have become unhappy innocence due to the anxiety created by the agriculturalist's prohibitions; prohibitions which the nomad indeed could not recognize as legitimate or even understand. But because he knew he did not understand something, the thought would fester and make him anxious.15 Cain's hard and patient work must somehow come to be respected because the situation has changed.

Kant's myth probably tells us more about eighteenth Century Europe than about our earliest ancestors, but the point is that Kant's prehistory begins self-consciously with murder, force, exclusion, and

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15. Soren Keirkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, Reidar Thomte and Albert Anderson, trans., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 41-46. This connection was pointed out to me by Peter Fenves of the University of Massachusetts Comparative Literature Department. For a slightly different account see Charles Taylor, "Rationality," Philosophical Papers Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

assimilation of the nomads. And the nomads were closer and more pleasing to God than we are. At the least we can say that the human race, at least in Europe, has chosen for itself ways of life and thought which exclude the direct voice of God, and even exclude those ways of life in which it might plausibly be heard. But this particular exclusion is not over and done with. The Bible mentions that Cain bore a mark by which everyone knew he had murdered his brother, the herdsman. This mark is open to many different interpretations, but it certainly indicates that Abel's death is some sort of scandal. It constitutes an indigestible event in Cain's constitution, a part of his identity which he can neither repudiate nor accept. Yet it is also what protects Cain. He is now, because of his deed, alienated from the soil, and is thus a wanderer whom others might kill. He thus becomes the founder of a city, neither nomad nor agrigulturalist any longer, but a sort of sedentary wanderer.

In Kant's version the mark is absent, but in its place we find government. Government acts as a voice of Abel reminding people that we are unworthy and corrupt. It does this by reminding us that we are the sort of people who require government to secure our property and voluptuousness. We require an impartial system of justice, and our world, the one we prefer to live in, is not a very nice place. In this way Kant enlists Abel's voice, the Other's scoffing voice, in the very project by which Abel was excluded. The victim becomes the accomplice in his own victimization, but in such a way that he will need to be

continually remurdered, since he continually incites in us that which needs controlling.

Agriculturalists founded villages and erected governments because they feared the nomads. One finds this event mentioned in almost marginal remarks in virtually all of Kant's books. I am suggesting we no longer read past these references as though they were lapses in an otherwise brilliant philosophical exposition. The progress which Kant invisions in human affairs is contingent upon this original act of withdrawal, exclusion, murder, and assimilation. Nor is there any easy return to a happier innocence. For better or for worse we have created ourselves as unworthy and discontented. If there is no way to limit desires anymore, and therefore no easy way to promote happiness, then perhaps there is hope in the other direction, that of unleashing desire and self-assertion. Unhappiness might be a spur to progress, and progress might be the route to a new more intelligible and self-conscious form of innocence.

3. Teleology

To call the defeat of Abel by Cain progress is not something justified by our merely observing the facts in the case. It comes rather from the imposition of a teleology. To understand this teleology better I will be discussing the Critique of Teleological Judgement.16

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16. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part II.

What teleology asserts here is that what is contrary to nature; e.g., murder and tillage of the soil, may still be redeemable since these things allow us to glimpse in their result an order beyond the merely physical, a more purposive order where "nothing is in vain, without an end, or ascribed to a blind mechanism of nature."17 The idea that things might have no purpose is itself a cultivated notion, presupposing that one's desires already are not strictly instinctual. Yet Kant believes that nature pushes human beings towards cultivation. The agriculturalist asserts against a world that is possibly in vain that:

> An organized being possesses inherent formative power, and such, moreover, as it can impart to material devoid of it--material which it organizes. This, therefore, is a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained by the capacity of movement alone, that is to say, by mechanism."18

Teleology is a "secret feeling of the existence of something lying beyond."19 People require this once their most unnatural whims cut them off from nature, first, say, as savages adorning themselves foolishly with feathers and earthen paint, but more importantly as farmers providing for themselves rationally by riding horses or plowing with pigs, asses, and oxen.20 Kant brings up these examples to show that teleology does not arise with just any whole. Natural man lives in a whole but doesn't know it could be otherwise. The kind of whole that

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17. Ibid., 24. Also, for an allusion to nature's encouraging Abel to become more like Cain, see 29
18. Ibid., 22.
19. Ibid., 11.
20. Ibid., 15. Again note the savage and foolish Abel against the rational and hard-working Cain.

calls for teleology is an organized whole, that is, a system which though it functions, still could in principle have been otherwise. People in societies bring material into relations in ways that nature by itself would never bring about, and in ways answering merely to their own cultivated desires and aspirations. One can, and perhaps must, transfer this form of human organization, by analogy, to the entirety of the world.

> ...if we assume that it is intended that men should live on earth then at least, those means by which they could not exist as animals, and even, on however low a plane, as rational animals, must also not be absent. But in that case, those natural things that are indispensable for such existence must equally be regarded as ends of nature.21

This should not be taken to imply that people through teleology come to find their natural niche in the world. If we consider an unlikely alliance like that between Laplanders and their reindeer, or the use of Brazilian firewood by Eskimos, this does not mean that Lapland or the Arctic can be assumed to be the natural and proper homes in the world for these people. Rather, Kant insists that only war could have displaced people to such inhospitable regions.22 Thus, their living there is a result of the human rebellion against the natural state, and their ability to survive there is a result of the human ability to adapt nature to human ends. While nature takes a hand in this--nature especially provides us with the ability to open-endedly

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21. Ibid.
22. Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace" in Reiss, 110.

have ends, without specifying them in detail, as with sheep--it is not a natural teleology in the way that, say, Aristotle's is. Rather, it is a teleology of self-assertion.

The schema for this teleology runs as follows.23 First come the subjective ends of individuals, the pursuit of happiness. These naturally push people to eventually make a social contract. Thus, Kant calls the next group of ends the objective ends of nature. They include culture, discipline, law, and administration. Next come the objective ends of subjects, which are identical with the end of creation itself. This is represented already in the second stage as the aspiration to work towards the summum bonum, the good of the whole world, where subjective and objective ends will harmonize. There may be a forth stage, which will be outside the scope of this discussion, where Reason and Spirituality are finally found to have the same objective ends.24

It is worth noting that, for Kant, all teleologies hitherto have tried to found themselves in the second stage. That is, they have tried to discover in social discipline the fulfillment of the search for happiness and have not seen that the second stage is actually only one stage in a progression of judgments. Kant's criticisms of this view

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23. This schema is distilled from the first one hundred pages of Kant's Critique of Teleological Judgement.
24. Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, T. M. Green and Hoyt H. Hudson, trans., (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1960).

will be discussed in detail below, but first I need to discuss the characteristic of self-assertion in Kant's philosophy.

B. Self-Assertion and the Critique of Happiness

1. Modern versus Natural Teleology

In Chapter I, I explored in a preliminary and groping way the relation between freedom and organization. I did this by looking at the history of a religious problematic, the disenchantment of the physical world, and by noticing how various pressures in that problematic led two men to articulate organizational responses to it. Immanuel Kant was also concerned with the religious problematic.25 In fact, the logic of all Kant's mature works typically begins with the premise that nature does not disclose to us any immediate truths--not even about desires and pleasures--nor can it bear witness to the essence of God. Nature answers truthfully only those questions with which humans interrogate it.

> [Galileo, Torricelli, and Stahl]...learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own, and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining....Reason must approach nature in order to be taught by it. It must not do

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25. For an account of this theme in Kant's earlier work see Hans Saner, Kant's Political Thought, E. B. Ashton, trans., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 7-57; Ernst Cassirer, Kant's Life and Thought, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 58-65.

> so, however, in the character of a pupil who listens to everything that the teacher chooses to say, but of an appointed judge who compels the witness to answer questions which he has himself formulated.26

It is clear that Kant's is a philosophy of self-assertion. In a world in which the direct voice of God cannot be read authoritatively from nature, human endeavors must be seen as originating with human goals and aspirations rather than as natural instructions. This basic premise has radical implications not only for physics, but for morals, religion, and politics as well. It goes along with Kant's doctrine that things-in-themselves are unknowable by us, and that there can therefore be no naturally valid claims to knowledge about how to act, how to worship, or how to arrange human affairs. But it also follows that desires, including pleasures, can have no privileged status either. The nature of God and of ultimate truths are beyond our conceptual understanding or even our realm of experience.27 That nature has lost its status as a teacher and now only assumes significance as a witness should alert us that Kant's faith cannot resemble that of Rousseau's Savayard Priest, nor can his ethics resemble either Aristotle's or Bentham's.

Kant finds it impossible to think of revealed religion, or any other version of Christianity based on historical evidence, as anything but a dogmatic pseudo-service of God.28 The authority of tradition,

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26. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Bxiii, 20
27. Critique of Pure Reason, A613/B641, 513.
28. Immanuel Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, 159-73.

family, estate, or church are at their best merely self-imposed immaturity. Any version of ethics based on the principle of happiness is antithetical to either freedom or religion because it completely subsumes people under the burdens of a cosmos of causal mechanism.29 But there is a further reason why happiness can't be the ground of morality. The maxims of happiness are completely contingent upon the situation and what one desires or requires from it. But situations are unstable. Thus maxims of happiness are always too narrow to provide universally valid rules for anyone anywhere, and this, in turn, leads human beings to deny an experience, which Kant believes we all in fact already have, of our own highest aspiration; namely, "the revelation of an intelligible world through realization of the otherwise transcendent concept of freedom."30

To help understand the nature of Kant's break with earlier thinkers one might compare Thomas Aquinas' notion of place with Kant's notion of space. In Aquinas the political problem often seems to come down to putting everything in its proper place. One can also read Aristotle or Shakespeare in terms of finding, discovering, rediscovering, or realizing a proper order of places. In Kant there likewise is a beautiful order to be realized, and a perpetual progress towards it, but now things no longer have places, only positions. These positions are not absolute states of being (which is why existence

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29. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, Lewis White Beck, trans., (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985), 107-08.
30. Ibid., 97.

cannot be a real predicate). For instance, pleasure is not a state pure and simple, but the result of Newtonian clashes of forces. If anything stays in a place it is because a general economy of forces hold it there. This kind of place, where all places are essentially the same, is better thought of as space, a homogeneous and general placelessness. Rather than an ordering or a hierarchy of places, one organizes things within the general economy of space. In fact it is a general condition for any experience whatsoever.

Thus in politics one doesn't seek to restore things to their places, but rather aims at rational progress over time. For Kant, to consult the natural order is not to discover natural right, but to subject oneself to natural causality, that is, to surrender one's ends to forces beyond one's control.31 Thus it seems a rather lame criticism of Kant to compare his ethics to, say, Aristotle's, discover that Aristotle's ethics is embedded in richly varied found ways of people's being together while Kant's is based upon a cold and abstract duty, and from there conclude that Kant misses the rich fabric of life, while Aristotle captures it, and, finally, opt for an Aristotelian ethics in modernity.32 Such criticism ignores the ways in which Aristotle's ethics and politics are bound up in the self-sufficiency of the polis,

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31. Hans Saner, Kant's Political Thought, 56; Hans Blumenberg, The Legitimacy of the Modern Age, Robert M. Wallace, trans., (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 197.
32. Philip H. Jos, Polity 21, (Winter 1988) 321-43.

Aristotle's physics, and especially Greek aesthetics.33 Kant is a compelling figure because he tried to articulate a conception of freedom in a thoroughly disenchanted nature for people whose history had been crossed by Christianity, and whose political lives could not be based in any form of self-sufficiency. The situation, here, is far from beneficent

If nature is disenchanted it makes a great deal of sense to articulate a morality based on respect, and to say that "Respect always applies to persons, never to things." In a disenchanted nature, things receive no respect. They are resources available for use and mastery. Thus in a disenchanted nature human life, as a part of nature, becomes another instrument for use unless humans can be made somehow special, in this case, objects of respect.

Probably Kant's most complete discussion of these issues comes in the Critique of Teleological Judgement.34 There, in his critique of Spinoza, Kant argues that nature, by itself, cannot render any viable conception of an intelligent purpose, that is, no teleology.

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33. For the relation of Aristotle's virtues to his science, see Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 139. MacIntyre refers to Aristotle's "metaphysical biology." For the relation of the virtues to aesthetics see Soren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, 16-17; compare with Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, Bk IV, Ch. 3, especially at 1125a where the great-souled man embodies the virtues of masculine perfection, beauty, and goodness.
34. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgement, Part II.

2. Spinoza and Physico-Teleology

Spinoza had argued that one could come to see that matter and mind were two aspects of one basic Substance, which we justifiably call God. Thus, to answer the question; why is everything just the way it is and no other way; what is the purpose of our being on earth?, Spinoza replies that it is because it is all part of a cosmic unity. Our conceptions, especially our moral conceptions, apply to the material world because both mind and matter belong to the unity of one Substance. We are here to work out the various ways of God's being, to participate in that, and to find meaning in it.

The problem with Spinoza's world of substrate and accident is that it contains no contingency. The seeming design of the world turns out to be really nothing but the Supreme Cause's unfolding of itself. Such a Being doesn't so much cause the world as sustain it. If final causes are analogous to a landlord causing a house to be built to realize the idea of rent, where rent is the determining ideal condition for building the house, then the appropriate analogy for Spinoza's scheme of Substance and its accidents would be an athlete and her perspiration. Perspiring is just a by-product of exercise. It is foolish to ask why she bothers to produce it, it is just in the nature of her constitution to do so. Kant's first criticism of Spinoza, then, is that the Supreme Substance might be very powerful, but needn't be very smart, very moral,

or, finally, even omnipotent, since for all we can know there could be something more powerful than even the Supreme cause of the world.35

Kant's second criticism is that the proof doesn't give us what we need, a designer of the world. In the modern age, when we ask teleologically why things fit together into a systematic whole, we assume several things. For instance, things do not have places, but are held by mechanical forces at certain coordinates in space. Things possess a radical contingency. They might have wound up in other configurations, both internally and spatially; that is, they are organized. The question of teleology would arise for us out of the world of causality and contingency, rather than out of places and hierarchy. In a world of places and hierarchy it is reassuring to articulate a teleology of substance and accident. God is the solid ground we walk upon, the guarantee of a rightly ordered cosmos, the beneficent provider, and that which enables one to participate in a life of integration with God, nature, and community. But for us, the world which generates the teleological question is not a whole in which we need to account for diversity, but rather a multiplicity that just happens to be organized in a certain way. In a world of contingency and mechanical causality, to reply to the question concerning ultimate purposes with the theory of substance and accidents is not reassuring at

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35. On the limitations of God's omnipotence by the material He must be presumed to shape in Kant's early work see Ernst Cassirer, Kant's Life and Thought, 59-60.

all, because it makes one the subject of a blind necessity, like any other animal.

A contingent, yet still moral, world would need to be held together not by a substance, but by a design. Design is the horizon against which a contingent world can even be contingent. Dumb matter could have been coordinated or not coordinated in infinite number of other ways. There is nothing even in the incredible coordinating of an oak tree that suggests any necessity of its organization, yet it brings together an array of disparate materials into a thriving successful organism. How did all those materials know to go combine themselves into an oak tree? Our conceptual commitment to efficient causality fails us here.

It is possible to draw an analogy to a construction project. The steel, the glass, the clay in the bricks all need not be together in a building, and they certainly could not have put themselves together that way, yet there they are. They are together because someone with a design in mind called for them to be placed there in just such a relation to one another. If we ask again why the designer did this, the next reply might be that she did so in order to gain rent money from the building's office spaces. Thus an idea, rent, works as a final cause, that which is at once the cause and the effect of the placement of the building materials in the building. Something analogous to rent is what moderns are looking for when they ask the teleological question.

Whatever this final cause turns out to be, the God which brings it about in a contingent world must be, first, a cause, and, second, an intelligence. An underlying substance doesn't help at all, because both God and humans would be subject to the blind necessities of the material aspects of being. It tells us that the world only appears contingent; in reality blind mechanism rules all.

3. Moral Teleology

We require our designer god to have one more major attribute, morality. Contingency has two edges. On one side it grants to human individuals autonomy, it allows for the possibility of free activity. On the other, it threatens those same individuals with determinism. God is needed to guarantee the first by staving off the second. The way Kant answers this difficulty is by formulating a moral teleology. Through teleology we can glimpse having access to a form of causality other than efficient causality.

The argument against Spinoza is just one of the many different ways in which Kant shows that knowledge of nature can never yield a conception of God. God is not discoverable in nature. This means that the traditional link between nature and morality is broken, in much the way it was for Abel's behavior. Modernity is the era of a fact-value split.

The old way began with an ontology designed to secure certainty about the nature of God and the soul. Once that was established, one could derive principles of morality, duty and freedom.36 The problem, however, had become that in a radically contingent world, knowledge of God and the soul would have to resemble scientific knowledge, or, in Kant's vocabulary, theoretical knowledge, by which he means knowledge in terms of causal laws. But of course, for Kant, theoretical knowledge can refer only to objects of a possible experience, and thus all attempts to understand God in the same way we understand nature have become completely unconvincing. God is supersensible; beyond any possible experience.

Kant turned the entire procedure around. Given human freedom, he begins, what can we know about God and the soul? The argument takes the form of saying that he who desires the end desires the means to achieve it.37 Thus the conception of God at which Kant arrives is not theoretical, but practical. Nor does it involve us in a blind necessity, as would any conception derived from nature, because it acts as an assurance freely accepted rather than a brute fact.38

Since God and soul are means to the moral ends of freedom, Kant spends a great deal of the Critique of Teleological Judgement elaborating a conception of moral ends. He must, of course, argue that

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36. Critique of Judgement, Part II, 147-49.
37. Ibid., 142.
38. Ibid.

his reader, upon reflection, will also endorse these ends. In fact, he needs to find a conception of ends that all moderns could in principle adopt. His answer is as follows: all human beings, he claims, take a moral interest in the world. It must have always been the case that people thought it made a difference whether they were good or bad, even when acting rightly carried no material reward.

> It could never be that the issue is all alike, whether a man has acted fairly or falsely, with equity or with violence, albeit to his life's end, as far as human eye can see, his virtues have brought him no reward, his transgressions no punishment. It seems as though they perceived a voice within them say that it must make a difference.39

With this felt need, that being good or evil makes a difference, comes the notion that there is something for which people must strive. At the basis of human being Kant finds a moral vocation; to strive for the supreme good of the world. This vocation to pursue the creation of a world where the possible might be actual, simply because it is good, is the main premise in Kant's moral proof for God's existence. The germ of this vocation has been with us from the start, but has had to grow up along with the progressive culture of reason. Kant's most rigorous version of the argument for moral teleology runs as follows.40

P1. If there is some final end, that is, some ideal for which everything else exists, it must be man as a subject, <u>not</u> a creature, of

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39. Ibid., 120.
40. Ibid., 114-19.

moral laws. Kant gives four reasons for this, all based in long prior discussions.

First, the world would be worthless if men did not value it, since only man can have a concept of worth. But that in virtue of which the world would become valuable for all men would have to be an end to which we could all subscribe unconditionally.

Second, the final value and worth of the world could not reside in the quest for human happiness,41 since happiness provides only relative ends, which, as we have seen, are too open-ended, changeable, and volatile to act as a final end.42 Just because we know that everyone in fact values happiness doesn't tell us why people should exist in the first place, or of any worth we might possess which justifies our attaining happiness. We would need a statement to the effect that because of purpose X, people's existence ought to be made agreeable. But it is that purpose for which we are searching. What is in question is exactly why or how we can be justified in assuming that nature is or could be disposed to "accord with the conditions of [man's] happiness." Happiness is not self-justifying43 For the same reason contemplation cannot be the final end of mankind.44 The "existence of the world could not acquire a worth from the fact of its being known." Contemplation

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41. Ibid., 88-93.
42. Ibid., 108. See also Rousseau's Emile, Allan Bloom, trans., (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979), 81.
43. Ibid., 108-09.
44. Ibid.

therefore receives its worth from what is contemplated. Therefore both contemplation and happiness derive their worth from some higher end, and cannot be the final end for which we are searching. Further, the desire for well-being is intimately connected to nature and causal necessity. If there is to be a final end, it must hold no matter what we desire and no matter what our situation. In fact, people search for a final end because our situation cannot justify itself.

Third, the final end must must reside somehow beyond nature, since everything in nature is conditioned and the final end cannot be conditioned. Since the argument begins with the presupposition that there is some final end, and since Kant has shown it can't reside in the natural order of causality, therefore, forth, there must be a moral law utilizing a different sort of causality, otherwise there is no basis for freedom, since the moral law, as a causality beyond natural mechanism, is the formal condition for our freedom.

P2. The moral law obligates us to strive towards the highest good possible through freedom, the summum bonum.45 Kant has shown that morality as freedom commands we strive, as autonomous rational individuals, for what is good without regard to self-interest or sensual desire. Yet, at the same time that people are rational, they are also finite beings, and the only end available for rational finite beings is happiness. Therefore the highest possible physical good is happiness in

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45. Ibid., 99-100.

conformity with the moral law; a state, by the way, in which the split between sensuous desire and morality would be finally closed. This idea, the summum bonum, says Kant, once conceived, is an idea that is both the cause and effect of itself, that is, it is the final end, that which justifies the quest for well-being and, with it, the subordination of nature.

P3. But if the summum bonum is to determine our actions we require the concept of a non-natural causality. Using only theoretical reason, that is, the laws of efficient causality, it is impossible to conceive of how happiness and morality could be at the same time both conjoined by natural means and conformed to the idea of the summum bonum. That is, if we did find that nature had somehow caused happiness and morality to come together, we could not simultaneously believe that nature had done so with the summum bonum in mind. This logic equally applies to human beings pursuing natural desires and longings. If such people happened to bring about the best possible world, it would be a random accident, not a working out of their arete.

C. Therefore, a moral cause of the world is morally necessary in order for us to fulfill our obligation, discovered in the moral command, to strive for the supreme good of the world. Without a moral, intelligent, causal designer, a God, there is no guarantee that our moral conceptions are at all amenable to the physical world. The moral law would still command one to work for the good, but any imagining of

the intelligible community--that time when all rational beings might associate voluntarily and harmoniously to pursue the supreme good of the world--would be lost. Kant imagines such a good man in a hopeless world as follows:

> Deceit, violence, and envy will always be rife around him, although he himself is honest, peaceable and benevolent; and the other righteous men...no matter how desearving of happiness, will be subject by nature, which takes no heed of such deserts, to all the evils of want, disease, and ultimately, death, just as are the other animals on the earth. And so it will continue to be until one wide grave engulfs them all--just and unjust, there is no distinction in the grave--and hurls them back into the abyss of the aimless chaos of matter from which they were taken.46

Without a designer one cannot hope for the moral community. But the moral community is the regulative principle for modern politics. Though it depends ultimately upon desire, Kant stresses that it is a free desire47 which works to limit and discipline the more usual sensuous desires. Freedom occures when one sets before oneself, as the highest end, the supreme good of the world. Our tastes have become refined such that we have "a crowd of insatiable inclinations." We cannot, as in the Emile, artfully limit desires, nor can we easily give everyone the power to realize desires, as in Marx. The only way open, Kant believes, is to endorse the modern world and to articulate its highest aspiration. He thus argues that happiness in its highest form would be the agreement or harmony of satisfactions and desires with

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46. Ibid., 121.
47. Ibid., 109. This passage is meant to evoke a similar passage from J.B. Turner in Chapter I.

moral legislation. In our age an admired man can be inwardly evil, and a man of well-being can be, for this reason, unhappy. To seek to implement the moral law through the summum bonum, however, provides three elements for happiness that the quest for well-being, at least in a world of contingent and complex desires, creates as requirements yet cannot satisfy: it pulls one out of introversion, it disciplines desires even while cultivating them, and it recognizes individuals as autonomous beings.48

The motive for articulating something like a summum bonum seems to arise out of the development of culture itself. Nature, according to Kant, provides people with two social drives, the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of culture. Culture, then, can be thought of as the Other of natural law. Culture unsettles what happiness would settle, reopens what happiness would close, and broadens what happiness would limit. Culture does this by continually creating unsatisfied desires. It shatters complacency, it leaves us in splendid misery. This renders the pursuit of happiness, despite its pretensions, finally disgusting and self-defeating. Eventually disgust and insecurity lead everyone to form civil commonwealths and enter social contracts. But the civil commonwealth further develops culture, decadence, and war. Disgust is deepened.

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48. Ibid., 100.

But from whence comes this disgust? There must be that against which people judge their own times and institutions. Eventually disgust, fear, cultivation, and reflection reveal that there is a conception at the basis of these judgments. They reveal a conception of an ideal commonwealth of confederated nations. Thus, to redeem itself, modernity needs to provide itself with a telos; for Kant, it is the idea of a cosmopolitan community, a voluntaristic association of individuals all of whom seek earnestly and harmoniously to bring about a higher unity, in which Abel's happiness will be reunited with Cain's hard work and intelligence. We should note that if we drop God from Kant's scheme, we are still left with a growing and deepening disgust, in need of both a ground and a redemption. One could neither persuade others that disgust is justified, nor hope for a teleological rescue.

Before leaving the critique of happiness I wish to comment on some recent criticisms of Kant made by the secular natural law tradition. (It is beyond my powers at present to deal with the religious natural law tradition.) It is difficult at times to find textual support in Kant's works for some of these criticisms, and occasionally they show an astonishing ignorance of what Kant actually said. Clearly it is silly to say that Kant has no notion of a summum bonum, or that he misses the profound role of nature in shaping our moral conceptions, or that he misunderstands the problem of the need for moderation in the modern world, or that he fails to see that teleology is crucial to a search for sources of moderation. Further, it is strange to claim that Kant misses

the importance of the search for happiness. Just the opposite. In fact, Kant has a very powerful critique of the assertion, "Human freedom is the freedom to live well or badly."49 From reading the secular natural law tradition's standardized rebuttal of Kant one would never guess that Kant ever wrote such a critique.

Or again, the secular tradition's relationship to nature is ultimately one of knowing and finally of philosophical contemplation.50 But this is hardly a good rejoinder to Kant, since for him knowledge of nature, no matter how perfect or imperfect cannot yield the moral teleology that natural theorists claim it does. To give an example from recent discourse, much of what used to pass for natural knowledge of social nature has recently become seriously unsettled. For instance, it is becoming increasingly difficult even to justify a strict distinction between insane and reasonable people. But natural law theorists, to articulate their vision of a natural ethical citizen, need to cling to this distinction.51 But if some people can no longer accept such a distinction as natural, in order to make it effective, someone will have to maintain and enforce it. Those who challenge such distinctions would need to be somehow silenced. But this seems to involve, on the part of the silencers, a nagging doubt about whether the distinction really is natural, since they can only appeal to their own self-definition as

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49. John Zvesper, "Liberty and Nature," Western Political Quarterly, 41, (Dec. 1988), 680.
50. Ibid., 680-81.
51. Ibid., 678-79.

moderate to justify themselves. As with Kant's nomads, anxiety creeps in to the ethos of natural happiness. In my opinion the whole project would be nihilistic. It is difficult, at any rate, to see how the pursuit of moderation will be any more immune to the perils of twentieth century politics than any other imposed political vision.52

To summarize Kant's discussion of teleology, physico-teleology must be replaced by the teleology of moral self-assertion. Nor is this an arbitrary notion on Kant's part. It follows from the situation of interdependence and contingency. It remains now to show what the implications are for modern organizational life.

