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CONTENTS

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EDITORIAL

Readers of the printed version of *Appraisal* will have noticed that we have reverted to the use of staples instead of comb-binding. Although the latter looked better, having pages printed on sheets of A4 worked out at considerably more expensive than having them printed on sheets of A3, and the 'staff' who had to undertake the comb-binding (i.e. myself) now lack the time to do it. Nevertheless there will have to be some increase in subscriptions for Vol. 5, starting this time next year, the first since we began seven years ago.

In this issue we have an interesting mixture of articles: with two remaining papers on aspects of personalism from last year's conference by Tihamér Margitay and Jan Olof Bengtsson; a continuation by Richard Prust of his earlier paper, also on the person; an assessment by Giorgio Baruchello of Rorty and his use of irony; and Bob Brownhill taking up yet another aspect of Polanyi's work, this time with reference to the contemporary situation of psycho-therapy.

These last two contributors, and probably Jan Olof Bengtsson, will be among those speaking at our own Conference next month. We have had to postpone the symposium on the tacit dimensions of knowledge management and professional training, though Bob Brownhill will introduce us to some aspects of the theme. There is growing interest, within business studies and the branches of professional training, in what we know but cannot tell and if and how it can be developed and transmitted, but sometimes at least without reference to Polanyi or with only a superficial knowledge of his work. We should make efforts to bring greater knowledge of Polanyi to those who have only just begun to read him and to familiarise ourselves with the scope for applying his work to these areas. We hope to arrange a one-day conference on this next year.

APPRAISAL/POLANYI CONFERENCE 2003

Fri. April 11th (noon) to Sat. April 12th (5 pm)

Hugh Stewart Hall, The University of Nottingham

Speakers & Papers so far arranged:

Bob Brownhill (U. of Surrey):
Giorgio Baruchello (Queen's U., Canada): 'The politics of cruelty: de Sade and Nietzsche'.
Anna Castriota: 'The Concept of "difference" in Fascist Ideology:
Exploring the ideological roots of Fascist anti-semitism'
Norman Wetherick: 'Hayek, Polanyi and psychology'
Hans Popper: 'Marcel's *Essai de philosophie concrete*'
Alan Ford (U of Gloucs): 'Narcissism in Western Culture'

At least 2 more papers can be incorporated within the programme: please send your offers straightaway

Conference Fees:

1 Full residential attendance incl. Registration, Friday Dinner & Bed (single room), Saturday Breakfast & Lunch, Coffees, Teas, all papers sent in advance, & VAT: £76
2 Full non-residential incl. Registration, Friday Dinner, Saturday Lunch, Coffees, Teas, all papers sent in advance, & VAT: £47.
3 Optional Friday Lunch £13.70; Extra night B & B £29; Extra Dinner £18.50 (VAT incl.).

For bookings and offers of papers (with title and summary) please contact the organiser,
stating your exact requirements.
Please make cheques payable to 'R.T. Allen, Conference Ac.'

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FREEDOM, VALUES AND KNOWING

A RADICALIZED INTERPRETATION OF POLANYI'S PHILOSOPHY

Tihamér Margitay

1. Introduction

Polanyi's most fundamental claim is that knowledge is always a person's knowledge who essentially, and personally contributes to it. It has been almost a truism from Kant on that the subject has a substantial effect on knowledge. However, according to Polanyi, it is not an abstract general subject, but the individual person who leaves her personal fingerprints on knowledge. It has been much discussed how subjectivist this position is, whether there is any justification for the universal—or at least intersubjective—validity of such knowledge.

We can approach this problem from a slightly different angle, namely, through the freedom of knowing. The problem of justification and Polanyi's epistemological subjectivism will be transformed into the question of what are the limits of our freedom in knowing. What sorts of constraints are there to temper individual fantasy? I will argue that our knowledge claims can be based on moral foundations and as a result of the fusion of the epistemic and the moral in the person, truth will emerge also as a moral value.

The expression 'freedom of knowing' is equivocal as a genitive structure almost always is. On the one hand, it may refer to the freedom we enjoy in determining (1) *what to believe about the world* (ourselves included) and (2) *what to view as knowledge*. This is the freedom *in knowing*. On the other hand, this expression may refer to freedom that is generated by knowledge: freedom *by knowing*. The relationship between knowledge and freedom is discussed generally in the context of this second meaning. We control our environment, social and natural, through knowledge and we enlarge the territory of our freedom by means of this control. In this paper, however, I will focus on the first meaning of this genitive structure which is, as it will be argued, prior to and a precondition of the second one. The freedom we enjoy in knowing is the foundation of, and a precondition for knowledge, and hence, for the freedom we enjoy by knowing.

2. Freedom in knowing

First of all, the concept of cognitive freedom needs clarification. Let us start with the standard analysis of freedom: *S* is free from *x* to do *y*. Where *S* ranges over agents, *x* over constraints, conditions, restrictions, etc., and *y* ranges over actions or conditions of circumstances. That is *S* is free from some constraint, restriction, etc. to do or not do, become or not become something. In the case of cognitive freedom this can be translated into the following form. *S* is free from some constraint, restriction etc. to believe *p* about *x*. This formula covers a rather apparent problem: how free we are to decide what to know. But it also involves a more interesting question: how free we are to form different and incompatible beliefs about the same thing.

However this formula can be expected to generate complications later for two reasons: for its atomistic perspective, and for the implicit assumption involved that the things out there are given descriptions independent of the beliefs concerning them. It seems more promising if we assume a serial of different complete set of beliefs, *systems of the world*, w_1, w_2, w_3,… as Quine introduced this notion. *S* is free from some constraint, restriction etc. to believe *w* as an adequate description of the world[1]. Later this analysis should be amended to include also nonpropositional knowledge playing an essential role in Polanyi's epistemology. But for the time being the problem of cognitive freedom comes down to the following three questions. From what sort of logical, epistemological, ontological etc. constraints are we free? In what kind of *w*s are we free to believe in, and what sort of constraints remains? Answers to these questions will be offered in the framework of an interpretation of Polanyi's philosophy.

2.1. Negative freedom

The negative concept of freedom is freedom *from*—that is, from certain constraints, influences and compulsions. The negative aspect of freedom opens up opportunities and possibilities to create our own knowledge according to our preferences. We are free from determinacy of certain kinds—ontological and epistemological—that could determine our knowledge, i.e., that could restrict what we believe about the world.

From an ontological point of view, it is the infinity of the inexhaustible reality that opens up a playground for us to create knowledge of our own, to see the specific personal aspects of the world. Reality is infinite and inexhaustible in the sense that it shows up indefinitely many and unexpected ways in the future[2]. An implication of the infinity and inexhaustibility of reality is that our knowledge is indeterminate in terms of its scope[3].

A second ontological reason for our negative freedom springs from the hierarchical-holistic structure of reality. This hierarchical-holistic ontological structure applies to reality in general and, thus, to knowing man in particular. Firstly, according to the emergent holism, a whole possesses properties and structures that are absent from the constituting parts. For instance, what a machine is cannot be defined in terms of its parts, but only in terms of its structure functioning as a whole. Therefore a machine is ontologically different from, and not determined by its parts. Secondly, according to type emergence, a

machine is not only a different entity, but it is also ontologically different in kind. While the properties of its material are governed and explained by the laws of physics and chemistry, the machine itself cannot be understood by virtue of these kinds of laws. We need a structural-functional description to define what a particular kind of machine is. In such cases, a new *type* of entity emerges. The emergent type of entity is not determined by the constituting entities neither by their laws[4]. But these lower level laws are satisfied by the emergent entity: they serve as boundary (necessary) conditions for it[5]. The higher level laws determine the functioning of the emergent entity within the playground left open by lower level laws. Reality is regimented by a multi-layered type-hierarchy beside the part-whole hierarchy and this structure of emergence characterizes knowing as well. Human knowing (or rather knowing human being) is itself an emergent type. As knowing persons, we are determined by the emergent structure of knowing that is governed by the (Polanyian) principles of personal knowing. The laws of physics, biology and the values of our culture stake out the boundary conditions for our functioning as knowing being, but they fail to determine our knowing[6]. This is the ontological basis of human freedom in general; our beliefs, skills and actions are not fully determined by the deterministic structure of the physical reality.

From a cognitive point of view negative freedom is constituted by *the indeterminacy of the subsidiary components* of knowing and *the indeterminacy and infinity of our integrating capability*.

Knowing is understood on the analogy of the pattern recognition of Gestalt psychology. A pattern that is to be recognized, acquired, known or understood—e.g. a face, some skill, regularity in nature, etc.—is more than the sum of its parts. The parts are integrated into a holistic form. The parts of a recognized whole possess meaning only in their contribution to the form, that is, they are subsidiary components of the whole. When focusing our attention on a whole, we are only subsidiarily aware of its parts. Of course, it is possible to switch the focus of our attention to a particular part, but this also changes its semantic and cognitive status. It is not attended as a subsidiary component of the former whole any longer, but as an independent whole. According to Polanyi, this structure characterizes all kinds of our cognitive efforts including both propositional and nonpropositional knowledge (knowing that and knowing how)[7]. The selection of the relevant subsidiary components and their integration are constituents of tacit knowledge which is itself nonpropositional in kind. Thus propositional knowledge is rooted in the nonpropositional one.

It is important for us to clarify the status of indeterminacy in order to see how it can contribute to our negative freedom[8]. If the claims concerning the indeterminacy of subsidiary components and integrating capacities are meant to be the part of a psychological description—as Polanyi's works are often read, then the indeterminacy may be the result of the limitation of our psychological knowledge. Had we got a better theory of cognition, this indeterminacy would not occur. We would be able to specify the effective subsidiaries that are the grounds for a certain piece of knowledge and they could turn out to determine it uniquely. The fact that we cannot specify how we come to a certain belief in a particular situation does not entail that there is no determinate reason (or, indeed, cause) for it. Some kinds of unspecifiability are in fact the result of ignorance, but unspecifiability basically has profound logical foundations lying in the structure of our cognition.

Subsidiaries and their integration are *logically unspecifiable*[9] and hence, indeterminate. Knowledge represented by the focal whole, is the result of two interrelated components: the subsidiaries and their integration. They are subsidiaries and integration *only* with respect to the focal whole. But the focal whole alone cannot determine these two interrelated components for there are many possible combinations of these two factors to construct the same focal whole. It is possible to counterbalance the modifications of the available subsidiaries by the appropriate modifications in the integration process and *vice versa*. Metaphorically, the same stimuli, information, data, situation etc. (the 'same' subsidiaries) can be integrated into different focal wholes, and different stimuli, information, data, situations, etc. ('different' subsidiaries) can be integrated into the same focal whole. The famous ambiguous pictures (Rubin vase, Leeper's ambiguous lady, etc.) may serve as an example for the first case and the recognition of a face under different circumstances, for the second.

As it was pointed out earlier it is possible to focus on a given particular that was formerly a subsidiary in a context, but in a focal position it is already a different cognitive object: it is not a subsidiary component of the original focal hole anymore. As the structure and the function changes the meaning of the particular changes.

> Subsidiary awareness and focal awareness are mutually exclusive…. Our attention can hold only one focus at a time and … it would hence be self-contradictory to be both subsidiarily and focally aware of the same particulars at the same time[10].

The first consequence of these is that our knowing, or 'correct' knowing is not completely determinable by rules or conditions—as far as the tacit component goes. Secondly, even if some rules for tacit knowing were prescribed, a person would not be able to follow them. Tacit knowing is free from the dictatorship of the rules of rationality and, hence, it is free from both inductive and deductive methodologies. A knowing person is not and cannot be a rule following machine.

Logical unspecifiability comes down to that the input data and the methodology cannot determine what the resulting knowledge should be[11].

Freedom from rules springs from the logical structure of the holistic integration of parts, i.e., from the structure of tacit knowledge. But recognition, skills, use of tools and language, understanding etc, have the same logical structure and thus the same essential logical unspecifiability. These cognitively relevant activities cannot be fully determined by rules whatsoever. In each level—from perception to understanding—knowing essentially involves tacit components.

2.2. Positive freedom

Thus we are free to determine our own knowing within a playground. It is a truly personal (or individual) freedom as the *cognitive action* is guided by *my own* bodily and psychological setup, my own learning history, skills and passions. By virtue of these factors we select the relevant subsidiary components and integrate them into a whole.

In addition to these functions, our body, psyche, system of beliefs, skills, etc. also supply subsidiary components to the whole[12]. Let us take Polanyi's example about localizing an object in space. We rely on the difference between the images of two retinas, on the muscular contraction controlling the eye motion supplemented by the impulses received from the labyrinth that vary according to the position of our head in space, on the earlier developed neural connections in the visual cortex, on the beliefs about the situation fixing the scale for us, etc. All these data are among the subsidiary components to be integrated into the spatial localization of the object we are gazing at. These data are supplied by our individual biological and psychological constitution. Metaphorically, we integrate ourselves into the knowledge concerning the world, and the upshot is shaped accordingly.

Knowledge becomes individual because of the way we integrate the focal whole and because what is integrated into it. In this sense we are free to see the world in our own way.

The background of this positive freedom is that Polanyi sees knowing as an activity instead of as a representation. He insists on the similarity between knowing and skills, using tools and practical activities, respectively. They are inseparable in the holistic action of knowing. Knowledge is not a symbolic representation rather it is our active and creative relation to the world.

3. Constraints

Now what constraints are there to stake out our playground for freedom within which we can act? What prevents us from pure subjectivity? If subjectivity is inherent in your perception, if you have self-set standards for the criteria of the reasonableness of your beliefs, well, then you may believe what you like.

Two factors prevent us from the freedom of daydreaming: our cognitive powers and our commitments. It should be clear these are not meant to be disjunctive components of knowing, but they emphasize different aspects of constraints.

3.1. Cognitive powers

Knowing, in the first place, is part of our normal adaptive system. The forms of knowing, i.e., the way an organism gathers information from the environment and reacts to it, range from the forms of the adaptation of the most primitive organisms to the most sophisticated cultural forms of knowing, from the food recognition of the amoebae to theories of science. Our cognitive powers are primordially evolved and brought about to maintain the closest connection with reality, to help us finding our way in the world. This is particularly apparent in the case of basic forms of our cognitive powers. For example, apart from artificial situations our body safely informs us about the dangerous temperature of hot objects. With our normal body and psyche we are constantly interacting with reality and they deliver fairly reliable knowledge about our environment. Human cognitive mechanism is not designed and primarily not used to invent subjectivist daydreams. This latter is the artifact requiring explanation and not our knowing about the reality. Under normal circumstances our cognitive powers confine our knowing by tying us to reality.

3.2. Commitment

Commitment is the second element of compulsions. The framework of commitments has a two-storied internal structure: on the first level we are committed to particular beliefs, values, etc. while on the second level to the search for knowledge, i.e., for truth and reality with universal intent. By accepting first level commitments we adopt the particular culture we have grown into, including our language and the accepted body of knowledge, the adopted cognitive methods and the acknowledged norms and values. In particular scientists are supposed to commit themselves to certain doctrines and methodological rules of their field, the norms and values of scientific inquire, pursuing certain problems, etc.

On the second level, however, commitment is an intentional link to truth and reality: I am committed to search for truth and reality[13]. On making knowledge claims we try to tell other people truths about a reality believed to exist independently of our knowing it. By claiming truth and concerning reality, all assertions carry universal intent[14]. Universal intent—the intention that a claim be valid for others (be universally valid)—is precisely the factor distinguishing the beliefs we consider knowledge claims from other beliefs having

no such aspirations. Thus our holding a belief with universal intent entails that our belief is held true and concerns reality. This commitment is directed to objectivity and intersubjectivity at the same time.

We are committed to lower level commitments with universal intent and the universal intent involved in our new knowledge claims controls the revision of the elements of the old lower level commitments too[15]. This suggests that universal intent also accompanies assertions and acceptance of normative claims at least as far as they are relevant to knowing[16].