C. Progress, Violence, and Organizations

1. The Dionysian Nature of Kant's Social Contract

In the Metaphysic of Morals Kant gives a fairly standard account of the social contract. By a sort of magic people manage to give up "their freedom in order to receive it back at once as members of a commonwealth, i.e., of the people regarded as a state." "They have in fact completely abandoned their wild and lawless freedom in order to find again their entire undiminished freedom in a state of lawful

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52. Paul Ricoeur, "The Political Paradox," in William E. Connolly, editor, Legitimacy and the State, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 250-272.

dependence (i.e., in a state of right), for this dependence is created by their own legislative will."53

In light of the Cain and Abel story we now know more about the mythological connotations which "the mere idea of such an act" carries. In the modern world natural right has been supplanted by a complex dependence, and, if we are to consider this dependence to be a state of freedom, then we have to consider it our own creation. We must also assert that we are freer now than we were when we were independent, though something important was admittedly given up, and that now our genuine freedom has begun. I have tried to illuminate the seriousness of this break with natural right by putting it in terms of a collective murder. If we take the social contract to be a Dionysian break in the midst of nomadic pastoral calm, rather than a rational moment in the midst of chaos, we may better understand its seriousness.

In both Kant and Hobbes, the social contract is a bulwark against revolution; the subject is constantly reminded that he or she is a consenting member. But the social contract is actually the source, not only of the state, but of revolution as well. A pastoral world of independent nomads requires no revolution. As Kant stresses, a family unhappy with the social relations within a nomadic clan can take its flocks and herds elsewhere. Truly independent people require no revolutions. Dependent people, however, have nowhere to go and are much

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53. Immanuel Kant, Metaphysic of Morals, Part I, No. 47, in Reiss, 140.

more susceptible to tyranny because they depend upon their property which, in turn, depends on the rule of right, which, in its turn, requires a coercive state. Dependent people just might dream of revolution.

The social act, the act of creating ourselves as dependent and the murder of our own independence in a collective act, is indeed a founding of sorts. It is both the founding of a regime and the founding of the overthrow of individual regimes. To speak only of its clean elevated side is, in Nietzsche's terms, to tell a lie.

2. The Propaedeutic of Violence

Kant often speaks of the quest for morality, whether in individuals, nations, or states, as in principle a fairly straight forward task, even if it is extremely difficult in a corrupt world. But to unify his philosophy Kant also requires freedom anchored in a teleology of self-assertion, where even our conception of God is a free assertion imposed upon nature. This God cannot be presupposed as creating an evil world, and therefore the fault for evil, again self-assertively, must belong to men. Innocent man, Kant believes, due to his naivete will always begin looking for sensuous reasons to obey moral commands, thus inverting the true moral relation.54 One might, for

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54. Immanuel Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, 31-39.

instance, refrain from telling lies merely in order to avoid anxiety, rather than out of pure love for the moral law. This creates a split between behavior and moral worth. When self-love legislates, the moral law is followed only when it furthers the interests of self-love. One might even design social and political institutions in which self-love does coincide with moral behavior. This leads to the petty morality of the middle classes for whom the absence of vice counted as virtue. Kant insisted that exactly this was radical evil, which seems at first extreme if you take him to mean shopkeepers, bureaucrats, businessmen, and professionals. How could such bland people be radical in anything?

The answer is that the evil is qualitative, it inverts the moral relation. If we add the premise from the Critique of Judgement that people are also radically interdependent, we can quickly imagine bland people creating evil in massive quantities, even while individually avoiding vice. In a world where everyone has his or her price, Kant notes, no one is righteous, and everyone is under sin.55 One of the more serious problems in modern life is that it encourages a dishonesty with which we humbug ourselves into taking our lack of opportunity to do wrong for virtue, and thereby never confront our own capacity for evil. But we might also view this from another angle. In an interdependent society, the smallest acts of moral cowardice are matters of deep concern; they affect everything. No reformer can afford to ignore them,

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55. Ibid., 34.

but neither can the police. The death of Abel seems to perpetrate a system of systematic cowardice.

To redeem this situation Kant needs to claim that radical evil is in principle remedial.56 In Rousseau a similar problem was answered by limiting desires and returning, at least partially, to innocence. But Kant believes innocence was self-defeating. The remedy for him lies in teleology. The loss of innocence is also the origin of culture. This means the loss of innocence assumes major importance in the teleology, and in the later works, from the Critique of Judgement through the later occasional essays, it seems to haunt Kant's writing more and more.

The break with the natural disposition has analogues throughout modern life, especially in revolution, colonialism, and professionalism. Kant, for example, often mentions the violent displacement of indigenous tribes by European colonists.57 He is clearly uncomfortable about natives, but there are other displacements which he vigorously champions. He champions the displacement of an old form of individualism, utilitarianism, by a newer form, autonomy. He advocates replacing older religious institutions and beliefs with newer more enlightened forms.58 Governments need to become republics. The list could be made quite long. But all of these evoke a violent moment which

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56. Ibid., 35.
57. Reiss, 173.
58. Religion, 11.

must be teleologically redeemed somewhere else; usually violence providing a negative grounding whereby we overcome violence.

The overcoming is typically a collective act, individuals, except in very rare cases, are too corrupt, especially in society, to pull themselves up to their own best aspirations.59 Usually it is disgust with our collective capacity for evil which forces us to create institutions which limit evil and enable progress towards the good.60 Interdependence is given the task of saving itself from itself. Ironically, we individuals are most autonomous when we endorse our moral interdependence, even while participating in actual organizations which do not measure up to our best visions of moral interdependence. Actually, because of man's asocial sociability, all actual institutions would have to be classified as pathological, but again, pathology is redeemed by teleology.

> Without these asocial qualities (far from admirable in themselves) which cause the resistance inevitably encountered by each individual as he furthers his self-seeking pretensions, man would live an Arcadian, pastoral existence of perfect concord, self-sufficiency and mutual love. But all human talents would remain hidden for ever in a dormant state, and men, as good-natured as the sheep they tended, would scarcely render their existence more valuable than that of their animals. The end for which they were created, their rational nature, would be an unfilled void. Nature should thus be thanked for fostering social incompatibility, enviously competitive vanity, and insatiable desires for possession or even power.61

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59. Reiss, 116-17. Also see Patrick Riley, "Autonomy and Teleology in Kant," 492.
60. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in Reiss, 44-45.
61. Ibid.

The break with the past is thus thoroughly ambiguous. It enables great evil, but also provides us with the reflective capacity for becoming appalled and for entertaining a hope for a better future. But the break is not actually unitary. It takes place on many fronts. For the individual, the new self-knowledge begins as a "descent into hell" which prepares one for a life of wisdom;62 for nations the horrors of war and taxation are preparation for a world of peaceful confederation. Human self-assertion, in destroying the conditions of happiness, first creates a hell on earth, then saves itself.

These violent founding events open up an alterity, a wound which shows up most plainly in the case of the French Revolution. Kant always insisted that the revolution was too full of misery and atrocity; that it was impotent to bring about genuine reforms and therefore perpetuated the evils it sought to overcome; and that it was by definition too secret and factional to ever be the legitimate creation of the whole people's will. Yet it is within this same very bloody horizon that Kant sees evidence of a deeper moral disposition in the human race.

The international public of onlookers, Kant maintains in "The Contest of the Faculties," "openly express universal yet disinterested sympathy for one set of protagonists. ....this revolution has aroused in

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62. The Metaphysic of Morals, Part II, Elements of Ethics, Part 1, Ch. 2, No. 14, in Ellington, 104.

the hearts and desires of all spectators...a sympathy which borders on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger."63 But this sympathy comes at a dear price, as witnessed by Kant's reflections on the execution of Louis XVI.

> But of all the outrages attending a revolution...even the murder of the monarch is not the worst....It is the formal execution of a monarch which must arouse dread in any soul imbued with ideas of human right, and this feeling will recur whenever one thinks of the fate of Charles I or Louis XVI. But how are we to explain this feeling? It is not aesthetic (like sympathy [with] the sufferer's situation), but rather moral, being our reaction to the complete reversal of all concepts of right. It is seen as a crime which must always remain as such and which will never be effaced, and it might be likened to that sin which the theologians maintain can never be forgiven either in this world or the next.64

The sympathy which formally reveals a moral community of disinterested spectators is closely tied to dread; to mortal sin and the death of Abel. The most dreadful notion is that the rules of Right, in order to establish themselves, might become involved in a spectacle of reversal. Kant, of course, only thinks of this reversal in the sense of a reaction or setback, but his teleology actually suggests something more serious. Right and the reversal of right are both contained within the same progressive culture. Right, in order to flourish, requires its own reversal to spur itself on. Morality is an asylum from evil, but evil is a loss of innocence which makes culture, the realm of the moral spectators, possible.

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63. Reiss, 182.
64. Metaphysic of Morals, Part I, No. 49, in Reiss, 145.

The moral spectators turn out to be those whose minds have experienced a mental revolution, and who then slowly and incrementally try to remake the sensuous world over to fit their acquired conceptions.65 The mental revolution is "a single unchangeable decision" to render oneself "a subject susceptible of reason." This is what Kierkegaard would later call a leap, and the motivation is the same, to find a stable form of selfhood. Of course for Kant, there is only one true form of selfhood, and it is linked to the sensuous world; the sensuous world provides the conditions by which some people come to experience the mental revolution, and then later the sensuous world becomes the arena for implementing it slowly and smoothly. This is one version of Kant's perpetual progress.

In the other version, horror, dread and anxiety; the thought that one's best endeavors are in vain; even the deadening complacency of middle class life; these are what the spectator actually reflects upon, and against which he or she actually frames the vision of the morally intelligible community.

Thus Kant offers the vision of a final unity; a whole in which natural teleology will be superseded by moral teleology, and the evil principle will be eliminated finally by human moral self-assertion. But Kant is also interesting as a thinker who sometimes confronts his vision

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65. Religion, 42-43.

as a unity of tensions, as when Right reverses itself while remaining formally the same, or when he notices the cool, controlled and reflective characteristic of passion.66 The procedures of passion bear a striking resemblance to those of morality, and Kant seems clearly appalled. Or, again, God enters the critical teleology in order to facilitate judgment, but judgment sometimes renders a double verdict. One may be at the same time meritorious, relative to others around one, but objectively a transgressor. Thus God's unity must be split up into a trinity which makes us the subject of three differing principles of justice; where Christ as the middle term is guarantee that the principle of relative merit will get a hearing in heaven. Kant is, of course, a consummate master at using his teleology to tie all these loose ends together into a plausible systematic account; the doubt I wish to raise is very modest. How is it that there are so very many ends that need tying together? Why, after the French Revolution, do they tend to proliferate, and what would happen if we didn't tie them quite so quickly into the Kantian system?

It is difficult to see how one can establish the modern notion of right without killing the king, the bearer of the medieval notions of patriarchy and natural law. In practice, Kant would ask us to kill the king slowly, or, actually, ask him to kill himself slowly, since he is meanwhile to be a sort of vanguard, implementing policies in the name of the future republic which will someday no longer need the king's

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66. Metaphysic of Morals, Part II, in Ellington, 67.

services. And in practice this policy may have a lot going for it. Yet whether it takes two hundred years or a few minutes, one has still chosen to overthrow the king. One has created Right by inverting it; one has murdered to create law and warred to make peace; one has forcibly closed oneself out of an entire range of human experience, the ethical. At his best, Kant shows us that we ought to experience these self-assertions, these avenues of hope, with a certain amount of fear and trembling.

3. Organizations

In Chapter I, I emphasized how organizations take the place of kings, but now this seems too simplistic. The modern organization can be seen as relying on a whole range of exclusions and conditions, beginning with radical interdependence and the death of natural law. But within these, there are other more specific conditions.

We can illustrate these conditions by again making a comparison with John Locke. In a society constructed along Lockean principles, people would be free because they were independent. In such a society one would think of the whole of a nation's wealth as an aggregation. But in a radically interdependent society, viewing wealth this way would imply that almost no one was free. Therefore, property and wealth must be regarded as a distribution. That is, there is an operative fiction that property ultimately belongs to the sovereign. But this

distribution can't take the form of feudalism or primogeniture, since, Kant notes, such things are contrary to freedom. The king should not hold land in his own name since there would be no higher court of appeal in property disputes, and thus every other property holder becomes a potential serf. Government lands must therefore be thought of as public lands, held in trust in the public interest.

From this fiction of the state's original ownership one can derive the rights of taxation and conscription. So far this is merely what all governments claim. The modern requirements of freedom make these rights take their particular form. Government impositions must be carried out only in such a way that the people impose upon themselves; and the state imposes nothing on the people which they could not impose, at least in principle, upon themselves. All of it must therefore be "done through the corps of deputies of the people."67

Immediately this is said, the number and kind of impositions and the various roles of public deputies begin to proliferate.

> The police look after public security, convenience, and also propriety; for it makes it much easier for the government to perform its business of governing the people by laws if the public sense of propriety is not dulled by affronts to the moral sense such as begging, uproar in the streets, offensive smells and public prostitution.68

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67. Metaphysic of Morals, Part I, "General remarks On the Legal Consequences of the Nature of the Civil Union," in Reiss, 149.
68. Ibid.

Economic and financial administration are also necessary, as is care of the poor, foundling hospitals, and a state church. Private associations must, subject to proper authority, be open to inspections, and there must therefore be authorities and inspectors. The wealthy must be compelled to pay taxes which go to finance the social welfare of the very poor, though of course taxes must never be used merely to enrich the state. Thus there will need to be tax assessors and collectors, auditors of public funds, and welfare administrators, but also inspectors who insure that indigence doesn't become an alternative to work. All of these functions, institutions, and deputies are required in an interdependent society to insure that all members will have a stake in the continuation and enhancement of lawlike government; so that everyone can cultivate an interest in morality. Otherwise people cannot view themselves as free. Thus interdependence, freedom, the loss of the natural right perspective, and the distributive principle of legitimacy all support one another in a teleology of progress which demands, in turn, multiple and varied incursions into and impositions upon daily life, including even smells, uproar, begging, and prostitution.

These incursions and impositions must be carried out in the name of those whose behavior is regulated and, therefore, a corps of people's deputies is required to organize and enforce the careful regulation of society. Without a civil service, the principle of the state could not be convincingly called distributive, since feudal, ecclesiastical or

personal modes of holding and distributing property all violate some aspect or other of the teleology; either they ground themselves in natural right, religious right, or independence, but not in the will of the whole, nor in the principle of giving to each person his or her due according to personal merit.69

There are some mundane complications in this scheme because its ideality must run up against bodily existence; and Kant himself understands this and offers a clue to its solution. The complication is this: on the one hand the civil servant is a sort of eunuch, disinterestedly administering public affairs, but on the other hand, he or she is a person who is trying to have a decent life in a distributive world. Both of these aspects support a system of civil service tenure; officials ought not be discharged without reason.70 Tenure gives one a reason to devote proper time and study to one's field. With tenure training time is less likely to be wasted because easy dismissal is unlikely. But in a distributive society, exactly this argument undermines the credibility of civil servants because as <u>interested</u> parties, they ought to be disqualified as keepers of the public trust. That is, to endorse an interdependent life, people need to see themselves as freely choosing their roles and tasks within it. This free choice depends upon the detailed administration of a distributive ethos, which in turn requires a professional independent civil service.

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69. Ibid., 148.
70. Ibid., 152.

But the civil service, in so far as it must be staffed by people who are themselves competing members, undermines people's ability to endorse the order of distribution.

This need not be fatal to the interdependent social order, since people can separate specific acts of administration from allegiance to the order as a whole. They can still think of themselves as essentially free, provided they can blame their problems on incompetent, bad, or corrupt administrators. But since arbitrariness is also a violation of modern freedom, this situation requires in turn that there be open avenues for criticism and complaint, and that one believes that government could correct itself in the long term. Where such feedback loops are tenuous and where people feel impotent, however, civil servants are prime candidates for scapegoating. This does not necessarily mean that they will be victimized, they may develop instead an entire culture of anonymity or in crisis may monotonously seek to shift blame away from themselves or, most likely, in daily tasks refuse to take risks or initiative and thus become an obstacle rather than a help to their clients. This, in time, would of course undermine the legitimacy of the distributive ethos.

Kant never addresses the problem in this form, but he does explicitly deal with a similar issue in "What is Enlightenment" and in "The Contest of the Faculties." In those essays the problem is that members of complex organizations must further the goals of their

organizations while at work, even where they have moderate reservations. The government cannot afford to remain indifferent to how students are educated in fields like medicine, law, and religion. High standards in these fields are essential for a distribute society, plus the regime cannot tolerate anything which actually undermines its credibility. A similar problem comes up with church clergy. If a pastor calls himself, say, Lutheran, he must present the Lutheran view of religion, even when he disagrees on finer points.

Kant probably knew this problem well, since even in his geology course he had to use textbooks approved by the government. The problem comes because no actual organization embodies all of a thinking man's convictions and aspirations. What happens to the remainder? Kant replies that there must be an unrestrained public discourse in which the voice of reason might break through the necessarily numbing web of organizational discipline.71 The principle even gets an organizational solution, in that the faculty of philosophy is supposed to be able to practice absolute freedom of scholarly discourse. This last shouldn't be any threat, Kant adds, because philosophers do not write for popular consumption, and thus the effects of philosophic criticism will necessarily by felt only in the long term. That is, change will be painless.

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71. For an excellent discussion of communicability and publicness in Kant see Hannah Arendt, Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy, Ronald Beiner, editor, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press , 1982), 39-50.

The role of free scholarly speech thus presupposes a thriving individual, one whose critical faculties break through the organizational web. What guarantees these faculties is a remainder which never rests with knowledge in its present state, but constantly subjects itself to ever renewed criticism. But what happens, we may ask with almost two hundred years of hindsight, when the remainder threatens other aspects of interdependence? Or, what happens when the legitimacy of the philosophic remainder closes off the legitimacy of other more mundane remainders, like delinquents, the insane, or native people? Kant's recognition of rational otherness in some areas necessarily closes off otherness in Other areas. Lastly, the organizational individual may be taken as too manipulated and corrupt to anchor freedom anymore. Thus free social discourse seems like a necessary but insufficient condition to anchor freedom in an interdependent world.

The bland behavior in all modern organizations will be the focus of the next Chapter. Here I need to emphasize once again the alterity of modern life. The construction of unities, of which Kant is a master craftsman, continually opens up small abrasions through which we glimpse a pathology within. Indeed much of Kantian political philosophy is aimed at healing these wounds. Yet the wounds tend to be self-inflicted and self-perpetuating. We are caught in the paradoxical imperatives of our freedom. But I have also tried to show why these imperatives cannot

be viewed as simply optional. The reason to read Kant is that he illuminates our situation in the midst of radical interdependence.

CHAPTER III

FREEDOM AND PATHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

There are two elements in Kant's thought which, while widely known, are still worth reviewing here; first, that Kant held the sensual to be deeply suspect, and, second, that his critical philosophy seeks its grounding in a deep exploration of subjectivity. In the two previous chapters I explored some of the problems and imperatives which gave rise to these formulations: the continuous and reciprocal web of economic and social interdependence, the disenchantment of nature and natural law, the rise of the Copernican sciences, and the general need of conscientious people faced with these facticities to think of themselves as at once modern, good, and free. I also conceded that the modern large bureaucratic organization is a plausible, though problematic, solution for this range of concerns. In this chapter I will take this one step further and follow up another of Kant's hints; that the ground of modern optimism might lie in the subjective experiences of discontent and unworthiness, that is, in a dynamic unhappiness which calls forth in individuals a deeper reflection. Thus I will explore organizational pathologies with an eye both to their cyclical and self-perpetuating nature and to the possibilities of

breaking or even leaping beyond them. But first I must return to sensuousness and the subject.

A. Sensuousness

During the 1780s, the decade in which Kant wrote his best known attacks on sensuousness, Europeans were becoming interested in a musical version of Don Juan. In 1887 and 1888 three operas based on the Don Juan story were staged, Mozart's Don Giovanni being the one we today know best. Soren Kierkegaard points out how important it is that Mozart found this subject, but also how fortunate that the subject found Mozart.1 The sensuous, says Kierkegaard, cannot really be captured in words because, he says in very Kantian fashion, the sensuous is an immediate expression. It must be felt in the present, as a movement. If Don Juan is quintessentially sensuous, he really cannot be captured in thoughts, the way Goethe's Faust can be, but requires something like music. Music is indeed a language, according to Kierkegaard, but it does not rely on thoughts. It is infinitely indefinite, and thus encompasses more than literature. It needs fewer distinctions, fewer divisions, fewer enclosures, and fewer exclusions. It conveys the mood of the sensual better than literature because it appeals to hearing, a more immediate activity than reading.

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1. Soren Kierkegaard, "The Immediate Stages of the Erotic," in David Swenson and Lillian Swenson, trans., Either/Or Vol. I, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

If there is anything to this, it follows that the problems of sensuousness cannot all be encompassed in a moral discourse; that philosophy might need help here from esthetics and religion. Kierkegaard believes there are actually three basic standpoints in modernity; the esthetic, the ethical and the religious. Each standpoint has a large number of variations with which to understand not only human action, but from which to develop deeper reflections. Each standpoint can make a pretty good internal case for its own primacy, but none can be finally convincing to the other two. Thus each standpoint views the other two with deep suspicion.

This is brought out strongly in Kierkegaard's discussion of Abraham in Fear and Trembling. In the view of ethics, in terms of human community, Abraham has violated the fundamental ethical tie, he has been willing to slaughter his own son for something too preposterous to be admitted as evidence in court.2 For ethics, Abraham is simply degenerate. But for religion, Abraham is the knight of faith, he knows and even acknowledges the authority of ethics; we must presume he loves Isaac, he treasures his wife's regard, and dreams of founding a blessed race. He knows what he is ethically doing, yet he transgresses ethics.

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2. Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling Unto Death, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Mark C. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel & Kierkegaard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). Taylor gives Hegel's ethical account of Abraham 37-41; For Kierkegaard's account of Abraham see Mark C. Taylor, Altarity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 340-52.

Esthetics would also judge Abraham harshly. Esthetics, says Kierkegaard, can understand sacrificing oneself to save another.[3] Esthetics might imagine a lover who, to protect his beloved, is hanged for a crime he didn't commit. Perhaps she is a mother married to his best friend. Ethics, of course, condemns such loving silence as much as it condemns Abraham. One's particular situation, the accidentally contrived love affair, and the lover's prescience are always only illusion for ethics. "Ethics demands an infinite movement, it demands disclosure."[4] But esthetics, at least, can comprehend this silence. But esthetics cannot comprehend Abraham. Abraham sacrifices another to his own spiritual ordeal. Abraham is either beyond good and evil, or he is absolutely nothing. Religious horror, says Kierkegaard, lies precisely here. Neither we nor Abraham knows which he is. Abraham is comprehensible only for the religious sphere, though even here this understanding is never generalizable since each religious individual must come alone to Abraham.

There is nothing analogous to Abraham's experience in any other sphere. Unlike the lover who could have spoken but wouldn't, or like the ethicist who speaks incessantly, Abraham cannot speak. No one would be able to understand him. He does not sacrifice Isaac to save the community, as Agamemnon did when he offered up Iphigenia. Iphigenia and Agamemnon can have a mutual understanding. No such understanding is

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3. Fear and Trembling, 112.
4. Ibid., 113.

possible between Abraham and Isaac, because Abraham, though resolved with all his being to carry it out, still believes absurdly that it won't happen. He doesn't believe this in the sense of statistical possibilities; there being some slight chance that God would change his mind. In that case he would be playing a long shot and we might call him rash or lucky, but hardly heroic, courageous, or faithful. He would no longer be Abraham.

> Abraham remains silent--but he cannot speak. Therein lies the distress and anxiety...The relief provided by speaking is that it translates me into the universal. Now Abraham can describe his love for Isaac in the most beautiful words found in any language. But this is not what is on his mind; it is something deeper, that he is going to sacrifice him because it is an ordeal. No one can understand the latter, and thus everyone can only misunderstand the former.5

> Abraham cannot speak because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable): that it is an ordeal such that, please note, the ethical is the temptation. Anyone placed in such a position is an emigrant from the sphere of the universal.6

Abraham is thus an exile from ethics. His climb up Mt. Moriah cuts him off forever from the community. This is the "movement of infinite resignation." He cannot make anyone understand this, it is totally singular, it transgresses the webs of language. But the next move is even more incomprehensible; it is the movement of faith.

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5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 115.

> This is his consolation. In other words, he is saying; But it will not happen, or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by virtue of the absurd.7

His family will say; if you don't believe it will happen anyway, why not abstain? He might answer; because it has to be an ordeal. But then his concern for the family simply appears hypocritical, since he is willing to sacrifice it to the ordeal. Or if he is sincere about his love, his ordeal becomes only a vaudeville. He cannot say anything coherent at all. He is either nothing, or he is beyond the language of good and evil.

Hegel had understood ethical life as a mature discovering of one's individuality, not against but within community life.8 One dissolves the opposition between particularity and universality by incorporating both. For Kierkegaard, Hegel always resolves the tension between particular and universal by giving priority to the universal, Hegel's claims not withstanding. Thus Kierkegaard agrees, for instance, that esthetics always misunderstands the claims of the universal when it understands community claims as merely limits on its expression. Esthetics ends in being unable to give itself any expression at all; it dissolves in pure possibility. Of course, unlike in Hegel's system, actual aesthetes don't find this to be a dead end. They continue to live in the oscillations of contradictions for a very long time. And

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7. Ibid.
8. Charles Taylor, "Hegel: History and Politics" in Michael Sandel, editor, Liberalism and its Critics (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 177-99. Mark C. Taylor, (1980).

Kierkegaard also agrees that ethics is expressive. What he denies is that ethics can contain individuality successfully. The paradox of Abraham is that the single individual is higher than the universal. His experience is completely singular, and yet it seems inappropriate to judge him by the same standards we usually reserve for self-appointed exceptions, criminals, and free riders.

Kierkegaard thus engenders in his reader an uncanny experience, the experience of placing Abraham above the ethical. One finds oneself somehow beyond the universal and discovers that there is something more, something humanly accessible but completely incomprehensible; that there is a class of completely singular experiences to which ethics does not apply. This is a transgression. Ethics claims to be all-inclusive. "The ethicist sees the aesthetic, ethical, and religious dimensions of experience as 'three great allies'"9 Abraham's transgression demonstrates that ethics is merely one discursive sphere among others.