First level commitments rest on knowledge, but on the other hand knowing presupposes commitment. This predicament can be resolved by the circularity of corrections. We acquire knowledge with certain commitments that are to be improved in the light of new knowledge. This ongoing process can be seen as a continuous strain for restoring the coherence between our commitments and the new truths we have found[17]. The most interesting in this process is the fact that we have to face the decision which elements of our first level commitments we trust in and retain, and which need be revised. The revision rests on the retained elements and the second level commitment. This choice is a crucial source of originality, where we are to exercise our personal judgment and, thus, our freedom.

How can commitment restrict our freedom? Being committed involves that our psychological, moral and social existence is at stake. Under normal circumstances we give our name to our assertion signalizing that we believe it and we did our best to find the truth and this is the result. If we prove to speak nonsense too often then it will undermine our psychological self-image (regarding ourselves insane or untalented, etc.) and our moral self-image (being reckless, dishonest, etc.) and our social position (being incompetent, dishonest, etc.). Risking our psychological, moral and social integrity seems to be the most powerful pressure on us that can be thought of, to make us resolutely strive for truth by using our cognitive powers properly and most effectively[18]. We are impelled to make our personal choice most prudentially within the domain of our free decision involved in knowing. Accepting a commitment is taking on a moral obligation with all the consequences it entails if not fulfilled. Obviously commitment is not an ultimate guarantee for truth. We are fallible. Nonetheless it exercises an ongoing pressure on us to improve our knowledge[19].

3.3. Reality

Reality[20] restricts our freedom in knowing *via* commitment. One of our most basic epistemological experience is that our knowledge is fallible. If we are honestly striving for truth, then—contrary to our best efforts to save some of our cherished ideas—it sometimes turns out that we were mistaken, and this experience is explained by reality. Everything does not go—even if we wish sometimes that it did. We experience an independent compulsion in the fall or failure of our knowing, and this is independent reality or truth. As we have to proceed form a framework of first level commitments (within a set of established beliefs, values, etc.), we are to be committed to the search for reality and truth in order to realize this compulsion of reality on our beliefs (and on the revision of the first level commitments if necessary)[21].

3.4. Remarks on commitments

Let us pause on the status of the claims concerning commitment briefly. In Polanyi's philosophy the idea of reality, universal intent, etc. are supposed to be shared by all beyond all indeterminacy. Is it not a contradiction? Certainly, it may be interpreted that way; everything is person-relative, how is it possible that these ideas are universal as they stand? But perhaps a more charitable reading would consider our sharing these ideas as transcendental conditions for knowing, i.e., as conditions of the possibility of knowing. '[O]ur acceptance of this framework [of commitments] is the condition for having any knowledge'.[22] He notes also that

> 'commitment' was introduced … as a framework in which assent can be responsible, as distinct from merely egocentric or random. It was granted thereby the faculty of exercising discretion, subject to obligations accepted and fulfilled by itself with universal intent.[23]

Though the framework of commitments is developed through responsible personal actions, it is not merely the manifestation of personal preferences it is not subjective. We have 'mandatory' commitments like searching for truth, submission to reality, universal intent, etc. Without them it would be impossible to acquire knowledge and, consequently, it would be impossible to develop a framework of commitments at all.

To sum up the constraints, *it follows from second level commitments that we do not enjoy freedom to believe what we like, but we enjoy freedom to know what we can depending on our own cognitive powers*[24].

Let us not be misled by the starting distinction between cognitive powers and commitments. As a matter of fact, commitments are part of our cognitive powers. It is part of someone's personal capacity how far she can stand the pressure of risking her reputation, self-respect, job etc., and how flexibly she can comfort herself with the reassessment of the situation after a fiasco. Someone can gamble on her whole private and professional existence even up to a lie or a professional sham while others cannot stand even the uncertainty involved in a normal scientific research project.

4. Justification and Truth

4.1. Justification

Seen from the other side, the factors limiting our freedom are the justifications for personal knowledge in the sense that they are reasons why we claim what we do. Justification is meant to be a guarantee for the cognitive value of our beliefs (but it is not supposed to prevent us from false beliefs). If the realist conception of truth and the possibility of the check of correspondence between statements and reality are put aside, than *what better guarantee can we hope for the truth of an assertion than that the researcher and the scientific community stake their reputation and self-esteem (and their existence on the long run) on that they have done their best what was possible?*

Before accepting a guarantee and thus a justification of this kind, obviously we should also see who is risking his existence and what sort of existence is at stake.

Exactly in what sense is this guarantee a justification? Various attempts are made and some are failed, to secure knowledge by defining justification in terms of empirical basis, necessary truths, logical methods, coherence, the reliability of the ways of acquiring it, etc. Theories of justification—justification taken in this broad sense—try to elaborate conditions to assure the truth of the justified beliefs, if they are met, on the ground of the very justification. They are to establish a logical link between the justifying conditions and the truth of a belief. In general and in principle this also provides a methodology for logical testing of our knowledge claims. Here I suggest a moral foundation for knowledge to replace the former epistemological, ontological, naturalistic or theological ones. Even if fulfilled, the commitment to the proper use of our cognitive powers in order to achieve true beliefs about reality directly does not entail the truth of these beliefs. On the contrary, we are fallible despite of our best efforts, as it is apparent in the history of ideas. Indirectly, however, it can incorporate most theories of knowledge, and thus it may involve a guarantee for truth as well if there is any at all under the given circumstances. The commitment requires that you do what is actually possible to secure the truth of your knowledge claims. By virtue of this commitment, you should use the relevant knowledge (methods, practice, norms, etc.) available in knowing, or else you should be prepared and able to defend why you have ignored or replaced certain elements of the accepted body of our knowledge, methods, practices, norms, etc. If you cannot defend your position opposing our orthodoxy, than you risk your moral, psychological and social integrity. If any available theory of justification could help by supplying a guarantee for truth, than it can and should be used. Indeed we sometimes criticize people for not applying the best method available. E.g., somebody speculates on the truth of a statement instead of going out and seeing what the fact of the matter is. He uses improper methods and justification to support his claim and, under circumstances, this might be sufficient to risk his professional etc. existence.

It is important to note that this notion of justification does not assume the unicality of truth neither an overall consensus nor an overwhelming persuasive power.

4.2. Truth (I.)

Truth has a double role in Polanyi's philosophy. Truth is understood as 'expressing the assertion of the sentence to which it refers.' My saying that *p* is true is equivalent with expressing that I believe *p*:

> '*p* is true' declares that I identify myself with the content of the factual sentence *p*, and this identification is something I am doing, and not a fact that I am observing . . . . To say that *p* is true is to underwrite a commitment or to sign an acceptance[25].

This is a sort of speech act analysis and in this sense truth is 'the rightness of an action' and hence justification is 'giving reasons for deciding to accept it, though these reasons will never be wholly specifiable'[26].

> The effort of knowing is … guided by a sense of obligation towards the truth: by an effort to submit to reality[27].

That is: our commitment to striving for truth guides our actions in knowing, consequently, truth is a basic moral value. It should govern us while exercising our personal responsibility in knowing. It is our responsibility to determine our personal knowledge within the indeterminacy left open for us. Truth is the most basic value to guide our responsible decisions and choices involved in the process of knowing. From another point of view truth is a moral (and psychological) value because we risk our moral and psychological integrity if not conforming to it.

The fundamental role of truth can be seen from another angle too. As the framework of commitments is a hierarchical complex system, and the whole system itself is guided by and operated for the commitment to truth and reality. Truth is the basic operational principle that a human knower with his cognitive resources including the system of commitments has to achieve. Truth is an ideal or a functional standard for a knower. (Obviously, in the cases of nonpropositional knowledge there are other values like, e.g., veridicality in perception to support our search for truth.)

Truth is also a precondition for our commitment to a belief at the same time. Because we can commit ourselves only to those beliefs that we hold true.