To return to the sensuous, and to Don Giovanni. In the Middle Ages the Church tried to unite esthetics with ethics and spirituality in a happy wholism. But in the late Middle Ages this seeming unity turned out to be merely a truce among antagonistic forces.10 In the stories of Don Juan and of Faust, the truce is irreparably violated. It is important to Kierkegaard that this falling apart results from the inner

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9. Mark C. Taylor, (1980), 249. Taylor is, of course paraphrasing Judge William in Either/Or Vol II.
10. Either/Or Vol. I, 87-89.

workings of Christianity itself. Christianity, as opposed to Christiandom, always points toward a transgression. It therefore can never be finally at rest in ethics, no matter how hard the Church tries to make it so. This occurs in the case of the sensuous because Christianity itself first posited sensuousness as an Other to be negated.

> As principle, as power, as a self contained system sensuousness is first posited by Christianity; and in that sense it is true that Christianity brought sensuousness into the world....it is Christianity which has driven sensuousness out, has excluded it from the world....to add another qualification, ...as a determinant of spirit, sensuousness was first posited by Christianity. This is quite natural, for Christianity is spirit, and spirit is the positive principle which Christianity has brought into the world.11

Of course the Greeks were also sensuous and erotic, but for them the sensuous was part of the beautiful personality, it was not an enemy to be subjugated. "[It] was liberated unto life and joy in the beautiful personality." Thus the Greeks never posited the sensuous "as principle, as power, as self contained system." Nor was it the Other side of spirituality. As such one cannot conjure up a Greek representative individual for the sensuous. For the Greeks the god of love was not himself in love, the goddess of midwifery was not herself a mother. "That which constitutes the power of the god is not in the god, but in all the other individuals, who refer it to him; he is himself as it were powerless and impotent, because he communicates his power to the

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11. Ibid., 59-60.

whole world."12 The incarnated Christ, on the other hand, is exactly the converse. "In the Incarnation, the special individual has the entire fullness of life within himself, and this fullness exists for other individuals only in so far as they behold it in the incarnated individual." Thus Christianity can develop better than the Greeks a concept of the representative individual. "In the representative relation the entire energy is concentrated in a single individual, and the particular individuals participate therein."

Thus on two fronts Don Juan is the product of Christianity. First he embodies a principle of pure sensuous rebellion against the ethico-spiritual, and, second, he is a single representative individual. But Christianity has also provided another key element here. Christianity, in so far as it is the spiritual, has already sundered itself from ethics. This is seen historically in what I have been calling the disenchantment of nature in which, seen from an Enlightenment perspective, the spiritual is chased out of the world. Spirit, of course, would tell the story differently; the spiritual repudiated the world.

> As spirit, qualified exclusively as spirit, renounces the world, it not only feels that this is not its home, but that it is not even its sphere of action; it withdraws into the higher regions, and so leaves the worldly behind as the arena of power with which it has always been at strife, and to which it now gives place. As the spirit thus frees itself from the earth, the sensuous appears in all its power; it offers no objection to the change; it, too, sees the advantages in being separated, and

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12. Ibid., 62.

> rejoices that the Church is not able to keep them together, but cuts the bond which united them.13

The sensuous was now awakened in all its richness, joy, and enthusiasm, "thus did the whole world become a mammoth sounding-board for the worldly spirit of the sensuous, while the spiritual had abandoned the world." Certainly this characterization fits Mozart's opera. Don Giovanni is always exuberant, spontaneous, and voracious. Throughout the opera no earthly force can touch him, his sheer energy is more than a match for any human institution. Moreover, all human customs and mores are endlessly useful to him. Banquets, weddings, manners, knighthood, and wealth are all so many opportunities. All other characters in the opera get their principle of motion from him, he "lends interest to all the others," they live off his capital.

> His life is the life principle within them. His passion sets the passion of all the others in motion; his passion resounds everywhere; it sounds in and sustains the earnestness of the Commandant, Elvira's anger, and Anne's hate, Ottavio's conceit, Zerlina's confusion....he is the common denominator. The existence of all the others is, compared with his, only a derived existence.14

Of course he must always go in disguise. He dresses up as his own servant or he uses darkness to disguise himself as the expected Ottavio in Anna's bedchamber. Even in broad daylight, when he appears in his own name, he is in the disguise of a gentleman; the seducer cannot appear as the seducer. This, of course, is what Kierkegaard discovers

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13. Ibid., 88.
14. Ibid., 118.

in all spirituality and in all worthwhile individuality: the inner and the outer are different. But unlike Abraham who was totally singular, Don Juan makes everything into an echo of himself, and he is himself the endless echo. This of course does not bother Don Juan in the least, and it is the element which makes him such a completely musical figure, a figure worthy of Mozart's genius.

With Don Juan desire is unleashed on the world as a spiritual demonic power. There is an analogy between Don Juan and bourgeois industriousness, though it has its limits. Don Juan treats women almost as a universal medium. He desires absolutely and is thus successful. To meet a young woman is to desire her absolutely, and to be desired so intensely is enormously seductive. But he desires woman. Once someone is seduced she is, by virtue of her experience, now a particular individual. She becomes both less than and more than the ideal. He therefore has to keep moving. Like an endless echo, desire must constantly possess its object in a busyness that leaves one breathless.

Don Juan accepts these conditions joyously. Reflection is not his strong suit. Even his accounts, the list of his conquests--and in Spain! One thousand and three--is kept only by his voyeuristic servant, Leparello. Don Juan is too busy to take time to count. For him life and possession are an exuberant on-going activity. It is exactly this which makes him compelling. A reflective schemer would

bother us more. We might more easily condemn Faust for seducing Margaret. But with Don Juan we hesitate. He is having so much fun.

At last the heavier and more profound music of spiritual earnestness returns to overwhelm Don Juan's frivolity, at least in the opera,15 and, Kierkegaard would add, in the reflective individual. Don Juan may in fact be the last truly musical figure to possess the modern age, and Mozart the last composer to capture the notion of a fun modernity. After that, the sensuous has become a serious business.

B. Deep Subjectivity and its Tortures

More interesting, perhaps, than Don Juan is his victim, Dona Elvira. Elvira gave up everything for Don Juan. In some traditions Elvira was a young nun, a real coup for a seducer. The convent appealed to her pride. There she could hold herself above the incessant chatter of eligible young women. But after Don Juan she could return to the convent only if she were willing to humiliate herself. The other nuns would think that it had been such a rash and unwise adventure; the Mother Superior's strict but knowing forgiveness would be unbearable. So Elvira would not return to the convent, nor could she rejoin her family and the twitter of the social sphere, because she threw all that away when she went to the convent. In throwing away the convent she has

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15. Ibid., 112; 127.

thrown everything away to love Don Juan. What could the other young women know about that?

There is thus no external ethical setting where she might disclose herself or give herself an exterior expression. Meanwhile inward turmoil eats away at her. Were she actually to confront her seducer, and Elvira is formidable enough to do so, her hatred would give her something to express, and Don Juan would be her opportunity. But when she was again alone she would have to think a contradiction; that the man she loves is a deceiver. The problem is that she must go on. She can not return to the convent because she has already mocked religious life. Besides, she would need "a priest who can preach the gospel of repentance and remorse with the same power with which Don Juan had preached the glad gospel of pleasure."16 Thus not just the ethical, but the religious also is closed to her.

All she has left to turn to is Don Juan's love, which she must turn to in self-defense. But this is the paradox: can she love him although he has deceived her? Thus, taking refuge in the memory of his love throws her into an endless reflection, something Hegel might term a bad infinite. She might even designate this paradox with a pet phrase like, "I was more slender than a reed, he more glorious than the cedars of Lebanon." This phrase becomes the name for her inward labyrinth.

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16. Ibid., 197.

Inwardly obsessed, though outwardly composed, she tears herself apart with conflicting resolutions.

"I will forget him," but then she is herself being unfaithful to her love. "I will hate him," but didn't he once love her, doesn't she owe him so much for that? "Do I not live on his bounty; for what else is it that feeds my hate, except my love for him?" Or perhaps he was not really a deceiver. Men perhaps don't understand what a woman feels. And he never actually promised anything. And here she remembers her pride, she would never have degraded herself for a common poltroon; he had only stretched out his hand and she had seized it. But she can not think of this without anguish. "I will not think of him, then." But she does not dare stop thinking of him, it is her only defense; and to remember him without anguish would be to not remember him at all. Her love, anguish, and Don Juan, have all collapsed into synonyms for one another.

Elvira, says Kierkegaard, has become like someone on a wreck at sea who stays on board to save something which he cannot save because he cannot decide what it is; "her destruction impends, but this does not worry her."

In this way Elvira becomes interesting, even granting that she has become sicker. She is now the plaything of psychologists, the subject of their endless reflections. Psychologists, or more correctly perhaps,

phenomenologists, are the "knights of empathy" who force open the interior in order to empathize with it. They are also called professional prowlers. This notion sets up the idea of multiple reflection. We who can empathize with Elvira can also imagine, even empathize with, a reflective seducer. And because we can also empathize with his victim we can imagine bringing her through an intriguing labyrinth of reflection. This takes the erotic not only beyond our physical and social abilities, but sends imagination and desire even beyond human possibilities. In Kierkegaard's "Diary of a Seducer" esthetics meets its very limit, and perhaps finally even nauseates itself, depending on one's reading of the entry dated September 24.

Every stage of Kierkegaard's existential dialectic serves to develop subjectivity. All stand in some relation to spirituality, to ethics, and to esthetics. All rely on deeper reflections which are spurred by trials. The ethical claims that one can achieve worldly happiness, but even here the married person or the judge in Volume II of Either/Or must overcome adversities, must make personal sacrifices in order to find worldly expression for the principles of love or justice. Thus Kant's discovery that unhappiness is dynamic is developed further in Kierkegaard's dialectic. Elvira's bind is just one of many possible binds brought out by the unleashing of the sensuous. Esthetic binds, in turn, are only one of three varieties available. Only the ethical claims that inner and outer can match, but esthetics would say that the price is boredom, while faithful people would say that the single

individual is higher than the ethical universal. I will return to this below. For now I will only mention that for spiritualists the ethicist's faith is too complacent, and for aesthetes his esthetics are too humdrum. What is clear is that subjectivity is not only an ambiguous, but an extremely unstable achievement. In fact, it owes its existence as much to pain and suffering as it does to enlightenment and reason.

For Kierkegaard all three spheres develop an inward/outward distinction, but two do not attempt to put the sides together again. The split between inner and outer is ultimately productive, but can be sustained only in the religious sphere. Thus, Elvira's double bind can fall within the demonic, as spirit's Other. Whereas the spiritual repudiates the world the demonic over-embraces it. Where the spiritual is earnest, the demonic is frivolous.

Kierkegaard believes the modern age is characterized by spiritlessness.17 Spirit has abandoned the world, and it has done so in such a way that the sensuous and the ethical become temptations. Those who succumb to sensuous temptation are liable to demoniac obsession, those who succumb to the ethical are guilty of arbitrarily declaring as universal what is actually only some particular and partial merger of the inner with the outer. A partial and contingent situation is declared whole and universal. It is just this sort of pretension which

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17. Mark C. Taylor (1980), 23-69.

scandalizes aesthetes and drives demoniacs crazy.18 The ethicist tells a beautiful story, but the story simply dismisses as inauthentic any counter-stories. Especially ethics denies experiences of spiritlessness, since it claims to be spiritual, of alienation or anomie, since it claims to be an integrated system of real-life expressions, and of unfreedom, since it believes its desires to be roughly congruent with its powers. But these claims, the demoniac believes, all contain hidden denials. If ethics is supposed to rest on full disclosure, the demoniac demands that these denials be fully disclosed. However, since the common life presupposes that these denials remain concealed, the demoniac is to ethics merely a transgressor. This transgression, however, is only the community's twin. The ethical does not overcome estrangement, it feeds it, and then, since everything must be made whole, it reasserts its wholeness by helping demoniacs reenter its cozy circle. The ethical, to the extent that its wholistic claims hide fragmentation, may itself be a demonia writ large.

To illustrate some of these assertions I will look at two attempts to articulate an ethics in the twentieth century United States; the

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18. Rene Girard, "The Demons of Garesa" in The Scapegoat, Yvonne Freccero, trans., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986), 165-183.

first comes from the popular Habits of the Heart,19 the second from the work of the humanistic management school, especially of Elton Mayo.20

C. Ethical Articulation and Individualism

Habits of the Heart opens with the questions of classical ethics; how ought we to live, how can we preserve and create a morally coherent life? Almost immediately the authors discover that there is a gap between how people live and the available resources for expressing it.

> While we focus on what people say, we are acutely aware that they often live in ways they cannot put into words. It is particularly here, in the tension between how we live and what our culture allows us to say, that we have found both some of our richest insights into the dilemmas our society faces and hope for the reappropriation of a common language in which those dilemmas can be discussed.21

All prevailing American discourses are individualistic; the good life, according to the reigning discourse, must be either a quantitative

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19. Robert N. Bellah, et al, Habits of the Heart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
20. Humanistic Management includes F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and the Worker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), F. J. Roethlisberger "The Foreman: Master and Victim of Double Talk," Harvard Business Review, 23, (Spring, 1945); Chris Argyris, "On the Organization of the Future," (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing, 1973) Sage Professional Paper in Administrative Policy Studies, v. I, no. 03-006; Elton Mayo, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933); Elton Mayo, The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1947), hereafter 1947a; Elton Mayo, Political Problems of an Industrial Civilization (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1947), hereafter 1947b.
21. Bellah, et al, viii.

maximization of interest, or a qualitative developing of one's human potential. The human potential language actually possesses a few resources for discussing deeper human commitments. The potentialists might speak of having a true need for commitments, that love is the "mutual exploration of infinitely rich, complex and exciting selves."22 But when this sort of language is put under tension the potentialists can't finally explain why two people remain in a marriage, or why they perform volunteer work in their communities, or why they join political movements. What happens when the relationship does not obviously meet the developmental needs of all parties? The potentialist often actually remains with his spouse, even under severe pressure. But the potentialist will resist any language of obligation, or any notion that the relationship might have significance beyond the finite needs of the individual parties. Habits of the Heart contains multiple examples of ordinary men and women trying to articulate ethical relationships while resisting the language of ethics.

> While they wanted to maintain enduring relationships, they resisted the notion that such relationships might involve obligations that went beyond the wishes of the partners. Instead, they insisted on the "obligation" to communicate one's wishes and feelings honestly and to attempt to deal with problems in the relationship. They had few ideas of the substantive obligations partners in a relationship might develop. Ted Oster began to hint at some of these when he discussed how having lived your life with someone...bound you to her in ways that went beyond the feelings of the moment. He seemed to reach for the idea that the interests, and indeed the selves of the partners, are no longer fully separable...but his utilitarian individualist language kept pulling him back.23

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22. Bellah, 108.
23. Bellah, 109.

Because there is no wider set of cultural traditions to give them support, the respondents could not articulate why long term relationships require the risk of loss, hurt, or sacrifice.

> What proved most elusive to our respondents and what remains most poignantly difficult in the wider American culture, are ways of understanding the world that could overcome the sharp distinction between self and other.24

The authors believe that this gap could in principle be filled by the language of civic republicanism, and they often mention Alex de Tocqueville and allude to Aristotle's discussion of friendship. Two things constitute the Archimedean point for the criticisms of American life. First, there is an older but still accessible ethical language and, second, there are implicit but actual ethical practices to which only that language can give adequate expression. Against this rich and ethical disclosure all our current forms of individualism seem sterile and poverty stricken. But only half the case is proved. The authors can make a good case that a utilitarian individualism, in which "the self is 'the only or main form of reality'" threatens to be unsustainable. But then we read:

> If this is the danger, perhaps only the civic and biblical forms of individualism--forms that see the individual in relation to a larger whole, a community and a tradition--are capable of sustaining genuine individuality and nurturing both public and private life.25

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24. Bellah, 110.
25. Bellah, 143.

In other words, only ethical life can solve the problem. This is suspect, of course, because it ignores an array of powerful critiques of this position--in the first chapter I discussed J. B. Turner's, in the last chapter I discussed Kant's, and in this chapter I am discussing Kierkegaard's--and it ignores an array of other seriously suggested solutions. Why should we look only to Tocqueville rather than Nietzsche or Marx, say? Both of these latter thinkers would agree with the first part; that modern individualism is self-defeating, but neither could accept ethical life as the solution. There is a privileging of civic republicanism which simply could never be redeemed. Just because atomistic individualism is self-defeating, it does not follow that civic republicanism can be sustained.

To show that another account is possible I will use Kierkegaard's concepts of spiritlessness and demonia to give an alternative reading. I will focus on an esthetic section of Habits of the Heart because I think this will show how it is that ethicists can seem so boring to aesthetes, and thereby in turn show how ethics incites the demoniac responses which it deplores, and, finally, that the religious sphere can offer a profound rejoinder to the ethical critique of American mores.

D. High Noon and the High Plains Drifter

As seen above, everyone in Habits of the Heart is said to be longing for ethics; only they don't know this because therapeutic and utilitarian languages are smaller than experience. In the section entitled "Mythic Individualism"26 the authors find that the classic American heroes--Huckleberry Finn, Captain Ahab, Shane, Will Kane, Travis McGee--are all outsiders, marginal figures, tied to but never really belonging to the larger society.

> His destiny is to defend society without ever really joining in.... Rather, his significance lies in his unique, individual virtue and special skill and it is because of those qualities that society needs and welcomes him.27

The cowboy can shoot straight and fast, Travis McGee is too tough to be corrupted, they all possess technical skills plus a peculiar sense of justice. Typically the problem is that society is too corrupt or cowardly to help itself. This leads to an ethically unacceptable movement, where goodness and heroism are found only in special characters who haunt the margins. This movement cannot finally ever come to rest.

> When it is not in and through society but in flight from it that the good is to be realized, as in the case of Melville's Ahab, the line between ethical heroism and madness vanishes, and the

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26. Bellah, 144-47.
27. Bellah, 145.

> destructive potentiality of a completely asocial individualism is revealed.28

The problem with cowboys and detectives is that they embody the ideal of autonomous individuality. But moral individuality must stand so alone that it risks running to madness, cynicism, or despair.

> One accepts the necessity of remaining alone in order to serve the values of the group. And this obligation to aloneness is an important key to the American moral imagination. Yet it is part of the profound ambiguity of the mythology of American individualism that its moral heroism is always just a step away from despair. For an Ahab, and occasionally for a cowboy or a detective, there is no return to society, no moral redemption. The hero's lonely quest for moral excellence ends in absolute nihilism.29

These total breaks clearly violate an ethicist's aesthetics. Everyone ought to seek happiness in a full and open social disclosure. It is impossible to imagine life without a town.

> Will Kane, the hero of High Noon, abandoned by the cowardly townspeople, saves them from an unrestrained killer, but then throws his sheriff's badge in the dust and goes off into the desert with his bride. One is left wondering where they will go, for there is no longer any link with any town.30

This last is a good example of what disgusts an aesthete when he listens to an ethicist. First of all, the situation does have an ethical side. Mr and Mrs. Kane have found each other and themselves in their ordeal; they are more married at the end of the film than at the

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28. Bellah, 144-45.
29. Bellah, 146.
30. Bellah, 146.

beginning, and marriage is said to be an ethical tie. If we must be pragmatic, I am sure they will settle down in another western community, one where they do not yet know the worst about their neighbors, and Will will be one of the leaders in planning and building the new school house. Unless someone makes him do it all over again.

Suppose the townspeople pursue him and force him to do it all over again. They cringe again behind windows and peek out at him. They are completely obsessed with watching him again and again step into the street, watching him once again slap leather, watching him once again gun down the evil killer, watching him once again reach for his wife, to once again teach us that justice prevails, to let us once again identify with someone we can respect. But why would the townspeople do this? I think it is the badge. When Will Kane throws down the badge, it is not only the townspeople who know they are cowards; the audience in the theater is judged as well. The badge in the dust breaks the spell. He acted, I watched. I sat watching him on the screen just like the townspeople. Kane not only refuses to rejoin the townspeople, he refuses to rejoin the audience. Had you or I been in town that day we would have let him go into the street alone, just as the townspeople did. Of course during the whole movie we have been denying this; we identified ourselves with him against the cowardly townspeople. The badge in the dust means the audience will demand with their money to see these scenes over and over again. Certainly American audiences became obsessed with the western movie.

If we looked for the last western, in a qualitative sense, a good candidate would be Clint Eastwood's High Plains Drifter. That movie starts with the nameless marshal being brutally bull whipped to death while the whole town cringes; but watches. They have paid the bad guys to do it, and they have staged this brutal scene to save their economic interests. The incorruptible marshal had learned that their mine was on Federal land. He was going to ruin everything. Here the theme of the lonely law man stepping into the street to face the villains while the townspeople cringe and watch is literally beat to death. Throughout most of the movie the marshal lies in an unmarked grave. Tradition has it, of course, that a man in an unmarked grave knows no rest.

Ghostlike, Clint Eastwood arrives and remains nameless. All the standard elements show up, but all the standard moves change. The stranger doesn't play fair or nice, and he takes revenge on the townspeople, even while destroying the three killers. At no point does the drifter make the world safe for ethical people; and though it would like to, the audience can not really identify with him either. He rapes a woman, he makes fools of people, he deputizes a dwarf. He unravels the whole fabric of the western. At every point he forces townspeople to admit their cowardice, he despises them, he dissolves their corrupt social nexus. Finally he throws the bad guys and the townspeople into a saloon together, without distinction. The bad guys cannot use their old tricks, they can't hold good people hostage because the stranger doesn't

care whether they live or not, and, besides, there are no good people here. The bad guys can terrorize the townspeople all they want, only it won't save them. Because the stranger refuses to get caught up in the trap of protecting the townspeople, who he refuses to pretend are innocent, and because this movie insists that the townspeople are indistinguishable from their hoodlums, the ghostly drifter manages to turn the town's demons back on itself. When its demons die, the town, at least as it was before, also dies; its buildings mostly burned, its first citizens mostly killed either by each other or by their own hired killers, its marginal dwarf given a place of honor, its marginal native inhabitants given blankets and clothes.

In the morning after the town's ordeal, when the drifter leaves, the dwarf is still sheriff, and he is inscribing the dead marshal's name on a tombstone. The obsessive cycle revealed and broken, the marshal can finally rest in peace. The myth had declared that the marshal stepped into the street to protect the townspeople; now the secret is out that the marshal was not the town's protector, but rather its victim. It has at last become esthetically impossible to make a standard American western movie, its hold on American popular culture is ended, one obsessive cycle broken.

This brief comparison of High Noon with High Plains Drifter should cast doubt upon the ethicist scenario as described in Habits of the Heart. High Noon needn't be seen as a straightfoward celebration of

autonomous individualism at the expense of ethical community. The ethical account can not really explain why we find such myths so compelling, and it will probably continue to be ineffectual in its efforts to break the hold these myths have on us.

The modern city, as even Kant noticed, is a complicated reciprocity which encourages a system of cowardice and smallness.[31] Kant goes so far as to call this radical evil because though the outward behavior is mild, the inward disposition is completely corrupt. The High Plains drifter would agree, and has worked out many of the dynamic movements of this system of cowardice. If we understand the American hero, not as an autonomous individual, but as a spiritual scapegoat, then we are in a position to question the nature of the society which requires such heroes and obsessively requires them to go through their endless ordeals. Of course we risk having to admit that the instincts of the demos might be valid. What popular myths especially bring into question is the notion of a sustaining community which the mad, or the sick, or the heroes need to only rejoin in order to be made whole. Perhaps the community has a hand in making them sick. Their condition as outsiders may fall well within the parameters of the demoniac community, only they speak what the community cannot acknowledge about

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31. Immanuel Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, T. M. Green and Hoyt H. Hudson, trans. (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1960), c.f. 29, "We call him good who is bad in a way common to all." especially 30-40. The most intelligent argument I have seen in favor of this form of economic reciprocity and its self-interested moderation is James Madison's "Federalist 10."

itself, or, worse, they might be the perpetual victims of collective violence, just as the communities in western movies tried to maintain themselves by scapegoating their law men.

E. Elton Mayo and Humanistic Management

The humanistic management movement, like the civic republican tradition, seeks an ethical solution to the problems of modern spiritlessness. It usually refers to spiritlessness as anomie. But unlike civic republicanism, humanistic managers are alert to obsessive responses and to their sources in modern organizational life. Like the authors of Habits of the Heart they reject Hobbesean individualism, whether as a prescription for or as a description of modern life. They agree that as a self-understanding, such individualism is inadequate for describing people's actual lives and when this understanding is applied anyway, it becomes a dreadfully self-fulfilling prophesy, creating conditions of anomie which it then 'realistically' authorizes strong measures to contain.32 Elton Mayo refers to individualist rationalities, and especially economic individualist rationalities, as "the rabble hypothesis," by which he means that economic rationality relies on the premise that humanity is a sea of introverted individuals, each interested only in maximizing his or her own welfare.

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32. Mayo (1947a), 45.

> In their behavior and in their statements economists indicate that they accept the rabble hypothesis and its dismal corollary of financial incentive as the only effective human motive. They substitute a logical hypothesis of small practical value for the actual facts.33

Against this, like civic republicans, Mayo would ask us to "observe the facts of life as they are lived."34 Actual people always belong to hierarchies "of groups, family, school, town, union, church, etc." In the real world there are no isolated individuals, everyone is a member of something, everyone embodies social institutions. But humanistic managers would disagree that today one could revitalize the older civic traditions; for them Tocqueville would be no help at all. The scientific, technological, and productive revolutions irremediably changed the face of human relationships; and they haven't simply changed things once and for all. The changes keep occurring and they come so quickly that no new community of traditions can grow up or take root.

This emphasis on change probably is a result of Mayo's and Roethlisberger's ages. Having lived through the era of the change, having personally experienced its disruptions, they probably have a deeper sense of how far from traditional communities we have come. Bellah, et al., often say they understand this issue, but then seem to believe modern highly mobile career people can still be civic republicans. Instead of Tocqueville and Aristotle, humanistic managers get their theoretical bearings from Continental social theorists: the

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33. Mayo (1947a), 83.
34. Mayo (1947a), 45.

psychologist Pierre Janet and the sociologist Emil Durkeim. In the late 1940s Mayo also studied St. Augustine, the thinker who wrestled with questions of how moral life might survive the transition from classical to Christian culture.35

Humanistic managers also share with the authors of Habits of the Heart a commitment to interviewing and learning from actual participants in life. They too discover that the language of individualism is inadequate to express what people need to say. But they do not conclude from this that what people are longing to express is ethics. What people are expressing is rather a sense of estrangement. What their interviews reveal is that modern work in modern organizations contains a host of potentially pathological situations and fosters in its participants a myriad of pathological and obsessive responses, and it does this at every level of a corporate hierarchy.