5. Autonomy in knowing

Every act of personal knowing is a recognition and appreciation of the coherence of the whole of certain particulars. This assumes certain standards of coherence, but they cannot spring from some

observations of reality, since every observation already presupposes certain coherence and its norms. They cannot come from methodologies either as we have seen earlier. We are the ones who define under given circumstances what counts as a coherent whole. This is freedom understood as autonomy: we lay down the rules for ourselves. Knowing is a domain of our autonomy and autonomy is crucial to knowing for '[a]ll personal knowing appraises what it knows by a standard set to itself'.[28]

By the same token another standard is set. The best performances of personal knowing set the standards for knowing and for the recognition of coherence, like the athletes putting forward their best, set the norms for the critics of their own performances. Thus a 'skillful performer is seen to be setting standards to himself and judging himself by them'.[29] It is a consequence of the structure of knowing that scientists set the norms and values to adjudicate the performance of scientists, that is to say, they set the norms for themselves and thereby for science. It is the personal autonomy in knowing that underlies the autonomy of science, and not *vice versa*.[30] It should be clear that autonomy here is not meant to refer to the platitude that political influence often misguide scientific inquire. It is about a fundamental and general autonomy of science and scientists, which does not involve some sort of total independence of the values and norms of society. For commitments to some social norms are part of the factors guiding scientists in determining the norms of coherence. Nonetheless they are supposed to submit themselves to these social norms autonomously.

6. Self-actualization

6.1. Knowing and Existence

An interpretation of the analysis of freedom[31] says that we are free to the extent we are able to realize our internal potentialities: our dispositions, abilities, talents, ambitions etc. in our life; we may become what we can. Polanyi's concept of knowing is important also from this point of view. Knowing expands our existence. First we learn to use our senses and to see the world with our eyes. The world sensed in our particular way is our world and we adapt our existence to it. This happens when, for instance, a dentist learns how to use his probe to explore cavities. In this process she senses (feels) cavities by the integrated complex system including both her probe and her body. She integrates the subsidiaries of the probe and her body into the feeling of the cavity thereby expanding her body by the probe in the experience of the cavity. After having developed a professional mastery of the probe she adapts her professional life to a world including cavities experienced this way. She dwells in this new world.

In this sense every knowing including the knowledge of our language and cultural background is an indwelling, namely the use of a framework of understanding[32]. Because such frameworks are also part of the frameworks of our existence. We developed our framework, hence our existence, by knowing, by a serial of responsible personal decisions and commitments determined by us. Eventually, it is the person to make the decision to commit herself to certain perception, practice, beliefs, values, etc., and what else could there be for her to go on in her free decisions, but her momentary potentialities. Hence knowing is a form of self-actualization or self-*real*ization.

6.2. Truth (II.)

It is a moral obligation towards ourselves to commit ourselves to the search for truth also because our existence depends on truth and falsity (apart from insanity). Truth is a moral obligation not only to acquire 'real' knowledge (as opposed to daydreams), but also to create 'real' existence (as opposed to an insane one, a fruitless, incomplete, senseless life). Knowing governed by the commitment to truth keeps interaction with reality and expands life toward or over it[33].

Most of us fail to achieve complete self-actualization. This is another and perhaps the most compelling experience in which reality shows itself by restricting our self-actualization. Complete self-actualization assumes that our inner self is in harmony with the outer reality. Daydreaming is a sign of reality, of the conflict between 'inner' and 'outer' reality. The conflict is resolved by giving up the obligation to truth. Once again truth is a precondition for real existence.

As the cognitive situation (matters of fact + our biological setup + our cultural background) does not determine our knowledge (leaving a slack for freedom), and all knowing is realized by a person, therefore knowing involves responsible decision about, among others, what we should know. Furthermore, since knowing is developing an existence therefore knowing should be governed by values of our existence. Knowing assumes commitments with universal intent, we have to commit ourselves only to the kind of values that we can hold valid both for knowing *and* for our own existence *and* for the existence of others. In general moral values cannot be detached from cognitive values and both should be held with universal intent.

This sophisticated commitment is still insufficient to foster the common good of the society as a whole, but—if fulfilled—it can guide knowing towards the good of other persons. If it is not the case with respect to scientific knowledge, then it is the responsibility of the scientists. This radical conclusion follows from the personal character of knowing.

7. Freedom from the inside

When freedom is viewed from the 'inside', it is often construed as a *coherence* between the person's desires (or her drives) and her actions (or rather, what she believes she is doing). If there is a conflict between the two, than we feel ourselves forced to act against our will.

Truth is the coherence of the whole in the person's experience. The standards of coherence are set by tacit knowledge by virtue of first level commitments, and these standards are part of the second level commitments, giving the meaning of truth. The standards of coherence embody values according to which we wish to see the world.

When we experience—for moments—the coherence between the standards of coherence (truth) and the way we actually see the world then we experience this sort of freedom in cognitive activity. These are the moments of coherence between the new experience and our prior first and second level commitments. The new experience bears out our expectations according to the required standards.

Unfortunately, this experience of freedom is completely inconsequential in most cases. But it may also become important as the sign of the discovery of truth at the end of a tiresome scientific research. The discovery is experienced as the conjunction of the two kinds of coherence: truth and freedom; when we experience truth and, at the same time, we experience the freedom of our creative action in knowing. Thus truth is not only the coherence in the world (in the focal whole), but also coherence between the world and the knower (of which we are only subsidiary aware). (As it could be expected from the claim that world, knowledge and knower cannot be detached.) When successful research is viewed as an activity (be it as an active contemplation or as a production of knowledge) as opposed to mere logical representation, then it is free in this sense of the word.

8. Polanyi radicalizes the outlook of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment taught that man's freedom means that he is driven only by the laws of reason (in their most general sense) that are virtually the laws of mind and the essence of human nature. Self-realization is nothing but applying our universal reason to our particular situations and experiences, that is, to our particular finite life. Freedom is based on knowledge, which is in effect based on the universal reason. According to my interpretation of Polanyi we can accept this line of thought up to the point that freedom is based on knowledge, but it is not the knowledge of the universal reason, rather it is a personal knowledge bearing the marks of the knowing individual. It involves personal freedom instead of the freedom of universal reason, and '(t)his is …our liberation from objectivism'. Self-realization, accordingly, means that we develop ourselves through personal knowledge (according to it and by it), integrating into ourselves what we have learnt. Since no universal reason remained for us to lean on, the personal responsibility, thus morality, emerges already in knowing.

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1. Quine 1975.
2. This formula reflects the subject-object bipolarity: there is a subject to be free in relation to the rest of the world (object). The subject-object dichotomy, in turn, presupposes the determinacy, separability, and the relative autonomy of the two. As we will see later in Section 6. it is far from trivial that these conditions are met in the process of knowing.
3. Cf., e.g., 'to attribute reality to something is to express the belief that its presence will yet show up in an indefinite number of unpredictable ways.' (Polanyi 1958, 311.) This treatment of the reality might seem odd, but assuming that our future is open then reality is indeterminate provided that we cannot make sense of reality over and beyond present, past and possible future contacts we make with it.
4. E.g., Polanyi 1968. To appreciate the role of the open-ended reality in constituting cognitive freedom we should contrast this ontology, e.g., with the ontology of a Kuhnian paradigm. In the latter, there is no room for the discovery of the radically new and unexpected entities or structures of reality. Reality may be inexhaustible and infinite only in the details of its features.
5. Polanyi's notion of emergence is different from its contemporary use. For, if his key example is taken seriously, then a machine can be realized by various physical structures and a physical structure may embody various machines according to the means-end

context in which they are used or functioning. For example, a screwdriver may function as a chisel and vice versa.