The humanistic management school was born in the early 1930s in the famous Western Electric management study.36 The study took about five years, interviewed over 22,000 employees, and included countless hours of observing workers in controlled and uncontrolled situations. It is truly remarkable the way the researchers constantly let their findings and observations change their own thinking. They were willing to learn as they went along. Their sensitivity to their subjects and

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35. Mayo (1947b), Mayo's debt to Janet and Durkeim are well known; for his discussion of Augustine's City of God c.f. 143-46.
36. Roethlisberger (1964).

their ability to know when their own methods and paradigms had become inadequate or limiting, and their willingness to admit their own ignorance are all enormously refreshing.

Briefly, the study was in three phases. In the first phase a controlled experiment found that worker productivity and satisfaction could be raised in a variety of physical ways; introducing mid-morning coffee breaks or varying the hours of work, say. The problem was that when these changes were later rescinded, productivity did not drop off again, in some cases it stayed the same or higher. At this point, about a year into the study, the researchers concluded they had to abandon their previous causal notions of why efficiency or satisfaction rose and fell. They turned to Pierre Janet.

In the second phase the researchers started their interview program. Here employees aired their many grievances. The idea had at first been to set up ways to correct these grievances, but very few turned out to be correctable or even verifiable. Sometimes employees complained about specific things: a vent fan had been broken for a long time, or a machine was unsafe, and everyone agreed that employee lockers were overcrowded. But most complaints were against people or referred vaguely to things like "rates are too low," "earnings are not commensurate with length of service," "ability doesn't count in my department."

Further, though these complaints were usually cast in one or another rational language,37 on closer inspection it was found that few employees really understood how, say, their economic incentive system really worked, and they certainly did not act in the best ways to maximize their economic utilities.38 For instance, many employees stated as a matter of fact that if they worked too hard the company would simply lower the piece rate, leaving them working harder to take home the same wages. Yet, the Western Electric Company had never in its history done this.

Several easy explanations were rejected. Workers were not simply pushing their own self-interests against those of capitalist management. For that to be the case workers' behavior would need to change. Nor were they simply ignorant fools. The workers used economic logic to communicate fears because economics was the legitimate language in the plant, not because it expressed what they were worried about. This, I believe, was the great breakthrough of the study, to notice that employee worries and complaints were neither errors nor partisan behavior. They were neither illogical nor were they in conformity with any abstract logic. Though couched in abstract rational language, employee complaints contained an experiential 'lived' logic.

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37. Roethlisberger (1964), 258-59.
38. Roethlisberger (1964), 532-37.

> They are the expressions of sentiment and reasonings in accord with sentiments, which are very common phenomena in all social life.39

Thus in a debate over which is better, individual piecework or group piecework, the genuine issue may not be how much money the speaker expects to take home, but who will be socially integrated in what way. In group piecework an individual's contribution tends to get lost, while in individual piecework it is inevitable that some items will be rated lower and that someone will be stuck producing these less prestigious items. Someone preferring group rates may need work to provide general social acceptance, while someone arguing for individual rates may need work to provide a way of standing out.

Thus complaints tended to have both a manifest and a latent content. "Such statements had an inner and an outer reference, and the inner reference could be reached only by further study of the person who made the complaint."40 The researchers were led first to abandon their causal model and then to adopt an interpretive approach. Faced with a series of complaints for which there was no objective solution, or any commensurate scale for weighting relative merits, and having been convinced from earlier findings that these complaints were directly related to the organization's health, it became important to develop a way to think about them. The relation between complaints and organizational health deserves closer attention.

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39. Roethlisberger (1964), 262-63.
40. Roethlisberger (1964), 265.

Early in the first year of the study, there was a woman in the test room who in her old department had been labeled a troublemaker. She was pretty difficult in the test room too. She talked too much, challenged authority needlessly, and often simply refused to cooperate. Finally she had to be dismissed from the test room. But one of the features of the early experiment was a series of blood tests. Eventually the medical people figured out that this woman had anaemia. After being treated her disposition completely changed and she even apologized to the researchers for her earlier criticisms, which she now said were unfair.

As the interview program proceeded what bothered the researchers was that many employees at Hawthorne had the same symptoms as the anaemic woman, but they did not have the disease. This led them to the theories of Janet, and to the above mentioned idea that workers used a logic of sentiments. They also decided that good managers had been dealing with this sort of material for years, and they began to try to develop explicit statements of the intuitive knowledge of these managers. They concluded that good supervision is not a matter of applying knowledge gained through scientific theories, not, for instance, from fatigue studies or theories of economic incentives, but of using common sense in a variety of concrete situations. And any description of the concrete situation in any department would have to include a reference to the workers' sentiments.

Individual psychology has its limits in that management stops at the factory gate while people go on through. However, in the second interview stage, the researchers discovered that the plant itself was riddled with social relationships and groupings and that one's status at work greatly affected one's status in the community. "For the employee in industry the whole working environment must be regarded as permeated with social significance."41 Thus one needn't follow each dissatisfied employee home; there was plenty going on right at work. Besides, work shapes people's dispositions, self-understandings, and community status as much as anything else.

This discovery leads to some interesting insights. A supervisor who says a policy is unfair may at first seem to be protesting against discrimination or favoritism, but over and over such complaints were found to "express a disguised demand for privilege, a demand to be differentiated from those below, but not from those above."42 Or again, researchers found that physical plant conditions, more than any other aspect of work differentiated supervisory and office workers from shop workers. Thus shopworkers, the lowest status on the ladder, complained more about working conditions than any other group. "It is too hot," "It is unsanitary" "The tools are no good."43 Often as not the man at the next machine had not noticed the problem. Dirt turned out to be a

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41. Roethlisberger (1964), 374.
42. Roethlisberger (1964), 364.
43. Roethlisberger (1964), 376.

barometer concept. Conversationally it works like the weather; dirt may simultaneously express a state of affairs and a general mood. People who disliked their departments, but liked the company--and many employees felt this way--would praise the company because the plant was not dirty.

The systems of social relationships had little in common with the company's managerial flow charts, nor did the technical nature of making telephones make it necessary to make status distinctions. Yet the social organization of the company was as important as its flow chart or technology for making telephones. Any change in either the work process or in supervision affects the company's social organization. Even tiny trappings of social status, like new ink blotters, are interpreted in terms of these social relations, and will be resisted or endorsed accordingly. What seemed to be happening was that workers would try under unfavorable conditions to maintain a social identity and self-esteem. Supervisors whose social identity was also involved in other community organizations, say church, family, or Little League, were less likely to panic when things changed than were supervisors whose whole social life consisted only in work. But for everyone, the social stakes of every change were high.

Social organization seemed to serve two main functions; internal discipline, to integrate people into the group, and protection from external interference. Most of what is "ordinarily labeled 'restriction

of output' represents attempts at social control and discipline and as such are important integrating processes."44 An internal social organization on the shop floor can make life pretty miserable for someone who violates its norms. One doesn't drastically out produce other workers, nor produce drastically less. One must not be officious or act superior. An officious inspector was constantly being reported as "slow" and blamed by employees for their non-productive time; they had to wait for inspections because they timed their work so they would all need inspections at once. The inspector was subjected to other tactics as well. He wasn't asked to bet in the daily horse racing pool, he was usually made to inspect in the less prestigious back of the room, he was excluded from trips to the candy store and from conversations. When his inspections were slow the men made sure supervisors heard them complaining about it. Eventually he had to be removed.

But if the chief function of these internal organizations is group protection, and the main threat is radical change, the chief enemies become those two backbones of modern organization: the supervisor and the technologist. Both of these figures impose an abstract logic onto a human landscape not designed to fit it. Here we come to the heart of the problem. In existential terms, the supervisor and technologist sacrifice the living individual to, or allow that individual to have validity and meaning only within the terms of, an overall system. The technologist sees the worker as a pair of arms who should be grateful

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44. Roethlisberger (1964), 523.

when things are more sensibly arranged, that is, when things are technically rational.

The supervisor introduces financial incentives based on the assumption that the worker is an economic monad. But if people do not go to work merely to move efficiently or merely to maximize their earnings, but also to participate in a series of social relationships, and if one's job bears its load of social significance, these abstract logics may be resisted. The technologists' logic tampers with the relation between a worker and his job. This can affect "his interpersonal relationships, his traditions of craftsmanship, and his social codes which regulate his relationships to other people."45 Supervisory logic may fail because company authority differs from normal social authority. No where except in the factory are human relationships governed by efficiency, and no where else is authority so one-sided. Ordinary authority, say parental authority, is non-logical and gives an individual back about as much as it takes away because it integrates him or her into the complicated activity of living. Because supervisory logic does not represent our accepted beliefs about human relationships, it is experienced as alien. Lastly, both technological and supervisory logics are imposed by people at one level of hierarchy upon people at a different level. A worker, whose sentiments are rarely consulted and who sees him or herself at the bottom of the

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45. Roethlisberger (1964), 546.

hierarchy "cannot hold to the same degree the sentiments of those who institute the changes."

Humanistic management discovers a longing for ethical life, but this longing itself helps drive an obsessive cycle because in an unhealthy environment the need for human cooperation and association invents for itself pathological forms. Humanistic management discovers in the people it interviews a distinction between overt and latent meaning; but this does not necessarily mask a healthy ethical drive, though sometimes it does. Often it masks a resentful over-thought desire for privileges or status. Insecure employees form unacknowledged social groupings, but usually these groups have to struggle with the abstract logics of technology and management. In terms of those logics, much of human social behavior--cooperation and association--is either wrong or irrational. There are usually rules against talking or against employees working together. F. J. Roethlisberger finds that among shop foremen, when informal groups are ignored or marginalized, people start feeling pushed around.

> Man's desire to belong, to be part of a group, is constantly being frustrated. Things that are important to him seem to be disregarded.46

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46. Roethlisberger (1945), 293.

Impressive technical achievement is accompanied by:

> ...a bleak and arid human scene scorched dry by the babel of words and logics which have long ceased to have any power to motivate or fill with renewed hope and vigor the hearts of men.

Workers who do not work according to the abstract logic of management get branded as troublemakers.47 Workers who do work according to those logics lose their sense of cooperation and trust and replace them with more pathological attitudes; distrust.48 The problem starts when managers, themselves under pressure from their own logic, treat discontented workers as either troublemakers or as too dumb to understand their own interests, institute on resistant workers tighter disciplines and incentive systems 'for their own good.' The demoniac cycle is completed when workers, in the absence of viable alternatives such as healthy ethical associations, come to equate satisfaction merely with high incomes.49 This means that one might accept work disciplines, but only conditionally and externally, with extreme reservations. One constantly looks over one's shoulder to see how much money others make and constantly tries to make up for lost dignity by wringing concessions from management. Managers, to keep their relative dignity from eroding, try to wring concessions from labor or introduce more discipline.

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47. Mayo (1947a), 83.
48. Mayo (1947a), 119.
49. Argyris, 25.

Disciplinary systems tend to encourage conformity. This is true both of informal group discipline and formal supervisory discipline. They work by playing upon one's fear of being caught straggling. Managers, who have the most to lose socially, are particularly susceptible to disciplinary systems. They want no hint of trouble in their departments because other managers will be quick to take advantage of their weakness. Managers tend to emphasize only safe quantitative issues like base rates, manhours, budgets, cost curves, and production schedules.50 There is a deep seated neglect and distrust of any human or emotional content. In a world where the only legitimate language is a highly rational one, mistakes, oversights, and problems are not merely difficult encounters with finite human situations, they are <u>contradictions</u> and <u>irrationalities</u>. To be caught in these is to be banished from being taken seriously. Thus one never accepts criticism as valid. One vigorously works to refute it.

> Managerial controls tend to create group rivalries, force groups to think of their own and not the others' problems, reward an overall point of view rarely, and place groups in win-lose situations in which they are competing with each other for the same scarce resources.51

Workers adapt through more informal activities; absenteeism, turnover, and apathy, managers adapt by thinking only of their own fiefdoms and ignoring the health of their companies. The point is that the modern corporation is structurally organized to insure that distrust

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50. Roethlisberger (1945), 288.
51. Argyris, 11.

becomes the only motive for action and material gain the only source of respect. But to call these motives external is to say that everyone in the organization must spend some part of his or her day overcoming his or her own self, and this places people in proximity to the demoniac bind. If an employee chooses to deal with this ethically, say through militant union work, then one can be active, which is some relief. But union demands all accept managerial abstract logic and economic rationality. One can act, but still only against oneself. Or one can try to retreat back into oneself, but then not only cannot act, but finally cannot work either. We call this condition apathy. Both responses, union militancy and apathy, are double-bind responses. Either can easily degenerate into obsessive over-thought resentments.

Like the authors of Habits of the Heart, humanistic managers know the modern world runs, not because modern rationality works, but because we are squandering our centuries old accumulation of civic capital.52 But by now workers have developed "a social code at a lower level and in opposition to the economic logic."53 People's aspiration towards ethics cannot be read off at face value. The lower ethical code is a result of having one's efforts at community systematically defeated in the very act of association itself. An individual might yearn for ethical life, and covertly be jealously guarding or seeking privileges.

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52. Mayo (1947a), 117.
53. Mayo (1933), 121.

The only hope for ethical life in modern organizations, humanistic managers would insist, is to relax the pressures tending to conformity, competition, and distrust in the modern workplace. Their strategies for doing this involve a lot of interpersonal group discussions, more cooperative forms of assembling products, policies of on-going consultations with workers, and policies of sharing responsibilities, risks, and decisions with employees. One of the more troubling aspects of their theory is that these changes must always be instituted from above and this has lead to charges of elitism. However, though one need not agree with Mayo and Argyris that change can only come from the top down, one must still admit that change could come that way and so their scheme need not be dismissed simply on these grounds. Below I will discuss what I believe to be the Christian nature of both the analysis and the solutions given above, but first I will look at Sheldon Wolin's objections to humanistic management.

Sheldon Wolin54 criticizes Elton Mayo on two major counts. First, Wolin fears that Mayo's cooperative forms of organization are simply euphemisms for the manipulation of workers. Second, Wolin worries that over-concern with the healthy organization of work, even if equitable, will lead to a disregard for creating a properly political public sphere.

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54. Sheldon Wolin, "The Age of Organization," in Politics and Vision (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1960), 352-434.

Wolin's second criticism is serious, and I will return to it. The first worry seems to me unjustified and most of the forgoing analysis was given in order to show that Mayo is offering a deep criticism of modern organization. Wolin here uses the distrustful perspective which Mayo wishes to undermine. Chris Argyris has attempted to answer this sort of charge by describing the level of commitment he thinks would be needed to implement humanistic management.

Argyris notes that workers have become wary of new management schemes with their talk of worker input and communication and, he says, rightfully so. Most of these schemes really have turned out to be hypocritical attempts to raise productivity. But Argyris dissociates his from these cynical schemes. If management seriously wants a more human managerial style, the managers must begin by changing themselves. If change is genuine, sceptical workers will be convinced only slowly and by long and continuous experience. There is a further complication; workers usually resist genuine change. "Harmony" is not going to mean "placid." A humanistic management style would have to respect individuals enough to allow them to flare up, spout off, and argue. One of Argyris' best insights is to notice that old style Pattern A managers, for all their tough talk and discipline, are people who fear confrontation.

> Thus Pattern A may be tough on getting the job done, but it is soft on keeping the system healthy, and this softness tends to get covered up.55

It has become commonplace to hear that American workers have become apathetic. Unions are usually blamed. But if workers are apathetic, asks Argyris, why haven't Pattern A managers confronted apathetic workers? Why have they tended rather to institute rules, rely on formal procedures, or, I would add, lobby for economic austerity measures that will facelessly discipline the labor force? Presumably, to hold workers personally accountable and to ask them individually to explain themselves are deeply bound up with what it means to treat someone with dignity. To ignore workers and then lay them off at the first opportunity is neither to treat them as equal human beings nor to do one's job of keeping the organization healthy.

Clearly someone who wishes to move from Pattern A to Pattern B management will have to confront his or her own deep fear and shyness about human confrontation. This amounts to a commitment on the part of managers to changing one's own possibilities for selfhood. This separates such managers from those who are simply practicing utilitarianism by other means. Pattern A managers, it turns out, have been hiding in the rabble hypothesis; their toughness is the toughness of herd discipline. Pattern B is an invitation to quit aping the crowd and to take responsibility for one's managerial actions.

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55. Argyris, 34.

Manipulation might still exist, but as a temptation rather than an option. Supposing a manager gave into the temptation, a distrustful observer could of course give the behavior a cynical interpretation. But to give the behavior only its external utilitarian reading is to deny the behavior any ethical content at all, that is, take away any recognition that an action may have intrinsic worth. We are then left once again able to value only extrinsic worth, money. Once again no trust or cooperation would be available. One wonders how any politics could flourish in such an environment. Wolin's opposition to Elton Mayo seems to me to violate Wolin's own best instincts.

Wolin's second criticism is more serious and organizational theorists ought to accept it as friendly criticism. Organization *per se* cannot bear the weight that Mayo and Argyris place on it. Work cannot be expected to relieve everyone's general sense of anomie. Simply to make everything okay at work is to leave much else wrong. In fact, a viable democratic politics in a viable public sphere would relieve a great deal of the pressure to make our work organizations do it all. Argyris might disagree, speaking of the sorts of leftist political proposals sometimes championed in the 1960s he says:

> ...if one's concern is with human dignity, growth, and realization beyond the level of economic subsistence, then altering the political system is a good example of tinkering with the system.[56]

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56. Argyris, 44.

Mayo also disagrees and he discusses how Leninism and other forms of nation state tend to degenerate into what he calls the military-heroic model; endlessly and monotonously mobilizing for one trumped up moral equivalent of war after another.57 He in fact thinks this is the most likely political expression of the rabble hypothesis. But in the case of both Argyris and Mayo they simply cannot conceive of a serious democratic political realm. Just as organizational change must be instituted by a managerial elite, so in politics the solutions entertained are top-down; state planning, vanguardism, mass mobilization.

Wolin has a much richer notion of politics, where we might think of politics as the realm of the unsettled. Politics concerns those things about which we necessarily disagree and will need to agree to argue about. Political actors in Wolin's polity would presumably have made the same sort of deep commitments that Argyris asks of his Pattern B managers, and their experience of treating people with whom they disagree as citizens would certainly facilitate the sort of disagreement-in-trust that Argyris hopes to create at work. Likewise the commitment to human dignity Argyris advocates for the workplace would greatly facilitate the more public practice of democratic politics. I frankly do not see why these two theories have to be antithetical.

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57. Mayo (1947b), 127.

The important insight to carry away from this discussion is the notion of obsessive cycles and how they work, both within organizations and within the structure of deeply interdependent society. But by considering two ethical theories I believe I have shown that ethical reflection by itself is too short sighted to address this problem. Earlier my brief discussion of aesthetic reflection showed that aesthetics could understand such cycles, but that aesthetics tends to celebrate them since they render people aesthetically fascinating. Now I will turn to a more theoretical discussion of the mechanisms of obsessive cycles, and the insights of the religious sphere.

F. Rene Girard and the Mechanism of the Skandalon

According to humanistic management the modern organization tends to be a theater in which characters try to satisfy their various needs for human association against a backdrop of low trust and high conformity. This results in characters ignoring the overall health of their organizations in order to be accepted members of some group or other, that is, it results in behavior by which one hopes to blend in. Or it might result in pathological exceptions; those who feel excluded, slighted, and conspired against. These last are of course only variations on the first response. The Hawthorne researchers discovered

these people often regretted not being properly recognized as being superior. So far I have discussed these characters from the point of view of a remarkably insightful group of American social scientists. Now I would like to briefly discuss this material from the point of view of an avowedly Christian perspective, that of Rene Girard.

In the Scapegoat Girard discusses these issues in terms of communal violence. The Bible differs from mythical texts, though it deals with all the same relationships and themes, in that whereas myth hides a guilty victim of communal murder or ostracism, the Bible constantly makes sure that its communal victims are innocent and openly acknowledged. Myth is communal murder as told from the point of view of the persecutors; the Passion is the same story retold from the point of view of the innocent victim. The Passion is therefore the un-myth, since it reveals the mechanism of the persecutors account, and once the mechanisms are understood they lose their hold on us. It is worth discussing, at least schematically, these mechanisms and how they work.

First of all the scapegoat at the heart of myth has been subjected to a double transformation. First, he or she has been made guilty of crimes so horrendous that they threaten to unravel the very fabric of the community. Myth mentions stars out of orbit, droughts, pestilence, animals refusing to mother their offspring, and great enmities among people. The scapegoat is found to be responsible for all this. Oedipus

has killed his father and married his mother, or the Jew has poisoned the water.

There are always distinguishing marks of scapegoats, something that sets them apart. Anyone could have been chosen, but the choice falls on someone who has a defining mark. Oedipus is a cripple, a foreigner, a king, a great soldier, and blind in one eye. The medieval Jews often stood out because they were better doctors than Christians and, since he who has power over the cure must have power over the disease, they were blamed for the plague. Such distinguishing marks become the reason for and focus of the accusation, the victim is hated without cause. Finally the community draws up in a circle around the victim and unanimously and anonymously kill him or her, perhaps through stoning, perhaps with weapons, or perhaps they simply force the victim over a cliff, or they ostracize him or her.

The second move comes because the community, which before was disintegrating and at one another's throats, is now temporarily reunified through the unitary act of communal murder.58 The second movement is to ascribe the renewal of the community to the victim. The one who had the power to destroy now also has the power to heal, and all good comes from him or her. The victim is transformed into a god or goddess. This double move is accompanied, as the myth is reinterpreted over generations, by a denial of the original violence, but traces

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58. Girard, 42-44.

always remain. Thus the baby Zeus is ringed by the Curetes and when he cries, to save him from his father, Kronos, who would eat him, they bang their swords and weapons to drown out his cries.59 Here the circle around the innocent one is said to protect, not kill. Or in other myths the scapegoat god is killed unintentionally or because there is a trickster who, while not actually doing the deed, is responsible for it, while he who actually does it is blameless.60 These are the sorts of moves which Girard calls the persecutor's account of violence. They are always cover-ups. The Bible never gives this sort of account. To really understand how communal violence works, in order to read this subtext in ordinary myths, one should study a story in which all the elements of the scapegoat mechanism are present, but where it is not carried through. Such a story is the death of John the Baptist.

Girard's chapter on John the Baptist is relevant for this study because, first of all, that is where he gives his most rigorous statement of how the scapegoat mechanism, or skandalon, works and because that is where he ties the mechanism into a structure of mimetic desire.

Mimetic desire has a sort of monkey see/monkey do quality. The story of John the Baptist begins, like so many such stories--like Cain and Abel--with sibling rivalry. Two brothers want the same life; "the

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27. Girard, 70.
60. Girard, 71.

same heritage, the same crown, the same wife." Both brothers were called Herod. Herod the petty potentate can only hope to have his brother's wife, Herodias, at his brother's expense. Two brothers are divided over an indivisible heritage. It is impossible to arbitrate such a dispute. John warns Herod against this kind of desire and asks him to renounce it. But Herod does not heed the warning, and desire festers.

Girard points out that once he possesses her, Herodias loses her direct influence over Herod, since his desire was not so much for her, but for his brother's wife. Thus Herodias resorts to her daughter and establishes a triangular relation, and possibly even makes her daughter a prize for the rival brothers. The situation becomes more and more mimetic; twin desires are multiplied. Everyone slowly becomes possessed by them.

For Herodias, wishing only to be possessed as a mimetic prize, John's warning threatens her with obliteration; her intensity is like Dona Elvira's only more deadly. Herod, fearing her vengeance on John, has locked up John both to appease and to thwart Herodias. But then John becomes the subject of a mimetic desire between Herod and Herodias. By shielding John, Herod seems to Herodias to be verifying John against her. Her hatred for John grows immense. "Attracted by John because rejected by him, the desire becomes the desire of destruction; it glides immediately towards violence."

> By imitating my brother's desire, I desire what he desires; we mutually prevent each other from satisfying our common desire. As resistance grows on both sides, so desire becomes strengthened; the model becomes increasingly obstructive and the obstacle becomes increasingly the model, so that ultimately the desire is only interested in that which opposes it. It is only taken with obstacles created by itself. John the Baptist is that obstacle; inflexible, inaccessible to all attempts at corruption, it is that which fascinates Herod and, even more so, Herodias. Herodias is always the coming into being of Herod's desire.
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> As mimeticism becomes more exacerbated it increases its dual power of attraction and repulsion and communicates itself as hatred more rapidly from one individual to another.61

There is always a crowd at lynchings, pogroms and communal murders. Girard is trying to comprehend how individuals come to be a crowd, how all individual desires become focused on one victim, whose death is called for in unison. There is a crowd in Herod's banquet hall, eminent people whose good opinion he craves, but how is it that they all close on John with him? Girard claims that because the mimetic structure of desire is the same in everyone, and because everyone is obsessed with some John the Baptist, and because resistance strengthens and intensifies desire, substitutions are possible.62 As the intensity grows, my ability to transfer my enmity from my John to someone else's grows also. Mimetic desire seeks a lowest common denominator in each person and after a certain point you cannot tell one desiring individual from any other. They all copy each other, and in fact originate in mimetic rivalry. Everyone desired the same thing from the beginning, their desires were always already related.

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61. Girard, 130.
62. Girard, 134.

The catalyst was first the banquet and then the dance. John the Baptist is by now the scandal, the stumbling block that keeps us from dancing. Solome's dance doesn't arouse sexual desire, she is only a child. It plays on the longing for free movement, the longing to say yes. Mimetic rivalry has bottled up everyone in inarbitrable positions. Brothers oppose brothers, the social fabric of community is unraveled. There is no longer a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence. But the crisis is deferred by focusing on the scapegoat. The crisis resulted from a clash of intertwining of desires, but desire instead holds its Other responsible. It cultivates its obstacles, becomes full of hatred, and is scandalized by them.

It happens that Herod, completely moved by the freedom of Solome's dance, and perceiving that his guests are also moved, offers her anything she desires. But she has no desires of her own, she is a child. Her mother has to tell her what to desire, and even so Solome childishly takes it too literally. Herodias' "The head of John the Baptist," which might only be a metaphor for simple execution becomes "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head, here and now, on a dish." The thing is clearly beyond anyone's control at that point.

Thus mimeticism envelopes everything, everyone suddenly speaks with one voice, everyone sees his own scandal in John. Each one can exchange his torments for John's head. "By espousing the violent desire

of Solome, all the guests feel as if they are satisfying their own desire."63

Before leaving John, it is interesting to mention that there were rumors of his resurrection. Herod apparently believed Jesus was a resurrected John. If John were a standard myth, he would have become sacred. The persecutor cannot believe the scandal is really dead. His hatred built a victim into a powerful being; a being too powerful to really die. But Bible stories do not make the victim either guilty or sacred in this way. In the story of John the Baptist it is impossible to believe that John was the cause of social disruption, nor is it possible to make him a god. He is rather an innocent man who spoke a simple truth.