6. This is my reconstruction of the ontology implicit in Polanyi. See, e.g., Polanyi 1958, Part IV, and Polanyi 1967.
7. It is clear that Polanyi's motivation is on the other way round. 'Our theory of knowledge is now seen to imply an ontology of the mind. To accept the indeterminacy of knowledge requires …that we accredit a person entitled to shape his knowing according to his own judgment, unspecifiably. … This ontology—which flows from my theory of knowledge—will be outlined further in Part Four.' (Polanyi 1958, 264.) But the direction of Polanyi's line of thought does not affect the claim that a kind of indeterminacy is rooted in the ontology of reality rather than in our ignorance. Therefore it can establish freedom as opposed to ignorance.
8. Polanyi 1958, 56.
9. A somewhat banal way to establish ontologically cognitive indeterminacy is this. Our cognitive powers are part of the reality and they are infinite and inexhaustible in the same way. Infinitely many and indeterminate subsidiaries may help us to integrate them into infinitely many meaningful wholes knowing ever-new unpredictable aspects of the world.
10. My notion of logical unspecifiability is different from Polanyi's. Compare Polanyi 1958, p. 56.
11. Polanyi 1958, 56-57.
12. This, of course, does not entail that these factors has no role to play in our knowing. See below.
13. E.g. Polanyi 1958, 59.
14. Cf. Polanyi 1958, 311.
15. Contrast with Polanyi 1958, 311
16. Commitment is crucial factor in the case of internalized constraints. For example, as to the pressure from outside we may be free from the rules of reason, but we are trained into the admiration and adherence to them. One internalized constraint can be overruled only by means of another. Commitment is a general way to acquire new internalized constraints to liberate us from the former constraints of the same kind. We replace one internalized constraint with another to which we freely commit ourselves.
17. We shall see later many kinds of value will prove to be relevant—and not only the 'epistemic values'. For knowledge is also a means and a mode of self-actualization and serves this purpose too.
18. See a hint to circularity of this kind, but in another context on p. 267. in Polanyi 1958.
19. It follows that Polanyi supposes that the choice between the proper use of our cognitive powers and daydreaming is intentional. At this point, we are not ultimately, but may be temporally, at the mercy of some Gestallt-play of our psyche.
20. Somebody might ask, then why take the risk? Because—according to Polanyi—passion drives us to do so. We are willing to give up our primary interests and needs in order to search for truth. Intellectual passion driving us to intellectually satisfying understanding is the source of this sacrifice and it urges us to venture new and untried solutions risking the failure.
21. I am using Polanyi's rather unhappy term, but it should be clear that reality does not entail metaphysical doctrines about realism or any *Ding-an-Sich*, etc.
22. Polanyi (1958, 311) gives another phenomenological argument for the existence of realtiy: 'reality [is] largely hidden to us, and e*xisting therefore independently of our knowing*.' (Original italics).
23. Polanyi 1958, 267. It should be noted that it is not alien to Polanyi to take hierarchical structures as transcendental structures in which the higher level structure provides transcendental condition for the lower level structure. As, for instance, our biological setup is a precondition for our mind and social life. Polanyi's arguments often purport also the fulfillment of a precondition. For example, it is impossible to apply rules by the help of other rules, but we can apply rules therefore we must have a tacit cognitive power to do so.
24. Polanyi 1958, p. 312.
25. Citing Polanyi we can add that '[t]he result may be erroneous, but it is the best that can be done in the circumstances. Since every factual assertion is conceivably mistaken, it is also conceivably corrigible, but a competent judgment cannot be improved by a person who is making it at the moment of making it, since he is already doing his best in making it [according to his commitment].' (Polanyi 1958, p. 314.) *Mutatis mutandis* the same applies to the scientific community.
26. Polanyi 1958, 254-55.
27. Polanyi 1958, 320.
28. Polanyi 1958, 63.
29. Polanyi 1958, p.63. Cf. also Kant's conception of cognitive autonomy.
30. Polanyi 1958, p. 64.
31. The demand for the autonomy of science is thereby supported by an epistemological claim. One reason why science should be autonomous is that it is necessary for the autonomy of scientists that is, in turn, a necessary condition for knowing. Contrast it with Kuhn who thinks that there is no personal autonomy, but only the autonomy of science.
32. See Sec. 2.
33. Polanyi 1969.

SPIRITUAL PERSONALISM:

PROSPECTS AND PRECONDITIONS

Jan Olof Bengtsson

1 Introduction

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between the intellectual cultures of the East and the West is found in their respective conceptions of the human 'self'. If the teaching of Buddhism can broadly be said to be focused on establishing what we *are not,* Hinduism may be said to seek to establish what we *really are.*[1] To a considerable extent, Hinduism agrees with Buddhism with regard to what we are not. It is a fundamental truth in both that we are not the psycho-physical nature, the body and the mind. In some interpretations of Buddhism, also the reality of what with the Western terminology we might call a 'spiritual' self is denied, whereas in other interpretations, its teaching is merely silent on this issue. When Hinduism defends the existence of the self, however, it uncompromisingly limits its reality to the 'spiritual' identity (*atman-brahman*) and takes quite as much care as Buddhism to 'deconstruct' the often very subtle power or function of false identification (*ahamkara,* the 'I-maker') with our psycho-physical nature.

These things are both the basic and in many respects the central concerns of these highly philosophical religions. What with some modifications can be regarded as the equivalent of Western philosophy in these traditions is without exception linked to a path of spiritual practice. Theory supports the concrete efforts of the student or believer to see through his false identification and/or (re)actualize and identify with his true higher self, the nature of which is *sat-chit-ananda,* (eternity, knowledge, bliss). This is the goal and enduring purpose of human life, where real metaphysical insight is indissolubly connected with a concrete spiritual realization that is tantamount to the achievement of Buddhahood or liberation *(moksha*) from the otherwise inescapable, endless suffering of the wheel of birth and death (*samsara-chakra*).

These fundamental teachings have a sublime simplicity that has proved almost impossible for the Western mind to fathom. With a variety of theoretical and practical means, both systems work relentlessly on breaking the bonds of illusion. Yet simple as their core, defining insights and goals may seem in theory, the strength of illusion, the strength of false identification with the body and the mind, make them a task of a lifetime—often, it is held, many lifetimes—to integrate deeply and to achieve. I believe it is true to say that the West has never retained in any tradition, school or other form, and perhaps never reached at all, the highest level of mature insight regarding these things that we find among the advanced representatives of brahminical or Buddhist culture and at the basis of their traditions. My purpose in this paper, to gauge and identify the prospects and preconditions of what I call a *spiritual personalism* in the West, requires that we take a look at the historical reasons for this. I will define spiritual personalism by drawing on both the Eastern and the Western traditions.

2 Western views of the identity of man

From the beginning, the West has distinguished itself from the Orient by its different understanding of the human 'self'. An Oriental inspiration was present in the Greek and Roman world, in the form of Pythagoreanism, Orphism, and some aspects of Platonism and Gnosticism[2]. In a way which at least approximated the Hindu view, the true self was here identified with the 'soul', which was fundamentally separate from the body and which in its true existence belonged to a higher realm[3]. Indicating the significance of this conception for the later development of the thinking about personal identity, R. Hirzel used the term *'Seelenpersönlichkeit'*[4]. The influence of this view was to remain strong in the West, but it was soon mixed with and overshadowed by other, distinctly Western ways of conceiving the identity of man.

Moral and political philosophers emphasize the social identity of the Greeks of the city-states, but it is important to keep in mind also that at least from the time of the Persian war, it became a defining element of the Hellenic self-image that in contradistinction to what they—often no doubt rightly—perceived as the despotic hierarchical and collectivistic empires of the (Near) East, they favoured the dignity and the status of the human individual. This individual was certainly normally regarded as having a soul separate from his body, but the individuality defended was quite as much that of the individual of the psycho-physical nature: the individuality of 'man' as such. This aspect of the classical, and above all Hellenic civilization, the defence of the individual and his freedom, was highly celebrated by eighteenth and nineteenth century liberals. The preoccupation with the individual in the purely human and worldly sense was perceived as a, perhaps *the,* defining characteristic of Western culture as developed out of Greek culture. All in all, despite

the fact that the Platonic tradition continued to stress the soul-identity of man (and minor philosophical schools kept insisting on the 'impersonalistic' positions of pantheism and materialism), Greek and Roman culture, the *paideia* described and analyzed by Werner Jaeger[5], became centered on the full-rounded humanistic cultivation of man as such, man in all his aspects. The emphasis was on ethics in the sense of the development of moral character—a level of purely humanistic culture that can, but need not necessarily, be related to insights regarding a higher level of the life of the soul or of spirit.