The examples at Hawthorn are, of course, not so extreme as the beheading of John the Baptist. For Girard violence rests at the bottom of all human association. In times of serious crisis it can always rise up to demand its scapegoats. But usually it need not go so far. Between times things are less extreme, mildly demonic as opposed to wildly Satanic. Girard presents an example of a recurring but not catastrophic demonic cycle in the story of the demons of Garesa. Certainly many modern institutions feed on mimetic relationships in which the scapegoat apes the community's potential for violence while the community violently denies and preserves his accusation. But within

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63. Girard, 135.

organizations the problem is most often akin to Saint Peter's denial of Jesus.

By the late 1940s Elton Mayo had become convinced that the scientific and technical revolutions in work had destroyed any American tradition of community; and had failed to find any other suitable way to relate a worker to his or her work. Instead there were pathological strategies within the plant to integrate oneself into various groups. This is exactly what Girard claims Peter was doing when he denied Jesus. Jesus had just been arrested, his followers and disciples had scattered. The social group within which Peter was a disciple had dissolved. When Peter went into the courtyard there were guards and servants warming themselves around a fire, and Peter tried to join this circle.

The fire circle is powerfully integrating. It brings everyone together in a ring facing one another. It is intimate. The fire galvanizes a sort of community. Peter, who was now alone and empty, tried to join in the circle at the fire. A servant girl, perhaps a popular young woman, objected to Peter's being there. Wasn't Peter with Jesus? Peter said no and left the circle, but not the courtyard. She pursued him, repeating mimetically what she had asked him before. The first time she failed to arouse the others, but this time she pulled it off. Her example worked. Also Peter denied knowing Jesus a second time and this second denial irritated them. Come on, now! they say. His accent gives him away, he is a Galilean. In other words they are

saying: You don't really belong here, you ought to be out hiding or something and it really irritates us that you are pretending to be one of us. Peter responded by calling down curses on Jesus and denying he ever knew the man.

I should point out the incredible power of the group; even Jesus' closest disciples can not resist joining it. In the end Peter tries to remain in the group by hating what they hate. He of course fails. Anyone who has ever had a political group infiltrated by a police informer should recognize the problem. The outsider is the loudest person to espouse the group's causes and especially its enmities, but even while getting the letter of the thing right, the outsider still gets it wrong. We saw this with Salome. Neither she nor Peter really shares the linguistic community they try to imitate. In Peter's case the mechanism of scandal only works to exclude him further from the cozy circle, but it clearly shows the attraction of the crowd, and how groups maintain themselves by making distinctions and maintaining them. The outsider is he who dissolves the distinctions. It is this mechanism we see at Hawthorne.

In the U.S. labor force there have always been scores of immigrants; people whose old ethnic communities are dissolving or who, at work, try to play down their ethnic identities. But people can be singled out in various other ways as well. At Hawthorne there were multiple systems of sentiment involved in all sorts of distinctions,

gradations, associations, and hierarchies. Old-timers were different from new-comers, office workers different from shop workers, supervisors of one rank differed from supervisors of another, inspectors differed from assemblers, and so on. There were also prestige hierarchies. Men's work was superior to women's, office work superior to shop work. (These two obviously conflict. It is interesting that often individuals in the women's movement will challenge the former while working to strengthen the latter. The most sexist behavior is usually said to be that of blue collar workers.) Assembling some parts was superior to assembling others. There were distinctions of race, sex, religion, maturity, age, education, and service.64 All this constituted "a complex configuration of relationships in which different groups are separated out and yet tied together."65 This system of "many conflicting forces and attitudes...working at cross purposes with each other" placed everyone in mimetic binds.

> Somehow or other, no effective relationship between "the worker and his work" had been established; and since a community of interest at this point was lacking, the group failed to establish an integrate activity and fell into a degree of discord which no one could understand or control.66

Mayo, of course, believed better communication and open trustful confrontation could diffuse this situation. He also believed that if people worked from a genuine motivation rather than the artificial ones

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64. Roethlisberger (1964), 539.
65. Roethlisberger (1964), 549.
66. Mayo (1933), 118-19.

imposed by incentive systems that the pathological binds and discords might begin to untie themselves. From our discussions of mimetic rivalry we know his instincts are good, even if we doubt the prescriptions of humanistic management are enough. In the atmosphere of low trust, competition, and conformity which Mayo uncovers Girard would tell us to expect mimetic rivalry and desire, ostracism, demonia, and scapegoats.

G. Conclusion

This discussion of organizational and personal pathologies puts us in a position to appreciate the relevance of a whole host of supposedly marginal texts, ranging from the outbreak of cholera in Jonathan Turner's Illinois to Kant's preoccupation with Cain and Abel and the propaedeutic of violence, to civic republicanism's opposition to Will Kane and Travis McGee. Modern communities have a deep problem with mimetic violence which we can neither successfully cover up in communal myths and traditions nor resign ourselves to. According to Girard this is because the Biblical account has done its work on us. This means that no version of community life which denies or covers up its victimization mechanisms will ever satisfy us. And yet, because we are so interdependent and subject to such a continuous reciprocity, our age is perhaps more susceptible to mimetic rivalry than any heretofore known, at least in scale if not in quality. The message with which the

religious sphere informs and corrects the ethical is this: that the single individual is higher than the universal. This is, of course, mysterious, paradoxical, and absurd, and thus can never arise from the *logos* of ethics. Yet it continues to haunt American popular culture.

To return to *High Noon* and *High Plains Drifter*, we can see in Will Kane the marks of an ostracized figure. He is singled out by his badge, his ability to handle a gun, his courage, his senses of justice and responsibility, and his incorruptibility. But he is not guilty of anything. Among the three actors--himself, the killer, and the crowd--he is clearly distanced from the evil that threatens the town, though still the townspeople believe that were it not for him, evil would not be threatening. Thus the community is unraveling, the accusation goes, because of Will Kane. The townspeople offer him many chances to leave, they turn on him, the killer's victim is also their victim. They have become a mimetic crowd, each person monotonously becoming anonymous to eject him from the community. He is the community's victim whether he wins or loses.

The unstable element in victimization stories is the villain. Is the villain associated with the crowd or with the victim? In the persecutor's version of the story the villain is tied to the victim, to horrendous evil. In the American western movie, there is never an attempt to associate the villain with the scapegoat, and *High Noon* does not explicitly link him to the crowd either, though I have just shown

how the crowd does link itself to the villain. It is also implicitly done when Kane throws his badge in the dust, repudiating the sign of the victim. He thus discloses the scapegoat mechanism and refuses to be part of it any longer.

This works for the character Will Kane, but, as I said earlier, it transforms the Will Kane theme into a scandal and audiences were irresistibly drawn to it for twenty more years. The American audience was continually accused of being a mimetic community and continually took revenge on the victims who dared expose them. I also said that High Plains Drifter broke this demoniac cycle, but now I must amend this slightly. The ghostly drifter takes things a step further, he takes revenge on the community; the victim fights back and wins. In the process he reveals much more about the scapegoat mechanism; the alliance between the townspeople and their demons, the complicity of the audience, the marshal's role as obstacle, and the poverty and mimetic quality of the acquisitive virtues. But because it is still vengeance, and even though vengeance at least takes responsibility for its own actions, the cycle merely repeated itself outside the western. Now it is in the even more monotonous violence of the police movie. Of course, there are other interesting aspects to the drifter. He is, like the Commandant at the end of Don Giovanni, a ghost. The hope, at least socially, lies in the claim that only the spiritual can provide the resources needed to overcome mimetic rivalry, or to even call it by its name.

Obviously one need not see these movies as celebrating the tradition of American utilitarianism, but as offering a profound indictment of it. I have also tried to show the deeply Christian nature of this indictment. There is in American political culture a Christian notion of justice at work. It is this notion by which Kant can call the daily anonymity of bureaucrats and shopkeepers radical evil, by which Jonathan Baldwin Turner can oppose a civic ethics based on an alliance between Greek ethics and the doctrine of Omnipotence, and by which George William Curtis can oppose the spirit of party faction. The notion of mimetic violence lies at the heart of American distrust of ethical life. In American popular culture, folk tales and sea chanteys, collective violence and cowardice are seldom successfully covered over, and this constitutes popular culture's great strength and even our greatest hope for moral progress. We can now better appreciate Kant's prescience when he linked the experiences of discontent and unworthiness to the aspiration for human freedom.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF SELF-ASSERTION (THE DEATH OF OMNIPOTENCE)

In an earlier chapter Immanuel Kant gave us a glimpse of what it might look like to combine freedom and organization. Kant believed that to sustain the notion of freedom, one needed the two concepts of moral action and personal worth. These in turn required a belief in the possibility of a moral progress which enlightened individuals would culturally impose upon the natural world. For Kant moral progress also required a moral creator whose rational plan could guarantee a possible progressive approximation of our moral ideas to their realization. But Kant rejected the notion of a Greek cosmos. He instead replaced divine voluntarism with human voluntarism. Because he could no longer consider the cosmos a beneficent provider, whether of material goods, theoretical knowledge, or of moral direction, human voluntarism had to take the form of self-assertion. Self-assertion, Kant thought, had to be the affair of intelligible communities and, in an interdependent world, could not be an individual endeavor. Self-assertion, even of morality, finally involves one in organized rational activity. These organizations, because they are themselves assertions upon material, rather than expressions of cosmic purposes, immediately seem to undermine the very freedom which makes them necessary. For instance, to what extent is it

permissible to subordinate nature to self-asserted rational principles; to what extent must people who are insufficiently convinced of assertive rationality be made to comply with organizational imperatives? These sorts of questions, along with the discussion of mimetic desire in the previous chapter, seem to undermine our faith that modern practice might somehow work out these details. We might, of course, think of Max Weber's characterization of the modern calling:

> Specialist without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nulity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.1

All this presents me with a complication. None of the thinkers mentioned so far expressly uses the term 'self-assertion.' The term belongs rather to Hans Blumenberg's analysis, and, as used so far, amounts to an interpretive projection upon these thinkers. It was only after reading Blumenberg that I was able to see a problematic of self-assertion in Kant, Turner, Curtis, and Mayo. This problematic allowed me to take these thinkers more seriously than I otherwise would have, since they were replying to a fundamental problem of the age. But now the notion of self-assertion may have, as a framework of interpretation, become existentially unsustainable. That is, in faithfully following its lead, I have undermined my own faith in it. In order to continue to respect the notion of self-assertion, and the thinkers whose work it interprets, I must now reconsider Blumenberg's discussion.

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1. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Talcott Parsons, trans. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 182.

The idea, however, is not to simply say to him, yes, but it all turned out so baddly. To say this I would turn to texts like Heidegger's "Question Concerning Technology," or Foucault's Discipline and Punish. But I am sure Blumenberg has read his Kafka. Rather, I wish to engage him at the philosophical level, and especially with texts which share with him the conviction that Immanuel Kant is crucially important to the modern self-conception. Thus I will consider Heidegger's Basic Problems of Phenomenology and What is a Thing?, and Foucault's The Order of Things. With these texts I hope to deepen my understanding and appreciation of Blumenberg's problematic of self-assertion.

In Chapter I, I said that organizations in America grew up in a context of Protestant religious problems, especially the disenchantment of nature and the shift from an emphasis on God's omnipotence to an emphasis on God's moral teleology. In Chapter II, I discussed this teleology in greater detail, but the withering of omnipotence and the lose of the cosmos were both treated as Kant's "characterizations" of the modern situation. That is, I did not question them much. In this chapter I will use Blumenberg's discussion as a means for understanding why these things were no longer available, but yet were still operative as negative motivations. Their passing could not be met with indifference, but called forth something called self-assertion. What does Blumenberg mean by all this?

It is characteristic of Blumenberg's way of arguing that the intellectual history he writes leads to certain claims on behalf of self-assertion. Self-assertion was and remains historically necessary, thus, since we must will there be self-assertion, we must also will all the presuppositions of self-assertion. If certain philosophical speculations undermine self-assertion, these speculations ought to be abandoned. This, I suppose, is an expample of self-assertion at work. One of the things we are told not to ask is Heidegger's question of Being; another might be the focus of this dissertation, the organizational implications of self-assertion.

In the preceding chapter I found that one reason organizational life might look so bleak is that it, at least in the forms we know, relies for its motivational basis on structures of mimetic desire. These structures are in turn facilitated by a pervasive concern for materialist gain and the anxieties produced by a world of relative scarcity. How did we come to rely so exclusively on materialism and why do we characterize the world in terms of scarcity? Are these things just bad attitudes or are they inscribed somehow the decision to be modern?

If they are, then is self-assertion a sort of 'decisionism?' Blumenberg wants self-assertion to be a form of voluntarism, but doesn't it set in advance what problems we might consider and what solutions we

might try and what we have to simply live with? Seen this way Kantian voluntarism would share some of the aspects that make us uncomfortable with Hobbes' decisionist social contract. Blumenberg notes that in Hobbesean theory "the contract of subjection can never be one that is yet to be sealed, but is only one that is inferred to have gone before."2 Blumenberg asserts against Carl Schmitt's juristic positivism that:

> ...juristic positivism must ally itself with the historical factor that puts the contingency of positive institutions beyond the reach of observation. This is why decisionism derives its relation to legitimacy from the negation of voluntarism--because voluntarism is as it were the institutionalized instability of absolute power, while decisionism 'lives' from the fact that 'decisions' have always already been made, that they appear in the form of historical authorities.

Thus organizational resignation and routine replace progress and freedom as organizational motivations.

The ultimate decisionist is, of course, the sovereign state. "Decisionism cannot function without a 'sovereign' be it only a metaphorical one." Actually the sovereign in whom final decision inheres almost has to be a metaphor since he must simultaneously both decide and legitimate his own authority to decide. The question is whether self-assertion is not already a deeper form of decisionism, an

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2. Hans Blumenberg, The Legitimacy of The Modern Age, Robert Wallace, trans., (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983) 98.

ultimate soveriegn, which might play itself out as positivism or transcendentalism or pragmatism.

In this chapter I will address these various issues through a debate between Hans Blumenberg, Martin Heidegger, and Michel Foucault. All three thinkers have an appreciation of Kant's work and its aspirations for freedom. All three would agree that Kant's work is central to an understanding of, using Blumenberg's term, modern self-assertion. All three take seriously the modern problematic as Kant understood it, though none of them believes that Kant's solutions have been programatically successful. Yet their approaches to the study of modernity vary greatly, and their disagreements throw light on the sorts of problems I was just discussing.

A. Hans Blumenberg

In previous chapters I have discussed the importance of the disenchantment of nature, the lose of a 'prose of the world,' and even the death of God in America. For Hans Blumenberg such events in our intellectual history are different ways of designating the relation between the religious doctrine of theological absolutism and the modern response to it, human self-assertion. Blumenberg's thesis is that the medieval doctrine of omnipotence aroused a deep anxiety which it then

could not contain. Out of this anxiety was born human self-assertion as a projection of a particular stance upon the world.

> ..."self-assertion" here does not mean the naked biological and economic preservation of the human organism by means naturally available to it. It means an existential program, according to which man posits his existence in a historical situation and indicates to himself how he is going to deal with the reality surrounding him and what use he will make of the possibilities that are open to him.3

This project must be differentiated from self-preservation, a naturalistic--and positivist-- biological conception. Self-assertion is firmly rooted in an existential situation, with its own historical a priori. It thus contains possibilities that "self-preservation" would not have; it, for instance, leaves room for freedom and for self-limitation in history because its understandings and agendas are potentially open to thought. Blumenberg illustrates the difference by discussing modern technical activity. If one understands technology in terms of self-preservation, one necessarily must view nature as a beneficiary which is deficient in the means of distribution. Human technical accomplishment then has the function of assisting and supplementing nature to execute essentially natural ends. One will then risk viewing the "growth of the potency of technique" in the modern period as simply a continuation or acceleration of something which is present throughout all human history. But, argues Blumenberg, modern

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3. Blumenberg, 138.

self-assertion grew out of a will, not to intensify an old orientation, but actually "extort from...reality a new 'humanity.'"

In the late Middle Ages two doctrines had changed the face of reality. These were the doctrines of omnipotence and predestination. European Christiandom's struggle with these doctrines is brilliantly and meticulously cataloged and rehashed in The Legitimacy of the Modern Age. The gist of the story is that beginning with St. Augustine's refutation of Gnosticism, Christian theologies were committed to maintaining God's power over evil. Gnosticism had maintained that evil in the world was the result of the evil Demiurge who has weaved us into a state of forgetfulness. This imperfect state is his cosmos, in which we are lost in what I would term a mimetic existence. The God of salvation brings us back to ourselves by reminding us who we truly are.

The problem comes with the Incarnated Jesus. If He were really a man, He would be a creature of the Demiurge, with no power to get out of the cosmos. If He were actually God, He could be said to be using manhood as a disguise in order to slip by the Demiurge. But if He needed a disguise He must be subordinated to evil and have no power over it. Furthermore, as time passed it became apparent that Christ's second coming might take a long time. On a Gnostic interpretation this might be further evidence of God's powerlessness to remove his arch enemy, the Demiurge.

Blumenberg also mentions an administrative drawback to the Gnostic doctrine in an enduring world, especially one in which Roman civilization knew itself to be declining. Civilized pagans viewed the Christian doctrine of the Last Day as being hostile to the world. They viewed the persecutions Christians underwent as a mild foretaste of what, in their view, Christians wished to visit even upon innocent women and children. The Gnostic doctrine had no reply to such charges since salvation lay exactly in the negation of the cosmos. If the Church were going to have to exist in the world for a long time, it would need a doctrine in which that world was not wholly irredeemable.

For Augustine, God created the world and he created it good. Evil in the world is the result of human sin, and humans were accredited with free will, which made their transgressions possible. However, some neo-Platonic elements from Gnosticism remain; sin leaves man in a fallen state, in what I would again call mimetic rivalry. For Blumenberg's purposes this means that theoretical knowledge is severely limited because, since fallen insight is measured against God's omniscience, what does not effect our immediate needs for salvation is beyond our ability. However, our curiosity can extend beyond our needs. Some science is even encouraged. But the scientific thinker who pursues theoretical knowledge beyond the point of what is needed for ethics and salvation is, according to Augustine, a busybody; he is officious.

Over the course of the Middle Ages these elements became intensified. The commitment to God's power eventually led nominalists to the point of saying that any statement about God's intentions for us, or about how much of His knowledge, and over which areas, He might have left accessible to human exploration; all such questions were simply unanswerable because every answer implied a restriction of God's omnipotence. But this formulation, designed to humble human endeavor and encourage a surrender to faith, actually had the reverse affect. This is because it seemed to open everything to a radical contingency. For instance, we could no longer assume, as had the Greeks, that the cosmos was the actualization of all that was possible, since for God to exhaust all possibilities in creating the cosmos, he would necessarily have had to duplicate Himself; in which case He would no longer be the most powerful Being. Nor could God be assumed to work only according to the schema of the Platonic Ideas, and it became inexplicable why only these Ideas and no others were used. Nor could He even be held to having made a cosmos that fit human conceptual frameworks at all. At its most radical, the doctrine of omnipotence forces one to assume that God at each instant freshly creates from nothing each and every thing in the world. It is inexplicable why or even if He maintains the physical continuity between one instant and the next; or whether he will continue to do so.

If we tie this to the notion of predestination, we can see that this situation was fraught with anxiety for human-kind. As Max Weber

pointed out, the doctrine of predestination produces anxiety because one never knows whether one is saved or not, in a situation where being saved is not a matter of indifference. This is why, for Weber, ascetic Calvinists and Pietists pursued earthly success. This worked best, as I have stressed earlier, where Aristotelian physics was in place alongside Christian doctrine.

Blumenberg points out that when the doctrine of omnipotence is intensified to this level, God begins to make no difference. Like in Gnosticism, the dependable God is the God of salvation, but even here, He has withheld from men's knowledge "the range over which he chooses to be dependable."

In a similar predicament in an earlier era, Gnostics had been able to articulate an escape in salvation. But now escape was blocked by predestination. In that same earlier era, Epicurus could articulate a doctrine of ataraxia as interworldly composure and self-sufficient indifference. But now ataraxia was blocked because nature was no longer a cosmos containing a minimum of beneficence to support indifference. Nature had become creation; ataraxia had rested on the physics of a cosmos. Our nature is no longer reassuring, and our physics has to be about real human power over nature to compensate for our radical insecurity.

Nor could a few good men repeat the Stoic individual's fulfillment in philosophy. Philosophy now had to assure the adequacy of mankind's possession of the world, since the problems of nature could not longer be forced to the edge of consciousness. One could no longer rise above the world, nature had become a pressing theme which made insistent demands on philosophy.

These demands were acknowledged, Blumenberg notes, through practical solutions like method, an intersubjective, inter-generational way of focusing the "incomparable theoretical energy, in whose service both individuals and generations were enrolled."4 But also, because once neither the cosmos nor the Platonic Ideas could serve as limits upon creation an infinity of possible worlds and their permutations became possible, late medieval thinkers began looking for conceptual constructions which could be used in any possible world as 'instruments' of understanding: mathematics and materialism. Late medieval thinkers speculated that, though God might know more about geometric figures than we do, of what we do know, because it is a priori and necessary, God could not know any better. Matter, as a speciesless substrate, is the stuff from which man can make whatever he wants. Materiality, of course, becomes the ideal premise of an attitude to the world defined by technicity.5 Because God is hidden, "man constructs for himself a counter world of elementary rationality and manipulability."6

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4. Blumenberg, 155.
5. Blumenberg, 164.
6. Blumenberg, 173.

Earlier, says Blumenberg, the nominalist Gregor of Remiri had begun to answer the problem of sense perception in a world which may not correspond to human conceptions as follows: the act of perception never justifies more than a limited judgment. "I see this color," does not include the more ambitious judgment, "This color exists."

Such confining of certainty to the facts of consciousness, says Blumenberg, already contains the theoretical minimum of self-assertion. Already it asserts, though with a new intent, Augustine's free will, and it asserts free will precisely in so far as human beings are responsible for what is bad in the world. If we are accountable for evil, then we can be held accountable only to the extent that we can be responsible for our own perceptions. If we are to remain responsible for bad in the world, this minimum must be assumed.

When Descartes in his First Meditation radicalized Ocham's thesis of God's absolute potential into the possibility of a malicious deceiver,

> ...he sharpened the doubt surrounding certainty to such an extent that the pragmatic formulas for the self-assertion of reason [such as Gregor's] could no longer be sufficient.7

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7. Blumenberg, 195.

Thus, says Blumenberg, Descartes' contribution is not to articulate a brand new plan for modernity, but rather to make the implications of theological absolutism more crucially plain; make them into such a threat "that the basis for resistance could only be found in absolute immanence."

In 1347 Jean de Mirecourt had already noted that if God could tamper with the knowledge seeker when that seeker was being honest, then He could tamper with moral responsibility too. In that case God would be the author of, say, hatefulness, which is, of course, contrary to God's goodness, and therefore cannot be supposed. Descartes, in line with this, discovered that the unity of the subject excludes insecurity of theoretical knowledge. God might fake appearances, but in moral questions He cannot hold the moral subject responsible for it. This carries back to epistemology. There is a point at which knowledge becomes so impossible that moral responsibility is lost as well. At that point, like one small atom against theological absolutism, early moderns asserted a resistance, a self-defense, a limit to omnipotence.[8]

Thus modern knowledge relies crucially upon moral freedom. Since there is one incontestable thing--morality and responsibility--knowledge is grounded. All that is necessary is to show that theoretical knowledge is the expression of a consolidated self, the same self that is morally responsible. Thus Descartes articulates "the primeval right

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8. Blumenberg, 196.

of self-assertion," that "anthropological minimum" which is "the essence of the modern age's understanding of itself."

Again according to Jean de Mirecourt, knowledge can be a product either of Aristotelian receptiveness or of the activity of a knowing subject. If the former, God produces all knowledge. If the latter, the knower must, as a 'secondary cause' intervene, and so become implicated in what is known. Just as the primary cause, God, could not substitute anything for itself without duplicating itself, neither can the secondary cause allow any valid substitutions for itself either. That is, only a unified subject can be held responsible. Blumenberg stresses that because God had become absolute, man's concern for himself also had to become absolute. Because of this, modern man had to reject the Aristotelian conception of receptiveness, "For this receptive openness delivers man up to an absolute power of whose goodwill he cannot be sure."9

Scholasticism had early-on accepted the Greek notion of cosmos. The problem, which plagued Scholasticism right up to modern times, was that, unlike Plato's demiurge, the God of creation cannot be contained within His cosmos. He could not be assumed to have merely made the world according to pre-established universal rules, and therefore, "the act of the divine will no longer related simply to the existence of the

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9. Blumenberg, 197.

world, but also to the universal truths that hold in it."10 The only way such a situation could guarantee the world's lawfulness would be if possibility was coincident with reality and divine reason was exhausted by divine will. Of course, nominalism had rejected both assumptions in favor of God's infinite potential.

> The attribute of infinity destroys the possibility not only of justifying God on the basis of his works but also of giving man the security of a cosmos that--as it was formulated for the Platonic demiurge--must be the best and insurpassable instance of what is possible as material appearance.

The question then arises of whether the hidden truth of the creation is not a matter of indifference. Could one retreat into ataraxia? But the Middle Ages had theological reasons for rejecting such a negative happiness. If happiness were merely the absence of pain or the absence of insecurity arising from uncertainty, then the bliss of the Beatific vision would become a sort of superfluous addition to a condition already sufficient unto itself. The essence of man's need for happiness must continue to be fulfillible only in the possession of God's truth. But that truth, because of predestination, is unavailable to this-worldly knowledge. It is in this situation that early moderns began to assert the hypothetical mode.

If one says, "Well! Let's just assume we have sufficient certainty to continue," the implication is of self-assertion. It means

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10. Blumenberg, 198.

we assert we have the wherewithal by which this self-assertion is possible. Or to say, "No! You can't say 'X' because 'X' makes physics impossible," is to assert that metaphysics must never make physics impossible. If knowledge of nature is a condition which makes self-assertion possible, then the epistemological conditions under which knowledge of nature is possible must be assumed to be given. The appeal to 'the normal course of nature' is thus no longer teleological, "but rather hypothetical, in the sense of a general supposition without which no other hypothesis has any sense at all--a postulate of self-defense, which does not assert the regularity and dependability of nature but rather assumes them as the only possibility left to man."11 With Descartes this was extended to the assertion of "the freedom to abstain from all categorical judgment in favor of hypothetical indecision."12 The ultimate assertion is that "man does not require certainty in the sense of insight into the plan of creation and the reality lying open before God in order to assert himself in existence."

This means that human knowledge is no longer even a cloudy version of divine knowledge, it is radically different. In relation to happiness this means that human endeavors to prolong or materially enhance this-worldly existence can be strictly distinguished from the other-worldly conditions of their ultimate fulfillment. But in the

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11. Blumenberg, 191.
12. Blumenberg, 199.

context of the withering of the cosmos, and the lose of its teleological beneficent protection, henceforth:

> man has to adjust himself to coming to terms with a nature that is not adjusted for his benefit, so as to anticipate the inconsiderateness of natural processes and to make up for the inadequacy of their products by his own production. Hypothesis, which from one point of view is the formal expression of the renunciation of the claim to truth in the traditional sense of adequacy, becomes from another point of view a means of self-assertion, the potential for human production of that which nature makes scarce or does not provide for man at all.13

This means that theory is no longer a way of contemplation, an end in itself, but is, and must be, mediated through human production. Blumenberg summarizes this entire discussion of the geneology of self-assertion as follows:

> The absolutism of the hidden God freed the theoretical attitude from its pagan ideal of contemplating the world from the divine point of view and thus ultimately sharing God's happiness. The price of this freedom is that theory will no longer relate to the resting point of a blissful onlooker but rather to the workplace of human exertion. Theory that can no longer be anything but hypothesis has really already lost its immanent value, its status as an end in itself; thus the functionalization of theory for arbitrarily chosen ends, its entry into the role of a technique, of a means, is a process subsequent to the loss of its status as an end in itself.14

Hypothesis is an escape from the old criterion of adequacy to the object, and method emerges as "artfulness and self-defense" against human inadequacy to know the divine truth.

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13. Blumenberg, 199.
14. Blumenberg, 200.

Stated this way, the modern turning to rational-instrumental logic and organization does constitute a sort of 'decisionism.' However, Blumenberg constantly maintains that this 'decision,' while it does commit us to the technical as such, and though it does close off many older methods for being at home in the world, does not mean that we are required to endorse without question whatever technology disgorges. The technical itself, he says, need not play the primary motivating role in technical processes. Blumenberg is the first to admit that technology can create a sterile world. Thus we are not, in relation to technicity, in a situation analogous to Hobbes' citizens in the Leviathan. In Hobbes, whenever we protest we are told first that we already agreed to the contract and second that any deviation will make the whole contract come unglued. Blumenberg says modern technicity leaves room for criticism and change.

It remains here only to say something about the relation between Kant and Blumenberg. In many ways Blumenberg seems to me to be an exemplary Kantian, and my own analysis of Kant owes a great deal to <u>The Legitimacy of the Modern Age</u>. One of the chief advantages of reading Kant more like Blumenberg would is that it corrects a tendency to understand Kant as a rationalist. Blumenberg would say rather that Kant is better understood as an anthropologist. Kant explores the anthropological minimum perhaps better than anyone, and also understands better than most the extreme drawbacks of anthropology. To underscore

all this one could cite any of hundreds of examples from the Critique of Pure Reason, but I will quote only one. It comes, appropriately, from Kant's discussion of hypothetical reason:

> The hypothetical employment of reason is regulative only; its sole aim is, so far as may be possible, to bring unity into the body of our detailed knowledge, and thereby to approximate the rule to universality.
>
> The hypothetical employment of reason has, therefore, as its aim the systematic unity of the knowledge of understanding, and this unity is the criterion of the truth of its rules. The systematic unity (as a mere idea) is, however, only a projected unity, to be regarded not as given in itself, but as a problem only.15

Blumenberg's analysis of self-assertion uses a certain structural triad: Theology-Cosmology-Anthropology. Whether this triad need still confine us, I cannot say, but Blumenberg stresses that it is basic to the way in which thinkers on the threshold of modernity understood themselves. Blumenberg's thesis is that the intensification of any one of the three elements of the triad finally requires the intensification of the other two. The thesis is most consistently worked out in Part IV in the discussions of Nicholas of Cusa and Giodorno Bruno. Theological absolutism eventually shattered the finitude of the cosmos because an absolute God cannot be contained in finite manifestations or in finite possibilities. The finite cosmos thus gave way to the infinity of possible worlds. This meant that an infinite God and an infinite universe confronted a finite humankind with an awesome indifference, and

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15. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp-Smith, trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965) B675.

with the real possibility that human conceptions were completely incongruent with metaphysical reality. Abandoned by the cosmos, humankind had to assert its own standing and self-adequacy. When it did, anthropology joined the rank of the absolutes.

No one has explored the features of this self-assertion of anthropology better than Immanuel Kant. In Kant, the principle of sufficient reason, which Leibniz had asserted to exist in creation, became a principle of the sufficient rationality of the human subject, inhering especially in practical activity. With all this in mind I will now turn to two of Martin Heidegger's discussions of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

B. Martin Heidegger

If for Blumenberg the problem was to show first that self-assertion is a sort of historical a priori, but, second, that its imperatives of mastery needn't be domineering, Martin Heidegger, though not using the term here, looks at the same self-assertion with a more jaundiced eye. While Blumenberg opposed positivism in order to gain a foothold for reflection, Heidegger carries the discussion of the modern a priori back beyond self-assertion to ask about self-assertion's own

presuppositions. From this point of view Blumenberg resembles more the positivists whom he overtly opposes.

Heidegger begins by taking self-assertion at its word, but eventually discovers that you can not be self-assertive without presupposing some relation or other to being. It is this understanding of being against which an ontology of self-assertion even makes sense. An ontology, however, provides a stance for deeper reflection than self-assertion can allow. To make this clear Heidegger refers to Plato's characterization of the dreamlike quality of positive science.

Plato had said that the positive sciences were dreamlike in the sense that they could not ask after their own a priori, they proceed without understanding their own philosophical grounding. This is because there is a difference between doing, say, mathematical problems, and asking after the foundations of mathematics. To do a problem at all one must already assume the set of foundations appropriate to mathematics to be true.

Blumenberg not only admits but celebrates this dreamlike quality of self-assertion. Self-assertive freedom, he maintains, crucially relies on affirming its dreamlike stance. But to know you are in a dream state is already to put pressure on it. Heidegger finds that the ontological basis of self-assertion treats the natural as the ontic. But we can only articulate that because there is some prior horizon

which allows us to understand it. The understanding of self-assertion is therefore not itself a self-assertion. That is, self-assertion is one mode of comportment toward what is, but not the only one, nor is it the whole story even in its own domain. Heidegger explores some of these issues in reference to Kant's thesis: Being is not a real predicate.16

From the discussion of Blumenberg we know that self-assertion involves a projection of human rationality upon a material which may or may not fit its projection. The only test is to project a production and see whether or not one can successfully produce it. So long as the product works as predicted, one need not revise one's theory. We know also that this involves a break with older metaphysical and ontological stances in the world. In the medieval and ancient period, it was believed that the logos was the structure of both thought and cosmos. Thus, one could get by with only one kind of logic, formal logic. Of course, the ontological argument comes from this earlier period. But the postulate of self-assertion implies a radical break between the rationality we project and the rationality of God's creation. Kant formulated this break in his notion of an a priori synthetic judgment. What it means is that our conceptions are disconnected from a cosmos. To say a triangle has three angles is still true, but one need not

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16. Martin Heidegger, Basic Problems of Phenomenology, Albert Hofstadter, trans. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), p 27-76; see also Critique of Pure Reason B620-30; Heidegger also explicates "The Postulates of Empirical Thought" B266-74.

assume that one has said anything about the world. For Kant this statement about the triangle is an analytic, as distinguished from a synthetic, judgment. Modern self-assertion requires Kant's a priori synthetic judgment as an assurance of freedom. Prior to self-assertion, western philosophy required only analytic judgments since knowers were primarily receptive. But once knowers become projective a different sort of judgment became necessary. Heidegger points out that Kant retains the medieval notion of reality in his discussion of analytic judgments; reality still resides in the conceptual structure, but perhaps here as in other places Kant's seeming backward usage is closer to the self-conception of self-assertion than is the one we normally use, where reality resides with the object.

When Heidegger begins to unpack all this he discovers that, as Blumenberg would admit, modern self-assertion makes use of all sorts of boundary concepts which it dare not clarify. According to Blumenberg this should not surprise us; this myopia is the condition by which self-assertion assures itself an arena of free projection. But Heidegger transgresses the boundary conditions; he asserts, following Kant, that using these concepts without a clarifying analysis is an invitation to error.

Some of the concepts in question are: reality, perception, actuality, and existence. The most crucial mistake that comes from not analyzing these concepts is subjectivism. One wrongly places the

subject prior to perceiving, and to the discovery, through perception, of the other concepts. For instance to say a house exists, according to Kant, is to nail it down to an absolute position in space, and thus bring it into relation with the pregiven knowing subject. This implies, says Heidegger, that the subject goes towards the object 'intentionally,' that is, the subject is looking already beforehand for something like that sort of object existing in that object's mode of existing. But then how did the subject know to do this? The Kantian might answer, because of the structure of consciousness, the categories of understanding. But these stand in Kant, again, as unanalyzable boundary concepts. These concepts, Kant asserts, get their unity from the horizon of the 'transcendental unity of apperception,' another unanalyzable conception.

Under subjectivism one tends to take over the medieval understanding of being and existence as 'extant.' Rocks and trees are extant, so are tools, but what about other entities like causality, perceptions, or realities? These are all positings which themselves have no positions. Heidegger finally discovers that Kant's conception of the real is such that reality cannot be a real predicate. Perception is not itself perceived, reality is not itself real, existence does not itself exist, causality is not itself a causal connection. Thus Kant is right when he asserts that existence cannot be a real predicate. But if one pursues this thought further one discovers that this is because when the subject comports itself intentionally, it is not prior to its

conceptions, as Kant had assumed. Rather, "the subject brings itself perceivingly" to the object because things like existence and reality are given prior to the knower. Kant makes use of "a wealth of structural moments" without really noticing that he does so. And all these moments are a priories.

The subject doesn't use these a priories in the sense of someone using a tool. Rather to comport oneself intentionally toward what is extant, these a priories must have provided a prior orientation. Heidegger at this point drops the term subjectivity in favor of Dasein, to show that we knowers are always already involved in something like the extant, we already belong to objects, because we are already the a priories of intentionality. The intentional relation doesn't arise from the addition of an object to a subject, rather the Dasein is structured intentionally. We can even hallucinate only because we "intend in general," and only in this way could intending assume the modifications of "imaginariness."

The subject, if we recall Descartes' First Meditation, is a defense against deception. If I just stay in my subjective sphere, says Descartes, I can't be deceived. But Heidegger finds that the subject can't understand its own intentionality. This is because intentionality is what "lights up" the subject. The subject of modern thought is, then, like its sciences, a dreamlike positivity.

While this analysis has not even managed to recapitulate Heidegger's extremely involved argument, there is enough here to show that the self-assertion of subjectivity relies on an ontology which is not itself subjective, nor is it really a self-assertion. The discovery that the subject relies on a whole prior structure undermines somewhat our allegiance to the assertion of subjectivity, but it also means that those prior structures become a matter which concerns us. How is it with these structures? In this way we find the structures of self-assertion leading, in spite of themselves, beyond themselves. They lead, Heidegger believes, to a deeper thought of being; presumably to free a positivist subjectivity from its dreamlike stupor.

Ten years after this analysis in the Basic Problems, Heidegger confronted Kant's first Critique again. In What is a Thing? Heidegger returns to all these themes. On the brink of World War II his tone is more anxious; apparently breaking-through to being was harder than he had expected; now it might take another hundred years or so, provided we decide to really ask the right questions, and even for this, mighty efforts are needed.

Self-assertion can function now perfectly well without a clear ontology. When the pragmatist cautions us that our language today is unsuited to ontological questions, Heidegger responds by acknowledging the point. In a passage recalling the earlier reference to Plato's dreamy positive sciences, Heidegger says:

> We can take the thoughtlessness as a standard for things. The streetcar goes exactly as before. The decisions which are made or not made do not take place in the streetcar or on the motorcycle, but somewhere else--that is, in the sphere of historical freedom, i.e. where a historical being decides its ground as well as how it decides, what level of freedom of knowledge it will choose and what it will posit as freedom.17

Decision, he quickly adds, is the structure of questioning. To remain content with a low level of questioning is to remain content with a low level of freedom, and, I would add, to cultivate an innocence. The primary question is the ontological question; and the primary way we should ask the ontological question is historically. "We question historically when we ask what is still happening even if it seems past."18 The question "What is a thing?" turns out to be the primary question of our own historical period. Kant, Blumenberg, Heidegger, and Michel Foucault all address that question. The reason to return to the threshold of our modernity thus becomes a little clearer. Our historical questioning "is not directed against the beginning, but only against ourselves insofar as we drag along this beginning no longer as such, but as something 'natural,' i.e., in an indifferent falsification."19 This means this past does not lie in the dim past where we cannot reach it, "but is here in every proposition and in every everyday proposition, in every approach to things."

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17. Martin Heidegger, What Is a Thing?, W. B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch, trans. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 42.
18. Heidegger (1985), 43.
19. Heidegger (1985), 48-9.

Decision is, then, to ask the forgotten question anew. It concerns everyone, it is the task of an entire historical period. And it requires "that we perceive more exactly with clearer eyes what most holds us captive and makes us unfree in the experience and determination of things."

With this in mind, Heidegger looks into Kant's attempt to discover the thing. When he does this he discovers that Kant is looking for the structures of reason which ground a thing in its thingness. Heidegger, I should mention, is uncomfortable with Kant's structures of reason; he would like to oppose thinking to reason, reason being just another self-incurred tutelage.

Kant worked through a sort of method which he termed critique. Critique is a deciding of reason's claims beforehand; a sort of civil court procedure, where several civil litigants, all with plausible claims, present their cases to a magistrate.

> Pure Reason in this its self-formation, pure reason in this claim, pure reason as the authoritative court of appeal for the determination of the thingness of all things as such--it is this pure reason which Kant places into 'critique.'20

However, in deciding the dispute this way, the litigants pay a rather high price. The litigants accept the finding of the court because they recognize reason as the legitimate arbitrator; this, by

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20. Heidegger (1985), 119.

analogy, resembles a mimetic rivalry in which the two parties are so determined not to let the other's interests prevail that they will accept domination by a third party if it stops the other. Reason arbitrates critical disputes only by taking them over, by making them translate themselves into the language of reason. It does this by making a critical survey; a survey which sets the boundaries for the enterprise of pure reason.21 Strategically this means that reason takes an interest in those disputes which enhance its position; it encourages those disputes without which reason would be superfluous. To the extent this is true, reason sets up a discursive regime which encourages some questions while discouraging others. What happens, then, when these discouraged questions get opened? Heidegger hopes to say that the principles of reason--I-principle, Law of Contradiction, and Principle of Sufficient Reason22--will give way into a rethinking of what Reiner Schurmann calls an-arche, non-principle.

Like Blumenberg, Heidegger finds that Christian metaphysics divides into three zones whose subject matters are: God, the world, and man.23 In Kant these three questions are explicitly all subordinated to the last one, which in the Critique of Pure Reason is the I-principle. This, I have maintained, is the essential move of self-assertion. The character of a rational mathesis demands that things must exhibit themselves as axioms of the highest principles, "according to the schema

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21. Heidegger (1985), 121.
22. Heidegger (1985), 108.
23. Heidegger (1985), 110.

of positing and thinking as such," and the progressive illumination of the world in terms of rational mathesis is called Enlightenment.24

Critique wishes to "determine in advance out of principles the being of what is." In the regime of modern self-assertion, this is an essentially 'mathematical' task. The Critique of Pure Reason thus really "aims at the formation and grounding of this 'mathematical.'" What Heidegger refers to as the 'mathematical' would certainly include Blumenberg's 'method' and 'hypothesis.' The mathematical is a self-grounding unity, and Kant calls this sort of unity a system. Thus Heidegger focuses in this discussion, not on Kant's refutation of the ontological argument, but on the chapter called "System of all Principles of Pure Understanding." (Heidegger has already shown that for Kant, and the Wolfean school generally, "understanding" can be collapsed into "reason.")

Philosophically, self-assertion, at least in its subjectivist mode, has always been most at home in epistemological issues, and Kant, at least in the U.S., has usually been read as the epistemologist par exellence.25 Heidegger challenges this reading in many places, the most interesting occurs in the sub-section, "Pure Understanding as the Source and Faculty of Rules; Unity, Categories."

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24. Heidegger (1985), 111; 118; 184.
25. c.f. Robert Paul Wolff, Kant's Theory of Mental Activity (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith Press, 1973).

The needs of modern self-assertion had dictated that the ground of all possible judgments lay wholly in the subjective sphere. But, as again both Blumenberg and Weber in different ways point out, this sets up a certain metaphysical anxiety which seeks to reassure itself through productive activity in the physical world, or nature. Kant is the first philosopher to squarely face this problem that knowledge must reassure itself against an object which is, in the absence of the cosmos, a totally Other. Heidegger claims that Kant's word for object is usually not "Objekt" but "Gegenstand,"26 which literally translates as 'standing against.' Gegen also means 'toward,' 'in the direction of,' 'opposite to,' 'in the presence of.' What we are able to know "must encounter us from somewhere, come to meet us," and also must "be determined as standing," and is therefore constant. This requires that there be something that does the job of Aristotle's receptivity, but which yet leaves self-assertion intact. Following the western tradition of metaphysics, the solution must remain a mathesis, but, and this is Kant's incredible insight, mathesis as self-assertion requires a gegenstand. Otherwise self-assertion, unlike medieval mathesis, asserts into a void.

This means that Kant had to change one of the oldest definitions in western philosophy, that of the judgment. From Aristotle through Christian Wolff and Leibniz, a judgment was defined as a relation

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26. Heidegger (1985), 137. Peter Fenves has pointed out to me that Heidegger is grossly over-stating things here.

between two concepts, and the foremost principle of all logic was the law of non-contradiction. Kant defined judgment as "nothing but the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception."27 It is no longer a question of relating concepts, but of placing "given cognitions" or intuitions into an objective unity provided, Kant argues, by a transcendental "I-think." The "I-think" provides a mathesis in that it projects concepts against an intuition which comes to meet it. If I say 'blackboard' the intuitively given is grasped and conceived as a blackboard. It is worth pointing out that one repercussion of this is that the hegemony of the principle of non-contradiction has come to an end. A judgment might contain no conceptual contradictions and yet still be false; for instance, 'Giraffes are purple.' In the Middle Ages such concepts could not really be excluded because God certainly might, if He wished, make a purple giraffe. In the age of self-assertion such formal and fine speculations are empty and unsatisfying.

Self-assertion, of course, must resist becoming a slave to the 'given.' Determinism haunts self-assertion precisely because it depends so heavily upon the gegenstand. Thus in Kant the mathesis reasserts itself in the structure of the categories. Judgments can't be Hume's "every time X, Y also," but the more definite, "If X, then Y."28 In the event of a rock being warmed by the sun, a poet might encounter a sun, a

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27. Heidegger (1985), 157; CPR B141.
28. Heidegger (1985), 138; and David Hume, Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Para. 20-32, p 25-38.

rock, a blue sky. None of these is an object for either Hume or Kant. Hume's object is the warmth abstracted from many instances in the past of warm rocks and sunny days. Hume's is a general concept, the highest generality being that 'in the past the future always has resembled the past," so Hume gets into the habit of expecting future sunlit rocks to exhibit warmth. For Kant, this a tyranny of the gegen; the warmth is not any more directly known than is the rock or the sky or the sun. Kant's object is the necessity of the cause/effect relation; "If sunlight, then warm rocks.' 'If => then' is what we know, but we must quickly remember, only through rocks and sun.

"The mere intuition of 'against' is not yet an object," not a gegenstand, "but what is conceptually thought in general, as something constant," say, a triangle, "is not yet an object either."29 One has an object, strictly speaking, when "the intuitively given has been brought to a stand in the generality and unity of a concept," in our case, cause and effect. This unity is what Kant means by a synthetic a priori judgment. The crucial discussion in Kant is therefore the one which explains how it is that something like a synthetic a priori judgment is possible.

Kant says that synthetic a priori judgments are possible because they take place in the faculty of understanding, and understanding is a faculty of rules for synthesizing the intuitively given into knowledge.

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29. Heidegger (1985), 140.

As rules, they are thus an a priori which precedes experience. To encounter the given we anticipate something like cause and effect in advance, otherwise we would not know instances of cause or effect when we encountered them. Understanding is the rule-governed activity that apprehends causally, or we would not experience it at all.

But mathesis as self-assertion actually puts more pressure than this on the understanding. "Not only is [pure understanding] the faculty of rules in respect of that which happens, but is itself the source of principles according to which everything that can be presented to us as an object must conform to rules."30 The understanding is not only the faculty, but also the source of rules and their principle.

When Kant says that understanding is the <u>faculty</u> of rules, Heidegger replies, "Here the metaphysical definition of the essence of understanding asserts itself." Kant is not just doing epistemology here, he is doing metaphysics. One is no longer busy understanding, but asking how something like understanding is possible. Thus Kant here leaves the dream world of positive science. Understanding is posited as that which makes something like an object possible at all because it is essentially the faculty of rules. When Kant further says that pure understanding is the <u>source</u> of the principles for rules, Heidegger replies, "This means that pure understanding is the ground of the

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30. <u>CPR</u>, B198.

necessity of rules at all."31 This is not just metaphysics, but ontology, specifically, an ontology based in the 'I-think.' Pure understanding is based in a prior metaphysical necessity, and here Heidegger and Blumenberg completely agree. The metaphysical necessity lies in freedom's requiring there to be something like a gegenstand, not as an overpowering pressure, but neither as a completely human fabrication.

> We master [the pressure] only when we serve it out of superiority, i.e., by letting the pressure stand over against us, bringing it to stand, thus forming and maintaining a domain of possible constancy. The metaphysical necessity of the pure understanding is grounded in this need that the pressure must be free-standing.32

This prior metaphysical necessity makes something like a pure understanding necessary to provide a source for this "free-standing." Kant finds that source in the principles of understanding which, in turn, are the source of all truth, which, in Kant and for self-assertion generally, means for a correspondence between our experiences and objects. This is only possible, of course, because that to which experience corresponds, the objective, "already comes before us in advance and stands before us." What comes forward in the Gegen, then, is not the rock or the sun, not even the warmth, but the objective as such; for us, the causal.

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31. Heidegger (1985), 188.
32. Heidegger (1985), 189.

> The pure understanding provides the possibility of the correspondence to the object thanks to the objectivity of appearances, i.e., of the thingness of things for us.33

Clearly it is no stretch to say Kant's discussion here is an ontology of self-assertion. By insisting on not focusing solely on what Kant says about objects or solely upon what he says about the mode of knowing,34 Heidegger uncovers a certain circularity in Kant, which epistemology would find scandalous, "that the conditions for the possibility of experiencing...are at the same time the conditions of the standing-against of the objects of experience."35 Human freedom finally comes down to a 'between;' between man and thing; but this between is an activity, it "exists only while we move in it;" and "this between is not like a rope stretching from thing to man, but as an anticipation reaches beyond the thing and similarly back behind us."

Earlier we saw how Blumenberg tried to soften the most domineering aspects of modern technicity by returning to the threshold. His purpose was to discover there what was essential and what superfluous in modern self-assertion, and he opposed self-assertion to self-aggrandizement or self-empowerment, both of which Blumenberg admits to have had destructive histories in the modern age. Since it seems to me that Blumenberg was attempting to reply to Heidegger's objections to modern "enframing", as stated in such essays as "The Question Concerning

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33. Heidegger (1985), 190.
34. Heidegger (1985), 243.
35. Heidegger (1985), 242.

Technology" and "The Age of the World Picture," what is interesting about What Is a Thing? is how closely Heidegger's discussion of the 'between' resembles Blumenberg's version of self-assertion. The structures of self-assertion as articulated in Kant, Heidegger believes, do not necessarily imply the total enframing of the world into a standing reserve. In fact, human freedom rests precisely in allowing what is to come freely forth.

Yet there is a gulf separating Heidegger and Blumenberg. Blumenberg, when he comes to metaphysical questions, would say that though it is hard not to ask such questions, modern self-assertion is not really equipped to deal with them. It has its own sets of pressing issues and we should stick to what we do best, respond technically to our perceptions of need. Besides, the age has already come pragmatically to its limits. The state, which has always used external threats as a way to defuse inarbitrable internal fractures, has come to the limits of such tactics. External threats, in the horrors of nuclear war, pose a much greater risk than any internal dispute ever could. Thus the tyranny of state bureaucracy could begin to unravel; we all know that if it doesn't we might annihilate ourselves. Therefore we don't need the question of being, we only need the pragmatic structures of dialogue which arise from our relations with the technical.36

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36. For pragmatism's account of the relation between technical activity and philosophical constructions see Timothy Kaufman-Osborne, "Politics and the Invention of Reason," Polity, 22, No. 4, (Summer, 1989).

With Blumenberg one comes away feeling that, though the modern age has some serious flaws, it still possesses the resources to set itself on a better course. Reassurance about our age's potential for progress requires a massive and complicated historical study, but if we patiently pursue this study, in the end we will be reassured. Where Kant could champion an entire teleology of self-assertion, Blumenberg will offer only a wispy possible progress of self-assertion. Self-assertion, in its pared-down form, of course, claims it doesn't need teleology, nor does it need to totally subvert nature. Such things derived from reoccupations of older medieval questions which are not properly our own. But self-assertion can now, because those old issues are being forgotten in the pragma of our lived dialogic structures, show a more authentic face, a gentler side, and with this better attitude, self-assertion is at least potentially equal to the world of problems it has so far produced.

But after examining Heidegger's account of the structures of self-assertion, it seems harder to nod assent to Blumenberg's optimism. Clearly if we are to endorse modernity, we must have faith in the common future we are building, and it is exactly this sort of faith which Blumenberg tries to generate by giving modern technicity a clean geneology. But what if the questions he downplays still bother us? Doubts begin to intrude. Maybe we mustn't ask about teleology because to do so makes modern life look like a treadmill. Maybe we mustn't ask about ontological horizons of subjectivity or its objects because to do

so makes us notice that the technological view is an extremely narrow and confining one; that it is even dreamlike. Maybe when we replace truth as correspondence with dialogic structures, we evade having to confront the ways in which self-assertion fosters discourses of power, institutionalizes problem constituencies, or increasingly resorts to disciplinary controls, since we can no longer justify our institutions as corresponding to natural forces or as being responses to the nature of power.

Heidegger uncovers in Kant almost the same structures of thoughts and questions in the modern age as does Blumenberg. This, as I mentioned before, is not surprising since Blumenberg often replies directly to Heidegger. In Kant Heidegger finds that a self-assertion which can be plausibly described as free requires a gentler attitude towards the thing. Otherwise self-assertion fails on its own terms. But rather than finding this attitude disabled by metaphysical and ontological structures, Heidegger finds instead that it relies on them. Kant's interpretation of the thing, then, is enabled by and in turn enables a deeper insight into metaphysics and ontology. From Heidegger's gloss, I would draw the opposite of Blumenberg's conclusion; the loss of the 'medieval' questions is a source of anxiety. The loss of teleology, the loss of the correspondence theory of truth, the death of God, and the obscuring of the ontological question all mean that modernity also loses its free relation to the thing. Yet modernity still requires, more than has any other age, a relation to things. The

suspicion is this: by analogy to Elton Mayo's "social code at a lower level," that self-assertion, in the absence of a free relation to the thing, may try to satisfy itself in an unfree, or mimetic, relation things.