In the Old Testament, there is no equivalent of a separate soul-identity of man of the kind that we find in various religious and philosophical traditions among the Greeks or an Oriental 'spiritual' identity. God looked on his creation and saw that it was good (*tob*—a very vague and general word[6]): although, in the strict Biblical context, this may mean rather that the result of God's *ordering* of the stuff of the original chaos was good, as a principal valuation it mirrored, or contributed to orient, the Israelite religion toward 'sacralized' yet this-worldly goals and values. God breathes his spirit into man, but man's identity is predominantly seen as the unified psycho-physical nature[7].

The meeting of Jewish and early Christian theologians with Greek philosophy that took place mainly in Alexandria had as a result not only that the distinctive theism of the Israelites, further accentuated and developed by the Christian view of the Incarnation which obviously implied an understanding of God which was personal not only *avant la lettre* but also in a distinctly modern sense of the word, was adjusted to Greek metaphysical speculations about the Whole, the All, of the highest principle behind or in the cosmos, of ultimate reality, and of God, as they had reached their mature expression in the works of Plato and Aristotle. It also meant that the identity of man as conceived in the Bible was often supplemented with or reinterpreted to accord with the more distinctly 'psychic' view of the identity of man prevalent in the Platonic tradition (with which Aristotle's school gradually merged). More or less 'gnostic' interpretations of Christianity arose which sought to separate it from its Israelite and Old Testament background and link it instead to an unambiguously soul-centered and somewhat more 'Oriental' metaphysics and understanding of man. Such currents were present also among the Jews. As subsequently in Islam, esoterical mystic interpretations of the law and the prophets also displayed the characteristic Oriental tendencies. Rival interpretations vied for the privileged position of Christian orthodoxy, and the disputes were settled only after hundreds of years, if even then. The outcome, at least in the Western Church, was that the psycho-physical human identity of the Old Testament was confirmed and even reinforced by the adoption of the peculiar doctrine of bodily resurrection[8]. However, as I have already mentioned, the Platonic tradition continued to exercise a strong influence, even on Western Christianity, which, despite the discrepancy between Platonism and the Bible, became more other-worldly in its orientation than Judaism. If care was taken to emphasize the createdness of the human soul, the more Platonic understanding of man's identity in terms of it could be retained by many theologians througout the Middle Ages, not only in the Eastern Church but also in the West. But by and large, orthodoxy's view of the Christian Gospel came to be limited to holding that it was about man's salvation, as man, from sin, and the restoration of his right relation, as man, to God—not about the liberation of his soul.

It is important to understand that although the soul in the Platonic tradition did sometimes come close to the Oriental view in that it was regarded as having constitutionally a prenatal and postmortal existence and was originally part of a higher reality[9], it was normally not as strictly distinct from the human mental plane as the *atman-brahman.* The Hellenic *psyche* was often nothing but the mind, albeit endowed with a higher status as our true immortal self. The soul as the mind, with all its faculties, also comes closer to the Pauline understanding of the *psyche*, which, despite some ambiguous formulations[10], is on the whole indissolubly linked to the body (*soma*) and exhaustively constituting together with it the created human identity that is 'the flesh' (*sarx*), which as a unity is sharply distinct from the uncreated spirit (*pneuma*), a divine power added through grace to the human psycho-physical identity and spiritualizing it from outside, as it were[11]. So little is the spirit part of human identity that it was finally recognized as one of the *hypostaseis* or *personae* of the Godhead. The problems of translation are of course legion in comparative studies and involve complex hermenutical considerations, but for my present purposes it may be useful to employ the term spirit (*pneuma*) as a rough Western equivalent of the *atman-brahman,* partly because if we keep the Pauline usage in mind, it serves to establish the distinction from the level of the soul[12].

Throughout Western history, the Christian view of man was dovetailed with various versions of the Hellenic ideals of *paideia.* Platonism itself always had a 'humanistic' dimension. If the soul-identity of Platonism could shape at least many of the early forms of Christian theology, the very same Christian thinkers who took up Platonism thereby also tended to adopt what came to be known in the West as the Pelagian teachings on man's own power to elevate himself, teachings which conflicted with the orthodox understanding of sin and grace. The combination of distinct soul-identity and humanism seems to be a peculiar Western phenomenon. In the extremer forms that could not be accommodated or tolerated by orthodoxy, the idea that man's true identity was

something close to a 'spiritual', divine spark led not as in the East to a curbing of the psycho-physical sheath with which the spirit falsely identified itself, but, in time, to a tendency to a divinization of man *tout court*, including his psycho-physical nature. After the Pelagians and Gnostics had been forced underground by orthodoxy and had thereby become radicalized, and after they re-emerged as revolutionary democratic movements in the heretical sects of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation, in British Puritanism, in the enlightenment, and in romanticism, this tendency reached its climax in the radical secular humanism of the nineteenth century.

These are some of the historical reasons why the West came to differ so radically from the East in its understanding of the human self. In the East itself, the 'Eastern' view never, on the whole, carried with it the extreme excess or had the radical secular consequences of Gnosticism. Quite the opposite: its highly stable and ordered society was shaped and inspired by a general cultural climate that favoured precisely the values that were related to the disciplining of the sensual and mental forces of man, the insight into why the psycho-physical is not our true identity, and the yogic and contemplative release of the higher self.

Although the Eastern way of knowing this truth is not only the way of philosophical thought and argument, but also a way of concrete spiritual practice, and no real insight is thought to be possible to reach without the latter, I believe there are also distinct philosophical reasons, even of the kind familiar in the West, for the 'Eastern' view of the self. The question of the prospects and the preconditions of a spiritual personalism in the West today must in my view be questions about the extent to which it is possible to combine our radically different, individualistic liberal humanism with, and to deepen it by, the Oriental view. Although the West has never reached the profound spiritual insight into the nature of the self, it should not necessarily be regarded as inferior on *other* levels. In this connection, the advances of modern science and technology are what comes to mind to most people, but they are not what I want to emphasize here. Rather I find it important to stress that on the level of what I have called the psycho-physical nature, the West has excelled also in moral and aesthetic culture, in moral and aesthetic *cultivation* of man and his potentialities. From the Eastern perspective, the value of all this can only be relative and secondary. But with the exception of the extreme 'illusionist' schools, even from an Eastern perspective that does not mean that they are not *real* relative and secondary values. Perhaps the most intersting and lasting of the contributions of Western culture are its deep reflections, throughout the ages and in many different forms, on the human self, the human individual, the human person, and the formation of moral character with which they are related. The partial truths of what I will here call Western *personalism*—truths that remain valid in the sense that they are not incompatible with the higher spiritual truths but are susceptible of being linked to them—are lasting achievements of Western civilization.

3 The concept of the person

The wisdom of the classical tradition of *paideia* can no more be denied than the deep moral and psychological truths of the orthodox Christian teachings on sin and grace. In both, the emphasis on the dignity and value of the human individual, as human, as psycho-physical, contained not only what from the Eastern point of view is a fatal, false identification, but also rich insights that remain valid on this plane even if we accept the Eastern position. The highly complex conceptual and terminological history of the word person reflects, or contains in itself, much of the essence of this valuable central line of Occidental culture[13]. But it is important to keep in mind that in the concept of the person that was gradually developed, much of what defined other concepts in antiquity was gradually taken up[14]. It was largely such contents that in combination with the distinct historical meanings of the term person came to form a new concept[15].

The developing concept was as rich as it was elusive, or, more precisely, it was a concept of a reality that was too rich and elusive to be exhaustively or even sufficiently and satisfactorily definable. True, the word has acquired an everyday meaning of 'a human being' which does not reflect the many layers and ambiguitites of its history. Its legal use expresses but one of its very many historical meanings. Moreover, 'personality' has come to be used in connection with superficial celebrity, the general obsession with which has clearly narcissistic traits. In modern psychology, central historical meanings often seem to be lost in a new kind of empirical character-analysis. Yet in modern philosophical personalism, the resources, as it were, of the concept have sometimes been clearly brought out and put to new and rewarding philosophical use. In general, the West continues to build on many of the elements of its distinctive legacy of humanistic thought and culture. But in the modern world, the valuable aspects that are still being developed have become increasingy bound up with and compromised by the specific, problematic reinterpretations that shape the West's equally distinctive *modern* legacy, reinterpretations that make it even harder to combine the insights of the classical humanistic tradition and of Christian orthodoxy that are still discernible with the transcendent dimension of what I would describe as a true spiritual personalism.