C. Michel Foucault

In his The Order of Things[37] Michel Foucault also asks about the modern relation to objects, especially its objects of study. But where Blumenberg discusses the threshold of natural science and technicity, and where Heidegger concentrates on the threshold of philosophy, Foucault offers a comparative study of the human sciences. Where Heidegger discovered that modern self-assertion presupposed an ontology which it squanders thoughtlessly, and with which, if we took stock of it, we might proceed with dove-like steps towards a freer and less domineering relation to things, Foucault finds that the human sciences are riddled with the imperative to duplicate and reduplicate localized versions of the ontology of self-assertion.

Foucault also finds a central text in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, and he would find much to commend in the Heideggarian interpretation given above. Heidegger had found that Kant's faculty of

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37. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

understanding was both the ground and source of rules which in turn make experience, as experience of objects, possible. Kant arrived at the transcendental by first conducting an analytic of our experience of objects. Both Heidegger and Blumenberg take this to be an act of Anthropology; what is discovered is the subject which experiences and grounds itself. Kant thus articulates what Foucault calls "Man;" man as that which both knows and provides the ground of knowledge; which experiences and, through that very experience, provides the ground of experience in general. Man, according to Foucault, is this alliance of the empirical and the transcendental, and, defined this way, obviously would be a recent phenomenon peculiar to modern western culture.

Foucault actually plays down Kant's role in creating man. Kant, says Foucault, was merely worried about grounding natural science. The more ambitious project of knowing man, which Kant admitted in "Was ist Man" he couldn't complete, is left to the human sciences. These sciences operate in much the same way as Kant's understanding; the empirical is known through an a priori which acts as the transcendental ground for the empirical. The a priori both renders possible knowledge of the empirical, and at the same time is what one knows. For Heidegger this structure of knowing could lead to either a dreamlike science or, if properly acknowledged, to a freer relation to objects. For Foucault this sort of claim merely repeats the tedious to and fro between positivism, where pre-critical naivete seems to rule supreme, and eschatology, in which what we know and what renders it possible are

going to at last be transparently united; where the in-itself will at last become for-itself. For Foucault, phenomenology's advance over Comte, the positivist, and Marx, the eschatologist, is to unite both their projects in what always was their common presupposition, that the transcendental had to speak in the empirical. To accomplish this merging of projects, phenomenology merely changed the point of application in transcendental analysis; where Kant had before asked after the possibility of a science of nature, now phenomenology--and pragmatism--ask about the possibility for man to conceive of himself. These claims should become clearer below when I discuss Foucault's section on Ricardo.

To ward off a deep insecurity, modern man relies on things. According to Heidegger, this leads Kant to the point of seeking to know the I-principle through things. Thus the question of the thing was crucial. Kant found things to be essentially a rule of synthesis, say, of causality. Causality thus reveals to us rocks and warmth, while rocks and warmth display a fundamental causality. A causality runs through things and through ourselves such that we who know and master its mechanisms are also those most subject to its overwhelming order. This, of course, need not cause a natural scientist to lose sleep. But things are different when one seeks in this same way to know something about man, when man becomes the thing which grounds knowledge of man.

The demand to know ourselves through things leads moderns into three "positivities." They are: Life, Labor, and Language and give rise, roughly, to biology, economics, and linguistics. These last three are not themselves, according to Foucault, human sciences, but their projections of life, labor, and language are what render the human sciences--say, psychology, ethnology, sociology, political science--possible. At any rate man turns out to be a living being, a laboring being, and a speaking being. These positivities are the subject of what Foucault calls the analytic of finitude.

From Kant, Blumenberg, and Heidegger we learned that the basic claim of self-assertion is that "the limits of knowledge provide positive foundation for the possibility of knowing,"38 or, self-assertion was born in the incredible idea of, as Dreyfus and Rabinow put it, "a being whose very finitude allows him to take the place of God."39 Finitude, as the essential idea of self-assertion, is no longer opposed term for term to the omnipotent God's infinity, as it was in the time of Galileo and Descartes, the time Foucault refers to as the Classical age. No longer is there an operative divine knowledge which we can participate in, though only dimly. Now finitude is self-referential.

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38. Foucault, 317.
39. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 30.

> From one end of experience to the other finitude answers itself; it is the identity and the difference of the positivities, and of their foundation, within the figure of the Same.40

However, all the finite forms turn out to be unstable. As finite, the spatiality of the body, the yearning of desires, and the time of language reveal the Same. This Same turns out to be an ontology of sorts. My finite desire expresses a more fundamental, almost metaphysical, finitude, a finitude which is self-grounding. Expressed as fundamental finitude, that which provides the source of all concrete limitation, finitude is radically Other; it is the a priori which is, in Heidegger's terms, what is furthest from us because it is what is nearest. In modernity we study the spatiality of the human body, the desires and appetites in virtue of which commodities can assume value, and the language in which, in time, discourses are given. All these studies are based upon the embodied finite experience of man, a being who exists in contrast with both mute animals and an omniscient God as a sort of neither. "This is to say that each of these positive forms in which man can learn that he is finite is given him only against a background of his own finitude." It is this a priori, which is always needed yet never given, which animates the human sciences.

> Thus in the very heart of empiricity, there is an obligation to work backwards--or downwards--to an analytic of finitude, in which man's being will be able to provide a foundation in their own positivity for all those forms which indicate that he is not infinite.41

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40. Foucault, 315.
41. Foucault, 315.

There follow, then, from the nature of self-assertion itself, from its anxiety and its need to self-ground itself as both knowledge and as the ground of knowing, a series of dead-end projects to unite the empirical with the transcendental. I will not review them all here, but the first of these attempts took the form of repetition; the positivity would be repeated as both mundane and fundamental. Thus, the death which gnaws at living things is the "same fundamental death on the basis of which my empirical life is given to me;" the desire that gives rise to economic interdependence is the same fundamental desire which "makes everything desirable for me;" and the time in which language moves discourses is the same fundamental time which draws out my own discourse. Foucault finds this repetition permeates everything in the early human sciences; the transcendental repeats the empirical, the cogito repeats the unthought, and the return to the origin repeats the retreat of the origin. "From one end of experience to the other, finitude answers itself."

The problem is that the positivities, the concrete forms of finitude, all open upon structures which submerge us. We are part of life which began long ago and will survive our death; we labor and toil within an economy of human making which no one remembers making or hopes to see completed; and we speak a language within which we were only inducted. Thus we are rooted in contents and forms much older than ourselves; life, labor, and language are always already begun, and they

all exhibit a temporal structure. Ultimately they subject us to a historicity whose foundation and promises continually elude us. Foucault brings out some of the main features by looking at Ricardo's notion of scarcity, and, since it also is worthwhile to compare Foucault's account of scarcity with Blumenberg's, this will allow me to do two things at once.

During what Foucault calls the Classical age, the time roughly of Galileo and Descartes, there was scarcity because people represent to themselves objects which they do not have. On the other hand, there was wealth because the land produces more objects than are immediately consumed. These objects can be equated with one another in acts of exchange, and therefore can represent other objects in the act of exchange and circulation of wealth.

Foucault claims that Ricardo recasts this relation in which there was scarcity amid a basic abundance into a mold of fundamental insufficiency. Land, Ricardo says, can not support everyone. So, Foucault says, "humanity is henceforth labouring under the threat of death: any population that cannot find new resources is doomed to extinction."42 Inversely, as people multiply, labor, because it is done on more marginal land, becomes less immediately productive. To feed everyone, labor must become more intensive. In this way, scarcity becomes a fundamental scarcity and economics no longer finds its

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42. Foucault, 256.

principle in the interplay of various representations; where I represent to myself an object I don't have, or where my commodities can represent other commodities. Now the principle of economics has become not just quantities of toil, but "that perilous region where life is confronted with death.."

Economics, in this way, refers to an anthropology. It includes in its reference the biological properties of the human species, it is related to human poverty and hunger, and it sets human labor over against death. This is the economic side of what Foucault calls the "anthropological hollow" within which modern thought sleeps. Its main economic tenet is that economic man is not representing his own needs to himself, but rather "spends, wears out, and wastes his life in evading the imminence of death." Economics is thus a study of finitude, and Ricardo studies finitude through its concrete forms, for instance, population. But population and its fluctuations call forth a history, and history turns out to have its own concrete forms of finitude.

Ricardo's economic history runs something like this: Rent of land used to be a sign of the land's fruitfulness. For Ricardo high rent is a sign that marginal land is being over-cultivated. New population provides new workers for industry, but also forces new land into cultivation. This is because if a day's toil is worth the amount of food and shelter it takes to get the worker through a twenty-four hour period, if real wages remain constant, it will take new cultivation to

feed new workers. But marginal land requires more cultivation and work than the prime lands did, and the costs of production in the marginal area will be higher. Since the new agricultural commodities are indispensable, unless industrial workers are permitted to starve, the production costs in the marginal areas determine the price of wheat. This means that producers in the more fertile areas can make higher profits, and thus landlords can lease these lands for higher rents.

This is the basis of Ricardo's theory of the falling rate of industrial profit. Because cost of subsistence rises, entrepreneur's must, to make real wages remain the same, raise the nominal value of wages. Thus as ground rent rises, and marginal land is cultivated, industrial profits must decline. However it does not dwindle to nothing, since there is a point at which entrepreneurs refuse to hire any new workers. At this point the labor force stagnates, population remains constant, no new tracts of land are cultivated, ground rent reaches a ceiling, and no longer pressures industrial profit.

> The tide of History will at last become slack. Man's finitude will have been defined--once and for all, that is, for an indefinite time.43

In this way Ricardo's History presupposes, at least as an a priori, the end of History, a time when labor will limit itself to needs, and when,

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43. Foucault, 259.

> "...any additional agricultural labor would be useless; any excess population would perish. Life and death will fit exactly against the other, surface to surface, both immobilized and reinforced by reciprocal antagonism.44

In Ricardo, History is given concrete forms; labor, production, accumulation, and growth of real costs; and History exists only in so far as "man as a natural being is finite." Thus we have the beginning of a reply to Blumenberg. According to Foucault, in Ricardo we can see how modern anxiety breeds itself.

> The more man makes himself at home in the heart of the world, the further he advances in his possession of nature, the more strongly also does he feel the pressure of his finitude, and the closer he comes to his own death.45

Ricardo's History, then, can be taken as a dramatization of an anthropological situation, a situation which is carried forward by History and its changes, but which does not itself change. History is merely the way, says Foucault, that the anthropological situation brings itself closer to its own impossibility. By this Foucault means that nineteenth century economists--Ricardo and Marx--longed for "anthropological truth to spring forth in its strong immobility." Ricardo looks towards a gradual slowing down, as though by half-lives, and a final stasis in which, with no more cultivation at the margins, no

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44. Foucault, 260.
45. Foucault, 259.

more pay raises, no more rent increases, no new population, no excess production, there will be no more room for finitude to elude itself.

> ...Man will gradually be stripped of everything that might hide him from his own eyes; he will have exhausted all the possible elements that tend to blur and disguise beneath the promises of time his anthropological nakedness.46

Ricardo, of course, is not alone among social scientists in resenting people for their wily strategies in eluding anthropological truths.

Marx, on the other hand, sought the end of History through revolution. History is negative; now. Labor is alienated; now. But labor produces infinitely more than it is paid, so that new labor is continually hired, so that the number of people held by History at subsistence level ceaselessly grows. Eventually this causes over-production and underemployment. Others might see these disasters as part of the natural order of things, but workers, and they alone, can see through to the real meaning of History. They will understand that this finitude is a human creation which alienates them from a truer finitude. Workers can restore this truer form, but to do so they must first reverse or suppress History. Then a truer time will begin, one that has a transparent form.

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46. Foucault, 260.

For both Ricardo and Marx, the end of History would be the point where historicity and human essence would be superimposed exactly one upon the other. Attempts like Ricardo's and Marx's do not generate a lot of excitement anymore; neither do their positivist brethren. But Foucault insists that the attempt to ground finitude upon itself is still with us, using new strategies. Phenomenology and perhaps Deconstruction may be the dying gasp of the analytic of finitude.

From Foucault's archaeology we can note several features of both Heidegger's and Blumenberg's examinations of Kant and the threshold of our modernity.

Both Foucault and Blumenberg agree about the metaphysical basis for the early modern, or Foucault's Classical, age, the time of Galileo and Descartes. Self-assertion in that age was based on a metaphysics of infinity; human action and knowledge was held over against divine knowledge. This meant, observes Foucault, finitude is an external condition imposed upon human beings. It merely means people see vastly less than does God. Finitude is thus not a fundamental finitude, but just a result of our status as fallen beings. In this setting representations could be linked discursively to what is. Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" "was accomplished within the light of evidence within a discourse [which] articulates one upon the other what one represents to oneself and what is."47

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47. Foucault, 311.

Nature and human nature used to meet in discourse, that is, human imagination and memory used to rework nature's random chronology. Thought and being could come together in discourse. But, from Blumenberg, we know that such an episteme presupposes an omnipotent but absent god. God's knowledge would be whole where ours is partial, clear where ours is fuzzy.

After reading The Order of Things we can see that almost immediately self-assertion abandoned this metaphysics and began searching for its own self-grounding. We have observed Kant's efforts in this regard. The new metaphysical stance in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is that understanding itself, as the faculty of rules, is itself the condition of the possibility of understanding anything at all. And understanding is, in turn, the condition of possibility of experience at all. Along with this self-grounding Kant can completely overturn the ontological argument for God's existence and displace the centrality of the principle of contradiction. He is able to accomplish both these things, Foucault shows us, because God's knowledge, power, and especially infinity no longer stand surety for human finitude.

With this we can understand American pragmatism's hostility to Kant. Richard Rorty's attacks on Kant's rhetoric as too technical, too obscure, and too abstract all imply that a simpler more direct language

is available.48 Here Rorty, I believe, is homesick for something like Foucault's Classical discourse, where things and representations come together in a way which makes self-assertion relatively unproblematic.49 However, pragmatists reject Classical metaphysics, trying instead to encourage a dialogic structure of development. There is no God to anchor this dialogue, but who cares? Just talk, it's easy. Foucault would point out that such a commitment to language is an involvement in a self-reflecting positivity; one is already post-Classical, already duplicating Kant while seeming to oppose him.50

At first it might seem that Blumenberg escapes this sort of criticism since he is closer to Kant, and implicitly admits it, even though he too champions a dialogic structure of progress. What is more, Blumenberg also agrees with Foucault over how and why early moderns understood nature in terms of a fundamental scarcity.51 Under pressure from absolute Will, he says, the Classical age broke up into two quasi-political groups; those defending God's absolute interests and those who responded by asserting, equally absolutely, the interests of man. Soon he discovers that these interests are insecure and that self-assertion is fundamentally an assertion against nature's fundamental inadequacy to provide for human happiness. Under conditions of insecurity man self-

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48. Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 147-64.
49. Foucault, 338-9.
50. For a criticism of Rorty see William E Connolly, "The Mirror of America," in his Politics and Ambiguity (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.), 116-26.
51. Compare Foucault, 368 with Blumenberg, 197-200.

adjusts himself to an unadjustable nature. When human production provides what "nature makes scarce or does not provide at all," it does so with a fundamental capacity for adjustment. Blumenberg here is not simply taking over Ricardo's postulate of a fundamental scarcity, he believes we can leave that postulate behind. Blumenberg is not trying to be positivist at all. But just as for Foucault phenomenology is transcendentalism becoming, in its emphasis on the life world, positivistic in spite of itself, so pragmatism is a way in which positivism can become, in its emphasis on human plasticity, ontological in spite of itself. Just as causality was the positive content of Kant's sunny rock, and just as scarcity was the positive content of Ricardo's History, pragmatic adjustment is the positive content of pragmatism's version of man--and I almost wrote 'Dasein'.

Blumenberg thus sees quite clearly why positivist sciences had to fail, and he is worried that Heidegger's search for being will degenerate into a search for an absolute substance which will be too decisionistic and will squeeze out any hope for modern freedom. Yet, he would think Ricardo was on the right track, and that self-assertion might still, by remaining in a dialogue with its own technical developments and failures, solve its own problems. Besides, he would ask Foucault, what else could we really do?

Foucault's replies in his later years seemed to say that we must continue to be Kantian, that is, continue to be self-assertive while

continually testing the boundaries of self-assertion to see whether they have given way.52

Still I believe Blumenberg, in order to save self-assertion, requires the metaphysics of the Classical age; that is, his genealogy works because it shows why self-assertion had to oppose the metaphysics of Absolute Will. He makes self-assertion rely on the opposition between man's knowledge and God's knowledge, and shows how crucial it was to overcome this metaphysics. But what makes secularization theory and Heidegger so suspect is that they seem to be, at least according to Blumenberg, championing the Absolute half of the opposition. Leaving aside that this is not a particularly exciting interpretation of Heidegger in a book which contains very exciting interpretations of everyone else, the fact is that Blumenberg's text works by kindling opposition to Classical metaphysics. Embraced or opposed, this metaphysics is still the basis of self-assertion; it is the only metaphysics Blumenberg considers. The Order of Things coupled with The Basic Problems and What is a Thing? allows us to examine more closely modernity's own metaphysical stance and the eclipse of that of the Classical age. Classical metaphysics is no longer available even as something to oppose.

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52. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Paul Rabinow, editor, The Foucault Reader (New York: Pantheon Books, 1884), 32-50.

It also makes a difference that we extend the discussion of self-assertion into the area of the human sciences. This, of course, has implications for our concern with organizations. An organization like the Post Office does not make us so suspicious as do those which hire in their top level positions practitioners of the human sciences. It is more the personnel department, the human service providers, or even the consumer research division which bothers us as clients. It is not just, as Weber supposed, that we object to the pervasive rationality of bureaucratic processes, though in the previous chapter I gave a number of reasons for being uncomfortable with that too, but we also feel uncomfortable with the substance of their missions. Yet, we may be unable to think of any reason to oppose them. But now we can at least harbor the suspicion that these agencies work to corner finitude, trying to force it to confront itself; but also that every attempt to corner it merely drives it further back. Every attempt to discover, say, why men are so much more violent than women will either become positivist; seeking a gene, a secretion, a physical underdevelopment, or a societal deviation, or it will become transcendental; seeking the violent a priori of a society such as ours in rapism, misogamy, or domination. When these two strategies turn out to be unsatisfying we will turn to interpretive approaches. These last will have their value, not the least of which is that they are difficult to routinize into an organizational approach, but they will succeed by changing the point of impact of the study from objects to self-analysis. Foucault predicts that this project will likewise finally be unsatisfying, leaving the

field open again to positivistic approaches, if for no other reason, because they are easily organized.

D. Conclusion

In every chapter so far, one event keeps coming up over and over, in too many ways to be systematized, the event which Nietzsche called the death of God. Here I have specified it a little more closely as the struggle with omnipotence. At one point in our history, all spirituality became concentrated in the notion of an absolute Will. But as absolute, spirituality had to flee from the world. This seems to have opened, very briefly, an era of freedom in the Classical age, but it gave way almost immediately to the dream of a return of a stony stasis, much as the stony ghost arrives at Don Giovanni's house for dinner. But if this uncanny guest from the future has failed to appear, failed to set limits on our desires and impositions, perhaps we must learn to get along without expecting him. All three authors consulted in this chapter agree more or less with this characterization, and all three are trying to come to grips with the situation left in the wake of this one event.

I began this discussion of our epochal threshold with Hans Blumenberg's's account of the second overcoming of Gnosticism, which we might also designate as the death of omnipotence, or, in terms of the

history of thought, Kantian self-assertion. This second overcoming of Gnosticism, which has clearly been unsuccessful, and which leaves one hoping that a third overcoming will not be necessary, is the experience of the God of of salvation's radical separation from the world. Self-assertion was an attempt to make this loss irrelevant by grounding human thought and action upon itself. But along with the Absolute's withdrawal there followed several important consequences; doctrines of scarcity, a search for a proper relation to things driven by an existential anxiety, and the inability to articulate an ethics. Modern organizations are often driven by all three, but I will consider only the last one, the lose of ethics.

Without a beneficent cosmos, nothing like an order of the world was available from which to derive, say, principles of wisdom or principles of the city.53 For us, says Foucault, morality consists in restoring language to what is mute, or destroying social myths, or reanimating what is inert. Thus it is naive to ask, as does Blumenberg, for a list of our options so that we may choose among them. Nor can we, with Richard Rorty, simply establish a morality by decision. The reason for this, says Foucault, is that Aristotelian receptivity is gone, or, as he actually puts it, thought is no longer theoretical. Optional choices and decisions could never be accepted as an ethics today, because they are much more aggressive than ethical formulations could allow.

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53. Foucault, Order of Things, 328.

> As soon as [thought] functions it offends or reconciles, attracts or repels, breaks dissociates, unites or reunites; it cannot help but liberate and enslave.54

This does not mean merely that the sciences of man are inextricably bound up with ethics and politics; but "more fundamentally, modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself." Modern morality tends to incorporate more and more into its order of things, yet always discovers the remainder, that which eludes and mocks it. Moral progress can easily become a 'bad infinite' or as stressed in an earlier chapter, freedom loses itself in mimetic desire.

Suppose we require a government agency to implement a modern morality. Suppose we wish to, say, liberate minority constituents by busing their children to school in parts of the city other than where they live. Other constituents experience this busing as an imposition on their right to control the character of their own communities. And since in this case the policy was set by courts, the time-honored 'sanctity' of the court is also called into question. The court is openly made into an agency for pushing partisan political demands. When morality is this controversial, modern people seek the aid of powerful government agencies. Foucault, of course, speaks at the level of thoughts and texts, but the problems he uncovers have a bearing on

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54. Foucault, Order of Things, 328.

public administration. The loss of the cosmos and of omnipotence is one powerful drive behind people's turning to the state or in forming organizations at all. Morality is unsettled and that clearly makes possible a thriving democratic politics; but it also makes possible mimetic and resentful bureaucratic impositions. Unfortunately many of these latter are done in the name of some one or the other of the human sciences.

Finally, the notion of mimetic desire seems to give us some stance from which to unravel modern organization with its discontents, but after the discussions of this chapter we can see that its force is not so much that of a spiritual Archimedean point as that of a language of someone in foreign captivity. The figures of speech, the very language of freedom and liberation and alienation which the captive must use, are all borrowed from the language of the captors. How can one sing a song of freedom in this strange tongue? And yet, it is the only available language.

Blumenberg could show, I think, through the relation of neo-Platonism to Gnosticism that the concepts of mimesis, as found in Kierkegaard and Girard, presuppose a Gnostic cosmology. Kierkegaard may have even owed a debt to Marcion's writings. Mimesis is the concept of an inauthentic structure of desire imposed upon us by our situation of being radically cut off from the Good-principle. Our perceptions and

especially our self-knowledge, are kept from their true content by the illusionist demiurge.

Foucault's explication of man and his doubles; of man as reduced and promised, as the being whose 'in-itself' longs to be 'for-itself,' certainly shows modern thought to be a fragmentation into a series of "regional ontologies" which in turn seem to proliferate a plethora of regional gnosticisms, any of which might give rise to an aspiration for an authentic freedom of which it can never even formulate an adequate conception. Self-assertion thus becomes a sort of Babylonian captivity in which we endlessly sing songs of freedom in Babylonian.

Clearly an analysis in terms of mimetic desire repeats the structures of reduction and promise. Elton Mayo discovered that at Hawthorne, the positivists had reduced workers to being maximizers of economic utility and thus subordinated them to incentive systems. Shunning Marxist eschatology, Mayo offered his own, based not on class conflict but on existentialist cooperation. In so doing he made an important contribution to social analysis, one which no strictly economic theory could ever provide, but the "Organization of the Future", as Chris Argyris calls it, rests in a promise that more transparent relations might be achieved someday. It would be easy to show that Management and the Worker is a very skillful development, but still only the latest trick, of the analytic of finitude.

It should even be possible to show that where pragmatism is a 'positivism' trying to acquire sensitivity to eschatological criticisms, existentialism and phenomenology are 'eschatologies' trying to be less alienated from daily life. But while the thought of mimetic desire does not escape the analytic of finitude, and while it relies on the very structures of Gnosticism it opposes, it still maintains the possibility of finitude's criticizing itself, of undermining our allegiance to modern moralities of incorporation even while we participate in them. Whether this is simply unhappy resignation, or the opening of a new space for freedom I simply don't know. I will conclude this study by showing how this concept of mimeticism might be included in a Weberian analysis of modern organizational life.

CHAPTER V

A WEBERIAN TYPOLOGY OF A MIMETIC WORLD

In the preceding, the authors whose works I studied employed a number of structural triads: Theology-Cosmology-Anthropology, Aesthetic,-Ethical-Religious, Life-Labor-Language. In this chapter I will also mention a forth triad, George W. S. Trow's Spirit-Manners-Toughness. It will be the purpose of this short chapter to tie as best I can some of these triads together. I will do this by looking at Donald McIntosh's interpretations of Max Weber.

Weber's typologies form a starting point for McIntosh. Weber's aesthetic, ethical, and religious are all possible ideal types which he finds are required by material interests.1 For Kierkegaard, Elton Mayo, and other thinkers I have covered, there is an underlying presupposition that material interests by themselves cannot motivate action. An ideal interest is also required. Certainly, says McIntosh, Weber agreed. Once basic material needs are satisfied, materialism is an external motivation. The actions one performs have no meaning of their own, but are merely a means to material satisfactions.

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1. Donald McIntosh, "Weber as a Critical Theorist," Theory and Society, 12 (1983) 75.

The battle, then, is often over which ideal interest will prevail and direct material interests. This is very important since, Weber notes, full scale rationalization requires strenuous effort and strenuous effort requires motivation.

McIntosh also finds that Weber deals with the Theology-Cosmology-Anthropology triad. These are components of the religious ideal type. All religions, Weber believed, once they grow beyond mere mysticism must begin posing and answering three questions; "What is the realm of the supernatural like, what is its relation to this world, and what are the consequences for human life?"2 They must ask these questions, Weber thought, because as religions become established, they become more rational and ethical, and as they become more rational they give rise to the theodicy question; why do bad things happen to good people, but even more important for this study, why is there a difference between destiny and merit?

We have also noted that expansion in any one element in the triad, say, of theology, results in an expansion of the other two. But the way that worked in this particular case was that the realm of the supernatural became so absolute that it might as well be absent. Once beneficence was taken away, instrumental action became necessary, and social hierarchies became questionable. But the triad, in Calvinism

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2. Donald McIntosh, "The Objective Basis of Max Weber's Ideal Types," History and Theory 16 #3 (1977), 272. C.f., also McIntosh (1983), 93.

and, for this discussion, in early New England, had been the source of anxiety and of ascetic motivation.3

At this point McIntosh reconstructs a part of Weber's model of rational action. Weber had asserted that action directed at values, or ultimate ends, finally fails at the level of meaning.4 This is because if a saintly person refuses to ever use any questionable means, no matter what the end, then the saint is obviously willing to give up the worthiest ends, those which give the saint's life its direction and meaning. This is simply irresponsible, Weber thinks. But then, notes McIntosh, Weber is unwilling to admit that Jesus or St. Francis were merely intellectually confused about what they wanted. With these men, says Weber, "this ethic makes sense and expresses a kind of dignity." So perhaps Weber occassionally thinks that the ethic of utlimate ends does sometimes work at the level of meaning.