The concept of the person is closely linked—in fact, analytically increasingly inseparable—from other concepts such as the self, the individual, and,

depending on the definition, the soul—and others. It is these concepts taken together, and especially as applied to the distinct level on which specific Western cultural eminence in general was reached, that delineate an important, deep, and fruitful area of reflection the exploration of which more than perhaps anything else marks that humanistic cultural identity of the West. I have mentioned the Platonic, more 'Oriental' strand of thought that is present also in the West, the relative 'individualism' of Greek and Roman culture, and the classical emphasis on *humanitas* with its ideals of a full-rounded education centred in the development of wisdom and moral character. To this was added the early Christian emphasis on the individual soul or individual man, and on individual providence. And in the course of the subsequent development of Western culture, there was further added the term and the concept of the person, with its own history and accumulated meanings. When we are told in the New Testament that God is no respecter of persons[16], these passages mirror the classical use of the term. Adolf Trendelenburg pointed to the striking development through which

> die Person, persona, d. h. die vorgehängte Maske, die den angenommenen Schein bedeutet, zum Ausdruck des innersten sittlichen Wesens, zum Ausdruck des eigensten Kerns im Menschen werden [kann][17].

From its use as a designation of the mask and, more widely, the role, in the theatre, in society, and in Roman law[18], the term was given a wider theological use in the trinitological and Christological debates[19]. But it was soon applied also to the human being in a new way; with sometimes only minor modifications or additions, Boethius' classical definition would be accepted not only throughout the Middle Ages, but also, with some additions, by modern personalists: *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*[20]. In Augustine's highly original thought many of the distinctive Western themes of self-reflection, individuality, and personality were introduced, but it was only in the late Middle Ages, with the influence of St. Francis, Ockham, and Scotus, that 'individualism' on various levels was first given a proper philosophical exposition. In the Aristotelian tradition, at least as interpreted by Aquinas, matter provides the principle of individuation; regardless of the special Aristotelian meaning of 'matter', the relevance of individuation in terms of it for the question of personal identity become clear when not only the immortal element 'in' man is reduced to the impersonal 'active' intellect but the soul is identified with the 'form'[21]. The late medieval philosophers who modified this teaching even more than Aquinas by means of various additions and re-interpretations and conceived of the form as subject and the soul as individuating, were still bound by the doctrine of resurrection to hold that the soul was somehow incomplete without the union with the body which was ultimately to be restored. The process of breaking with the Aristotelian conception of the soul was really successfully completed only with the renewal of Platonism during the renaissance. It is also in the renaissance period and the works of Petrarch, Montaigne and others, that self-reflective writing of Augustine's kind on individual human selfhood as singular and unique is resumed and flourishes[22]. Through the great French psychologists of the classicist age and the romanticized classicism of the German culture of neo-humanism, the new emphasis on individuality and 'interiority' as stressed by Trendelenburg are variously combined with the lasting ideals of antiquity.

4 The self in modern Idealism

Parallel to this development, however, another concept emerged which soon became linked to the specifically modern development of science—the new concept of *subjectivity,* sharply distinct from its Aristotelian terminological counterpart. An interesting early stage of its development can be studied in the work of Cusanus, but it is from Descartes that the concept, and the project of scientific epistemology for which it is the basis, comes to dominate and redefine Western philosophy. The purely rationalist version of the project was supplemented with an empiricist one. Often it is developed under the terminological designation of the *self*. In Descartes, this implied a reassertion of dualism quite as sharp as that of Plato, but with significant modern re-definitions of both sides of the dual reality. It is highly significant that at the same time that Kant and some of his idealist successors limited the scope of the project and sought new safeguards of moral and religious philosophy, for them too the new generalistic concept of the subject and the self overshadowed, obscured, and often even obliterated the distinctly modern individualistic meanings of the term person. Only in the development of the special form of idealism that in Britain in America came to be called *personal idealism* are the more precise modern meanings and insights with regard to individual personality preserved and integrated with the truths of modern idealism.

In personal idealism, conceived in a broad sense as a movement of philosophy reaching from the end of the eighteenth to the first decades of the twentieth century, we find what is perhaps the most mature and philosophically interesting expressions of the new partial truths of individual personality in the humanistic, moral, religious, and to some extent political spheres, that had gradually developed in the enlightenment and romanticism that define Western modernity. I have elsewhere suggested that this expression of these truths may suitably be designated by Folke Leander's term 'higher romanticism' and Irving Babbitt's term 'true liberalism'—and that they

add important dimensions to the definitions of these that are lacking in Leander and Babbitt[23].

However, situated in the period of crossover to what can reasonably be described as radical modernism—the materialist and atheist strand in the eighteenth century, extreme irrationalistic and antinomian romanticism, and all of the distinct forms of speculation that developed on the basis of these throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—this form of modern personalism is sometimes tainted with elements of the new worldview and correspondingly flawed in important respects. It is essential for the understanding of the modern Western view of the person and of the identity of man in general to have a firm grasp of the underlying dynamic of Western modernity. The basic driving forces of this dynamic was described by Irving Babbitt as 'Baconianism' and 'Rousseauism'. Eric Voegelin described partly the same, partly other aspects of the development of modernity in terms of a modern, secular 'Gnosticism' and an immanentization of the Christian *eschaton*[24]. I suggest that an even more general description of the basic characteristics of the whole development can perhaps be made in terms of a 'pantheistic revolution'—considering that the line of demarcation between pantheism and naturalism is thin and that several thinkers have convincingly analyzed how representative modern forms of the former have substantively and historically implied the latter. The nature, and the inevitability, of the strange symbiosis of radical individualism and radical impersonalistic pantheism in the romantic period has been elucidated by Gerald N. Izenberg in *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origin of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (1992). It can easily be shown that this dialectic defines also the whole of the subsequent development of Western modernity[25] and not least post-modernity, which can be described as post-romantic only by the most superficial of accounts. 'Rousseauan' romanticism was indeed to some extent a reaction against enlightenment rationalism, but in no way was it a replacement or an independent alternative. 'Baconian' enlightenment reasserted itself (or, in Britain and France, had never really been defeated) in the second half of the nineteenth century, but romanticism continued to fuel the culture of scientific rationalism with a supplementary emotional inspiration. Most aspects of this were exhaustively and definitively analyzed by Babbitt. In the resultant cultural climate, the understanding of man's personal identity could not but be affected in significant and often deeply problematic ways. As Babbitt showed, both the Baconian and the Rousseauan strand of modernity are naturalistic: they have in common the move away not only from what Babbitt describes as the transcendent level of religious *meditation*, but also from the humanistic—in the classical sense—level of ethical *mediation*.

5 From Idealism to Naturalism

The version of Platonism that could again flourish when in the course of the nineteenth century the firm hold of Church orthodoxy over Western culture was broken[26], was of a different variety than the classical: this was the secular humanist version, which tended to redefine the immortal soul-identity and/or the divine element of man in terms of a divinization of man as such. It often tended to became nothing but a Victorian terminological facade of what was already in substance sheer secular humanism. Outright naturalistic humanism soon emerged through the works of the Young Hegelians and in the form of Saint-Simonianism and Comtean positivism. It did not take long before the high-flown idealistic terminology was considered hypocritical, unnecessary, or simply wrong, and joining ranks with the scientists, the philosophers became 'scientists' in the philosophical sense. Yet the interdependency of this development and romanticism not only in the mild form of sentimentalist humanitarian ethics and idealism but of the radical countercurrent or dialectical negation that is romantic extremism was a reality throughout the late nineteenth and the whole of the twentieth centuries, as witnessed by the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, fascism in general, and postmodernism[27].