McIntosh seizes on Weber's term 'expression.' Perhaps the problem isn't that Jesus' actions are incomprehensible, but that Weber's instrumental concepts for understanding it are inadequate. Some action isn't describable in means/ends terms because it is expressive. As expressive, it still can be judged as more or less rational, but not in instrumental terms. One might apply this to New England Puritan asceticism. The Protestant work ethic, Weber often stressed, is closely

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3. McIntosh (1983), 98.
4. McIntosh (1983), 81-82.

related to an anxiety over whether or not one is saved. Weber himself tried to understand this in instrumental terms. Good works in one's calling "are a technical means, not of purchasing salvation but of getting rid of the fear of damnation." But in an ethically expressive action, notes McIntosh, "The worldly activity of such a blessed person gives a concrete behavioral expression to [the] sanctified state."

> The true believer who follows the ethic of worldly asceticism to the letter but does not achieve worldly success knows in his heart that he has not been saved. He nevertheless continues to endeavor to act well, because that is God's commandment. If, however, success does arrive, this is taken to mean that God has aided one's efforts and hence that one is a member of the elect. The meaning is reflected in the results of the action.5

In this case there is also an element of interpretation. One notes a result and then finds an explanation. This, according to McIntosh, is in keeping with the nature of magical action, which, as opposed to scientific predictive rationality, is postdictive. McIntosh's second revision of Weber, then, is to add a type of interpretively rational action. The examples fall into two categories, ceremonial action and magical action.

Given all this, McIntosh believes that Calvinism's incredible ability to motivate action stemmed from its amazing ability to integrate three modes of action, the practical-instrumental, the ethical-instrumental (c.f., saving souls), and the ethical expressive; or more

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5. McIntosh (1983), 98-99.

precisely, he says these modes "are differentiated, rationalized, and integrated in the most thoroughgoing fashion." That is, these modes were not part of a homogeneous social matrix, as in primitive societies, but analytically separable, with each element consistently developed, yet made to work as a part of a unit.

Of course, historically we know that the practical-instrumental mode dominated. Weber notes that as one mode is rationally developed, it tends to do so at the expense of the other modes in its configuration; they become less and less rational or underdeveloped. In the United States these other modes have tended to remain as possible critics of the rational-instrumental, but they remain unable to sustain themselves as dominant modes. It might be helpful to follow this story through some of the organizatinal literature mentioned in this dissertation.

First of all I noted that the work ethic and the ethical-religious parted company somewhere around 1775, and certainly after the American Revolution. McIntosh recounts this loss of the ethical-expressive in the following way:

> The person who has the reputation for practicing this [the work] ethic finds ready credit and trusting customers, and so is likely to succeed. This presupposed a community in which one is known, personally or by reputation. But as capitalism advances, the units of economic interaction become larger, and social mobility within and between such units increases. More and more, one cannot evaluate in advance the good faith of the person with whom one is dealing. The result of this situation in which neither party can rely on the good faith of the other is the proliferation

> of formally rational legal regulations whereby one can be assured of the proper performance of the other, or find redress if such performance is lacking.6

At first there was a tight fit between the ethical expressive and the practical instrumental, but economic expansion and the loss of face-to-face relations undermined the trust required by expressive rationality. Consequently ethical behavior became less and less a guarantor of success.

What I must explain is how it is that as the doctrine of omnipotence receded, the anxiousness which drove economic expansion in the Puritan era did not also recede. The answer, it seems to me, is that we are dealing with a triad. The cosmology and anthropology associated with omnipotence were still those developed under the sway of the theodicy problem. Especially in the Newtonian understanding of nature, and in the anthropology associated with an infinite universe riddled with scarcity, we can still note that they were first articulated in response to the God who may as well not be there, since he provides no clues or direction in His creation. However, though in the United States worldly success and personal worth remained tightly connected, once omnipotence receded as the dominant doctrine, they were never again so close as they had been in Puritan times.

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6. McIntosh (1983), 100.

In McIntosh's terms, in Puritan times institutional norms prescribed behavior which was believed to be morally good in itself. But there was "a heavy emphasis on the goal of worldly success in a situation where the opportunities to achieve such success by good faith action [were] restricted." This created the possibility of two sorts of responses. One could continue to accept the culturally defined goal of worldly success, but procede by unethical or illegal means. Or, one might reject the goal of worldly success while remaining loyal to the ethical norms. In the United States this meant that one could become the 'nice guy who finishes last.'

What strategies are available to this nice guy? McIntosh lists three ideal typical responses: ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Advocates of alternative politics in the United States often in practice mix these types in various proportions. In this study I am least interested in rebellion, but will consider variations of the other two. Such oppositional stances are difficult to sustain because, says McIntosh, in religious terms the ethical-expressive relied crucially on hope, and hope was signified by worldly success. If one gives up worldly success, hope is also eroded and it is difficult to continue to act faithfully. In secular terms, in the world around one, lack of personal success means lack of personal worth. To maintain self-worth in such a situation would take an exceptional person, "it is difficult to continue to act worthily if one is convinced that one is worthless." The ethical-expressive is also in an equivocal position vis-a-vis legal-

institutional rationality. The ethical-expressive must regard the legal system as either ethically meaningless or ethically wrong, which gives rise to retreatism or rebellion. Or it might give up on itself in favor of a ritualistic adherence to the letter of the law.

We can see these various strategies being worked out by some of the people mentioned in this dissertation. Among transcendentalists we might think of Henry David Thoreau.7 Thoreau practices retreatism. In this we can see that by developing a non-instrumental, and more expressive, relation to nature, he tries to formulate a different notion of success, one more compatible with ethical expressivity. Thoreau's vision of the self arises in this context as not just a haven in a heartless world, but as a heartful self which inables a heartful world. I noted in the first chapter that this self has affinities with Kant's practical philosophy, which I have further specified as self-assertion. It therefore shares some aspects of the utilitarian culture it opposes, especially the need to be able to give its notion of worldly success, and with it personal worth, a worldly form. Transcendentalist institutions like Brook Farm tried to do this, but with limited success. Certainly Thoreau himself couldn't have joined the commune, since he would have been too sceptical that it might become yet another they-world. At any rate, I found that the next generation of American intellectuals did not find it satisfying. Politically retreatism was

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7. My understanding of Thoreau is indebted to Jane Bennett, "On Being Native: Thoreau's Hermeneutics of Self," Polity, in press.

unable to respond effectively to something like the slavery problem, and existentially it was defined too closely as an opposition to Wall Street busyness.

Jonathan Baldwin Turner introduced science as an overt strategy for opposing omnipotence, social hierarchy, traditional college curricula, and slavery. Scientific farming puts one in touch with a cosmology of God's causal laws, while traditional farming traps one in ignorance and destroys the land. Turner hopes, at the level of theodicy, to integrate cosmic law and human ethics in the intelligible farmer; an individual in an intellectual community who is materially and socially successful precisely because he is good, both to others and to nature. During the times of plague Turner rejected any Aristotelian receptive ethics, especially as it related to omnipotence, because it was just too unfair to assume that those stricken deserved their fates. He does, however, try to retain it to some extent in science. He rejects any ethical doctrine based on the world as we find it, with its conservative overtones, and champions instead a scientific doctrine that the world as we wisely mold it grants success to good people.

All this, however, turns out to require a network of national organizations: The Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Extension Service, the Land Grant College system, not to mention farm lobby groups. The analysis so far allows us to understand why the first generation to staff these institutions found them so fulfilling. It was

that there was finally created a set of institutions which seemed to reunite the ethical-expressive with the rational-instrumental. But after a few decades the rational-instrumental had completely taken over the Department of Agriculture. The Extension Service became the employer of experts who wrote the pamphlets for farmers who ritually accepted their conclusions. There was, of course, an encyclopedia problem. Individual farmers cannot know what "we" know, where "we" is the community of agricultural scientists. The individual farmer loses the direct ethico-instrumental link with the cosmos, and experts and support industries swell within the gap. The farmer may as well be dealing with omnipotence again.

Turner's attempt, unlike Thoreau's, tried to integrate the ethical-expressive back into the culture of success. But in a large extended commercial republic around 1862 this had to mean integrating the ethical-expressive into the legal-institutional system. But, as McIntosh notes, the legal-institutional system, based as it is on distrust, continually undermines the ethical-expressive. By the late 1980s when farmers lobby for government support on the basis that the farming way of life is somehow ethically worth saving for its own sake, other constituencies in the U.S. only hear a crass economic demand disguised as a principle. Why, they ask, should farming be the only business in the country which doesn't have to be cost effective? Farmers themselves have for so long viewed the Department of Agriculture in an instrumental light that they can offer no rebutal except lobby-

group pressure. As someone who has belonged to a farm organization and knows the personal capacity for virtue of American farmers, I chose this example because it seemed to me that if the ethical-expressive ever could be integrated into the legal-institutional system, it would be in farming or nowhere.

George William Curtis also worries about the theodicy problem, and tries to solve it by institutionalizing merit. In this he explicitly tries to recreate the spirit of the Puritans by attempting to carry Emerson and Thoreau into the public realm. Curtis introduces civil service reform as a deliberate check on unethically and illegally attained success. Again the first generation found working in or with the Civil Service Commission to be exciting and fulfilling, but in time the legal-institutional structure would make it unlikely that men like Curtis would find careers in civil service. Everyone is familiar with Weber's notions of bureaucratic inflexibility, where action is taken only because the rules prescibe it.

> Thus, scrupulous compliance with formally legal rules constitutes ritual behavior in the strict sense of the term... The difference between traditional and modern ritualism lies in the source of authority (traditional versus rational-legal) and the type of formalism ("extrinsive" versus "logical"). In both cases, compliance with the law is in itself meaningless. It is up to the actor to endow the action with meaning, i.e., to fit a meaning to the behavior. As it is developed and rationalized, therefore, modern formalism becomes more and more an interprtetive, and less and less an instrumental or expressive mode of action.8

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8. McIntosh (1983), 102.

This brings me to the work of Elton Mayo. McIntosh mentions that in a formal organization like the Western Electric plant at Hawthorne, the formal elements of the organizatonal structure undermine its instrumental elements. This may be simply because formal rules can sometimes be inefficient, but this is not the interesting case, since one might simply instate formal rules which are better. The more interesting case results from the informal structures which grow up in large formal organizatons. That is, workers, faced with formal rules which seem extrinsic to them, respond to them with an interpretive rationality. Sometimes this rationality enhances the effectiveness of the organization, but most often it limits it.

> The modern large scale bureaucracy presents to the individuals working within it an environment analogous to the natural environment of members of a primitive society. It is a world of arbitrary, impersonal, and uncontrollable forces, both meaningless and inexplicable, to which one must adapt or perish. The solution is to endow this world with a symbolic meaning which provides a framework of cognitive and motivational orientation for the individual.9

While, in light of Blumenberg's discussions, we may question whether this situation is primitive or quintessentially modern, the point still holds good. The small group interpretations of individuals within large-scale organizations have a large bearing on not just how the organization performs, but on whether or not people can think of themselves as free within them. This also brings up another tension; that between interpretive rationality and the ethical-expressive. For

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9. McIntosh (1983), 103.

example I mentioned in an earlier chapter that a manager motivated by the ethical-expressive may easily be interpreted as trying to use psychological trickery to get higher productivity from workers, even though what the manager really wishes is for higher productivity to be the expression of honest ethical relations in the plant. From Mayo's work we would expect people to change their interpretation only if the new interpretation wouldn't challenge the structure of their current informal social structure.

Mayo himself tried to bring together the ethical-expressive, the practical-instrumental, and rational-interpretive in Humanistic Management. In this, unlike Turner and Curtis, he doesn't have to invent the legal-institutional system since it is already a given. Again the trick is to tie economic success to ethics. But what he finds in the factory is, according to McIntosh, a modern form of ritualism. Of course, the "archenemy of ritualism is innovation." Since Mayo's is a truly innovative approach, it is not surprising that workers themselves usually put up the strongest resistence to humanistic management.

> Bureaucratic ritualism thus constitutes a sclerosis of the main artery of instrumental progress in the modern system: technological innnovation....Bureaucratic ritualism is an at least partly constructive answer to the problem of the meaninglessness of action which the members of a bureaucracy face. By endowing action with meaning, bureaucratic ritualism provides the motivational support necessary to the continued existence and operation of the organization.10

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10. McIntosh (1983), 104.

Mayo's attempt targeted bureaucratic ritualism, and correctly understood that modern instrumental rationality could not, on its own, motivate action. He also noticed that bureaucratic ritualism as it presently exists is unhealthy both for the organization and for its members. He sought, therefore to channel interpretive activity in a more healthy direction. He sought to replace the sick motivations of the present with the healthy motivations of the future, and he saw quite clearly that neither the ethical-expressive nor the practical-instrumental can be maintained for long unless a more adequate motivational base is found. However, no one would maintain that his reforms have taken hold in American business. The work of Chris Argyris, insightful though it is, still shows quite clearly that, as Weber might say, the institutional-practical is much easier to rationalize than are either ethical-expressive or interpretive rationalities.

McIntosh notes that Weber's ritual motivation is majical, but reminds us that magic need not be confined to ritual. McIntosh takes things one hierarchical step further. Moving from the modern business to the modern state, he examines the charismatic and magical basis for the widespread popular support for modern state authority.11 One problem with Weber's saying that in the modern age everything has become

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11. Donald McIntosh, "The Charisma of Reason: The Magical Basis of Rational-Legal State Authority," (1986), unpublished manuscript.

disenchanted is that Weber also held that the magical was a crucial part of human motivation. The drying up of enchantment, Weber believed, was what made the age so spiritless and locked it in its iron cage. Yet clearly modern capitalism and tne modern state can generate quite a bit of enthusiasm. These institutions have:

> ...retained a vigor and adaptibility which can only be accounted for, if we are to take Weber's theories seriously, by the continued sustaining presence of the magical power of charisma.12

The ideal interest which legitimates the modern state is nationalism. McIntosh argues that nationalism is religious; it is "not the equivalent of religion; it _is_ a religion in the literal sense of the word: the belief in and worship of the State as a supernatural power." To make this clearer McIntosh repeats his analysis of the expressive and interpretive componants of magic. The expressive, being concerned with ethical action is not so interesting in this context where ritual is no longer the center of the discussion.

> As a pure type magic seeks not to change the world but to understand it. It is an interpretive, not a practical, mode of action, even if we use 'practical' in the broad Kantian sense which includes ethical and expressive as well as instrumental action. Prototypically the magician is a seer, not a doer...13

Magic is a search for meaning, a vital part of human life. Magic ties into cultural myths, where myth is understood as "an explanatory

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12. McIntosh (1986), 4.
13. McIntosh (1986), 8.

account in narrative form of the origin of the world and humanity, their current situation, and often their ultimate fate." It is a form of explanation in which events are explained by referring to the supernatural powers which must have motivated them.

A viable religion must, in Weber's terms, combine magical with ethical ideas. Ethics keeps magic from being a mere cult, magic keeps religion from becoming a secular creed. For a long time the modern state integrated these two, so that one could think of the state as furthering the universal interest, or, when with time no one could believe that anymore, the national interest, or, again with time, the interests of the elite. But finally in our era the state, especially its massive power for destruction, can not be said to serve any ethical, practical, or instrumental ideal. This leaves us wondering why we need such an awsome presence. How is it that people are actually willing to die for the modern state?

McIntosh replies that it is in the means of violence that the state excersises its magical hold. Modern weapons possess a charisma and it is the charisma of modern weapons, not their efficiency, which makes them attractive. The modern state has become, not, as Hobbes thought, an artificial person, but an actual person; in the same sense that God is a person. While one might reply to this that persons for instance die and the state does not, surely in this dissertation I have shown how and in what sense God also can die. Mayo and Roethlisberger

found at Hawthorne that workers often personified the company, much as modern citizens do their state. The systems of offices and rules tend to take on a sort of personhood of their own which actually operate in individual lives the way that a God does. Besides, millions of people seem willing to die for their states, and can think of no greater or more rewarding sacrifice.

Charisma, according to Weber, must be constantly bolstered by repeated magical acts. The state's use of terror, says McIntosh, is what fills this requirement. State violence takes the form of war against foriegn enemies, war against internal enemies, and punishment for criminal acts; often using torture or other spectacular acts. In the modern era the cult of the state takes an instrumental turn. This is again because a religion is a combination of magical and ethical ideals. The ethic which the modern state espouses is the ethical-instrumental, or ethic of welfare. As instrumental, this ethic, unlike expressive ethics, can also be political, and this gives it access to political violence.

> Matters are easier where the ethic is primarily instrumental. Here it is above all the act of violence which simultaneously serves the earthly purposes and proves the supernatural powers of the leader.14

Viewed this way, the value of the matchlock musket in the 15th century, did not lay in its supior ability to efficiently kill people.

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14. McIntosh (1986), 29.

Actually, it wasn't very much more effective than the crossbow for a long time. But,

> ...the supernatural power of the musket was from the start imcomparably greater. It is the charismatic, not the natural, power of the musket which explains how a handful of Spaniards were able to conquer a continent, and a handful of Europeans the world.15

The French Revolution took major steps in the rationalization of violence. "The guillotine is a grisly symbol of scientific efficiency in the administration of death." But nationalism also made the massive conscripted citizen army possible, and Robespierrie connected the cultivation of virtue to the excercise of terror. But, "The ultimate proof of charisma in the Modern era lies in the possession and use of nuclear weapons."

I find all this makes a certain amount of intuitive sense, and McIntosh is not the only one who thinks the modern period is becoming more and more fixated on rational violence. John Keegan in his The Face of Battle16 at one point compares modern battle to modern mountaineering, and in both places finds how increased technology and rationalization has led to a more and more severe emphasis on endurance at the cost of every other virtue; he speaks of "the hard men of the

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15. McIntosh (1986), 31.
16. John Keegan, The Face of Battle (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), 304-15.

'Winter Eiger Direct,' crouched shivering day after day in their tiny, filthy, smelly snow holes."17

Or George W. S. Trow, writing in the New Yorker18 finds upon examining the textual strategies of Harvard University alumni publications over the years that at one time the Harvard man was a mixture of spirit, manners, and toughness. It was this particular combination which allowed Harvard to be a backwater for American society, an institution which could shelter something like the Blackrock Forest from the mainstream utilitarian ethos. After the First World War, spirit was collapsed into manners, and finally in the 1970s manners were collapsed into toughness. In this way we get talk of making tough realistic decisions, but with a rhetorical evocation of spirit and manners. Everything has been subordinated to toughness; and toughness says that the Blackrock Forest would be a more lucrative investment if it were sold. But, of course, this means that Harvard is no longer a backwater. The distinction between Harvard and all the utilitarian institutions around it has become rather vague. One would no longer trust Harvard to care for a forest that one wanted protected.

Thus we find a society which increasingly can motivate itself only with toughness, hardness, or endurance. These things were always important components of the American self-image, but now they seem to

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17. Keegan, 307.
18. George W. W. Trow, "Annals of Discourse: The Harvard Black Rock Forest" New Yorker, (June 11, 1984), 44.

have become dominant and to have thrown off all those manners, spirit, or virtues which used to temper them. Keegan here would agree with McIntosh and Weber that there is a reciprocal relation between the ability to rationalize a dominant ideal and its acceptance. Clearly it has been easier to rationalize toughness than manners or spirit, since, as Keegan points out, the relation between toughness and technology is so tight.

To the extent all this is true, McIntosh's thesis of a charismatic violence and of the state as its legitimate wielder makes sense. But what, we must ask, do people find so magical about violence. Here McIntosh refers to Freud's thesis in Civilization and its Discontents that people have sublimated violence in order to live in groups and nations. Social life demands a taboo on murder, and thus the state acquires a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence.

> The charismatic appeal of official violence springs from the fact that civilization requires the renunciation of personal violence, at least most forms of violence against parents, spouse, siblings, and offspring: precisely those towards whom we have the strongest violent impulses. Since one typically identifies with both punisher and punished, one can simultaneously have the sadistic pleasure of exercising one's violent impulses and the masochistic pleasure of being punished for having them. These meanings of course are mostly unconscious.19

This is the only place where I would differ with McIntosh. It seems to me that Rene Girard's account of the scapegoat mechanism offers

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19. McIntosh (1986), 30.

a more direct way to understand the same phenomena. What McIntosh points to over and over again is the phenomenon of a collective violent unconscious drive. "[Magic] is a way of working the meanings and motivations brought forth by myth into the thoughts and actions of the members of the communty, and the magical power of charisma is nothing but the power of the unconscious."20

For Girard myth and violence are also closely connected; myth is a coverup of a collective murder. What we find is a collective unison which uses scapegoats to take the heat off mimetic and frustrated desires. Thus the need for violence stems from the social structure of desire itself; in this case from the dominance of instrumental rationality, and the technical rationalization of systems of desire. In this way Girard would keep McIntosh's relation between violence and the sacred, between magic and ethics, and between personal frustration and rationalized violence. The violent enforcement of ethics is a prime ground to develope something like a scapegoat mechanism.

The source of frustration may be something more mundane than unconscious drives. The civilization of productivity has by now come up against numerous physical limits; third world people are not willing to labor at starvation levels indefinitely, domestic oil reserves are depleted, the earth's ecology may be unable to withstand unlimited exploitation, and many people experience the achievement of affluence as

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20. McIntosh (1986), 10.

empty and unrewarding.21 On top of this I have noted how various strategies to reintegrate ethics, meaning, and instrumentalism have all been at best only partially successful. In Weber's terms, instrumentalism is by far the easiest of the three to rationalize, and a rational reintegration of all three would be a tall order indeed. Thus as instrumental rationality loses its ability to satisfy desire, we at the same time put more pressure on it than ever to do so. Since instrumental rationality simply cannot supply what ethics, or spirit, or manners used to provide, and since material success is still the major source of self-worth and of hope, I would expect people to be rather reluctant to question desire itself, and to rather seek the source of their dissatisfaction in exactly those people who are either the victims of that desire or who oppose it; the poor, perhaps the rich, third world peoples, and domestic criminals, that is, anyone who can be accused of undermining the very foundations of society, or of causing horrendous ills, and who carries some mark which sets them off as different.

With this slight and friendly revision of McIntosh I will end my discussion of the Weberian structure of American organizational reform.

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21. William E. Connolly, "Progress, Growth, and Pessimism in America" in his Politics and Ambiguity (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 42-51.

1. Conclusion

Modern organizaton owes its existence not so much to the courage of Francis Bacon or Galileo, but to the collapse of omnipotence in the everyday lives of sincere people. It has been the task of this dissertation to understand how this happened, what it has meant, and what we might make of it. In pursuit of these things I have explored a variety of existential situations and organizational reforms, philosophical systems and interpretive standpoints, and especially the characterizations and speculations of Immanuel Kant. This is because it seems to me that Kant was especially insightful about the nature of modern freedom and its connection to modern goodness, and about the necessity and difficulty of trying to sustain them both in an interdependent world.

In the course of his analysis Kant emphasized a series of themes, and it is these themes which I have found unify the diverse thinkers in this dissertation. All agree that the loss of an Aristotelian cosmos, the separation of theoretical and practical reason, the hope of moral progress, the rationalization of sensuous desire, and incongruence of merit and earthly reward are important concerns for an age that seeks to think of itself as free. All thinkers in this dissertation also agree that individualist solutions are impractical, but that ethics is also an unlikely possibility. Kant's attempt to solve these issues has not been

sucessful, but once we understand what is at stake, we can better understand why the Kantian answers are so hard to give up.

In line with this, I have also considered some revisions of the Kantian approach. By developing some features of Kant's thought while ignoring others one can get such different approaches as those of Hegel and Kierkegaard, but I also found important Kantian features in Blumenberg, Heidegger, Foucault, Elton Mayo, and Clint Eastwood. However, I did not find that any of these approaches could make Kantianism succeed, rather, their value lay in their ability to characterize the modern situation and articulate its worst dilemmas. This finding obviously has not yielded any optimistic political or organizational program, but such a study of the modern prediciment cannot help but generate a certain amount of hope.

This is partly because Kantianism has a history. One of the things I have discovered is that once Kant articulated his philosophy, it did not sit dogmatically above our thought, but constantly found it necessary to revise itself until today Kant himself would hardly recognize it. What this means in practical terms is simply that human beings, and even theories, are much more wiley than social theorists used to suppose. As soon as we capture people within our conceptual webs, we find they have somehow escaped us again; sometimes precisely because they have believed our theories about themselves. In response we must revise our theories again and again. This is not to say that

the discussion of memises above is meant to apply only to texts or theories; memesis exists also in existential experience. Yet memisis as a theory can never encompass all the behavior it purports to explain. At some points it will have to strain itself, and at those points perhaps we will discover new avenues of inquiry. In other words, what we don't know may yet help us.

A second avenue of hope lies in the activity of criticism itself. By learning our limits and their nature, we already make them less formidable. This is partly because of the subjective experience of the theorist; it is hard not to occassionally allow oneself to wonder whether it isn't all just words on paper. But the more serious reason is that once we have given these things names we already in principle look to the horizon beyond them. In the process they already begin to dissolve. This double nature of criticism, that it articulates limits by becoming less limited, is captured in the following two quotes; the first by Karsten Harries, and the second by Michel Foucault.

> It has become fashionable to answer the problem of spiritual dislocation by calling for a return to the life-world or to ordinary language, suggesting that it is only the philosopher whose disengaged speculations have let him lose his place in the world. Such answers are not convincing. Descartes is too much with us. We have grown too reflective, too free in our thinking to make this return. Inseparable from this freedom is the desire to reincarnate the dislocated spirit, the longing for words that will let us rediscover where we belong and thus defeat that sense of contingency and arbitrariness which is the other side of objectivity. And yet, in spite of such longing, we find it difficult to step out of the Cartesian shadow. And when the

attempt is made it seems to yield no more than poetry: we are offered a vacation from reality rather than its revelation.22

To conclude and to come back to Kant. I do not know whether we will ever reach mature adulthood. Many things in our experience convince us that the historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults, and we have not reached that stage yet. However, it seems to me that a meaning can be attributed to that critical interrogation of the present and of ourselves which Kant formulated by reflecting on the Enlightenment. It seems to me that Kant's reflection is even a way of philosophizing that has not been without its importance or effectiveness during the last two centuries. The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.

This philosophical attitude has to be translated into the labor of diverse inquiries....I do not know whether it must be said today that the critical task still entails faith in Enlightenment; I continue to think that this task requires work on our limits, that is, a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty.23

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22. Karsten Harries, "Metaphor and Transcendence" in Sheldon Sacks, editor, On Metaphor (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 71-88.
23. Michel Foucault "What is Enlightenment" in Paul Rabinow, editor, The Foucault Reader (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32-50.

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