Personal idealism, as represented by many of the German so-called 'speculative theists', the Swedish 'idealists of personality', British thinkers like A. S. Pringle-Pattison and J. R. Illingworth, and the American school of personalism as founded by Borden Parker Bowne, firmly resisted all forms of naturalistic reductionism, and often had an exceptionally clear perception of the nature and the pantheistic, monistic and other roots of such reductionism. They rightly saw the parallels between the impersonalism of naturalism and that of Absolute Idealism. Yet the weakness of this movement was the degree to which in various respects it too was caught up from the outset in the modern dialectic described by Babbitt and in the process of immanentization analyzed by Voegelin.

In this historical situation there could be no restatement of an original Platonist or 'Oriental' view of human identity. At best, the humanistic level, in the classical sense, could still be cultivated. It could even be further developed in certain respects, for along with the distinct nineteenth century naiveté with regard to the course of history, there was also a development and philosophical articulation of the historical sense which added new dimensions to the Western tradition of reflective self-understanding. Despite the resistance of the idealistic personalists against naturalistic reductionism, the overall drift of personalistic philosophy was inexorably in the direction of a definition of the identity of man exclusively in terms of his psycho-physical nature. In the course of the twentieth century, resolutely breaking with

Victorianism, personalists emerged for whom this identification is a fundamental and essential part of their philosophical message. And although such personalists added distinct radical modernist elements or were at least inspired by radical modernism in their distinctive reinterpretations, Western intellectual history did indeed, as we have seen, provide an impressive precedent in many respects.

One can easily understand the dismay of the American personalist George Holmes Howison when the British philosopher Henry Sturt misused his own term 'personal idealism' to designate a position which soon turned out to be compatible with an extreme state socialism and fascism. The problematically ambiguous Old Testament legacy of prophetism was more or less directly present in the work of the prominent modern personalist Martin Buber, and the Old Testament view of man was tellingly defended by the Scottish personalist John Macmurray in an uncompromising opposition of Biblical corporealism to idealism of any kind, even to 'mentalism', tending to reduce human identity to the sensual, physical nature alone. Defending the Soviet Union, Macmurray, like the French personalist Emmanuel Mounier, freely mixed personalism and communist sympathies with typical twentieth century insouciance[28].

6 Eastern Personalism

I began by signalling my view that this modern position with regard to human identity—and its premodern Western antecedents—is not tenable, and that I defend the Eastern view of the identity of man: man, with the less developed Western terminology, as not really the 'soul', but as a 'spiritual' being, clearly distinct not only from the body but also from the mind. But we must now consider a serious objection to this. I have defended the lasting value and the validity of the distinctly Western development of the philosophy of individual personality and the view of the cultural and moral values and their progressive realization with which it is essentially linked, although I have qualified it by saying that it is concerned only with a relative dimension, which in this context means that it is concerned only with the impermanent and constitutionally limited and imperfect world of the body and the mind, i.e., the psycho-physical, or at least phenomenologically psycho-physical, level. But would not the acceptance of the Oriental view mean that we gave up precisely these unique insights of Western culture and abandoned ourselves to that typically Indian monistic and impersonal unity of spirit beyond distinct individual identity and personhood? Is not personalism, and not least theistic personalism, precisely what Indian culture is best known for lacking?

This was long the standard view in the West. Pantheistic, monistic, and 'impersonalistic' interpretations and philosophies of very many kinds could indeed find ample support in the Indian scriptures. When from the eighteenth century Western scholars began to discover and properly understand the religious and philosophical riches of India, their attention was mainly directed to the synthetic systematization of Shankara's *advaita vedanta,* which was once decisive both in the reassertion of Brahminical orthodoxy after the spread of Buddhism, and in the formulation and establishment of that orthodoxy itself. Although Christian personalists and theists were less than enthusiastic, it was widely understood that here was to be found the highest expression of Indian thought. But it was not only the strong position of *advaita vedanta* in India that explained this focus on the part of the Western indologists and the educated reading public at the time. An often neglected factor, I believe, was the prevailing spiritual climate in the West. I have suggested that the underlying dynamic of Western modernity can perhaps be described on the most general level as a pantheistic revolution. The dominant climate in the nineteenth century, at least among those who had strong interests in the philosophy of religion, was the climate of a largely pantheistic and monistic idealism. Liberal theology had been firmly linked in most forms ever since Schleiermacher to idealistic and romantic philosophy, and many Broad Church Christians and nonconformists moved freely beyond the confines of their own religion and explored the wisdom of the East. But in doing so they were decisively programmed by their Western sensibilities to find only that which answered the needs that these sensibilities had formed. Hence the broad theosophical movement, for instance, has been shown, for all its claims to rediscover and restate original teachings of the East, to be a distinctly Western, and distinctly *modern* Western, phenomenon[29]. What attracted Western romantics from the early Friedrich Schlegel at the beginning of the nineteenth century to Alan Watts one and a half century later, was monisms and pantheisms that they could interpret in terms of their own romantic, liberal, humanistic, and progressivist temperament. In this extra-Christian religious seeking they were warmly welcomed and assisted by Indian neo-vedantists like Vivekananda who undertook to present vedantic doctrine in terms that suited their Western admirers, i.e., in a form which was already conveniently romanticized by themselves[30]. This was for the most part a blurred, watered-down, and cheap version of Shankara's interpretation of the *vedanta*. It upheld none of the strict requirements of the tradition, nor did it do justice to the subtleties of Shankara's own philosophical position.

Even more seriously, it missed completely the fact that Shankara's was only one of several existing orthodox interpretations of the *vedanta*. Different philosophers systematized the content of the common

scriptural canon in different ways, and drew different conclusions. Over the last few decades, Western indological scholarship has fully discovered the significance of this, and an increasing part of it is now devoted not only to the alternative and rival commentary of Ramanuja[31], but to other interpretations that develop different interesting variations on the fundmental *theistic* interpretation that Ramanuja established against Shankara[32]. The existence of the Ramanuja tradition has of course long been known. But the import and centrality of it has only recently been grasped. This is indeed strange, in the face of the fact that, for instance, of the five volumes of S. Dasgupta's *History of Indian Philosophy,* published by Cambridge University Press in the 1930's, more than half are devoted to philosophies that reject Shankara's monism and represent theistic and, to various degrees, pluralistic interpretations of the *vedanta*[33]. Of especial interest for our present purposes is the fact that from the nineteenth century, representatives of theistic *vedanta* have used the Western term *person* to describe and explain their position to Westerners. This perhaps implies that something of the richness of the meaning of the Western term is relevant also in the description of the individual 'spiritual' self that Ramanuja establishes as distinct from the totality of the higher 'spiritual' reality. Moreover, this totality itself is ultimately conceivable in personal terms[34]. Western personalists consider the person to be a broader, and richer, concept than the soul, but in the light of the mentioned vedantic schools, this can only be because of the limitations of their understanding of the soul more often than not as mere mind. For spiritual personalism, although we cannot understand it in our present condition, the fullness of personality belongs to the spirit, the true source and locus of consciousness, and the mind and the body are but temporary modifications and limitations.

It may well be that to the extent that they came in contact with it, the theistic branch of Indian religion and philosophy was not as palatable to nineteenth and twentieth century Westerners for the simple reason that it was too similar to the Christian orthodoxy of theistic transcendence that they sought to escape. Often they saw lasting personal identity and responsibility as a limitation. Not seldom radical individualists themselves, of the kind that many modern personalists have warned against, they nevertheless, in accordance with the logic of romanticism, sought release in some impersonal whole. Preserved individual identity, not to mention a preserved individual identity which confronted a personal deity, was precisely what they resented—for specifically Western historical, cultural, and psychological reasons, too many to be recounted here, but which are nevertheless clearly distinguishable and and unambiguous in their import.

Be that as it may, the tradition of theistic *vedanta* was still in many decisive respects different from Christian orthodoxy. It shared the basic monism of the canon, the comprehensive spiritual nature in and of which all takes part and is identical at the deepest level. This was the kind of position that some of the Christian Platonists and neo-Platonists necessarily approached as they tried to reconcile the cosmological views of the Greeks with the teachings of the Bible. Although the impersonal view of God that this entailed for the Christian Platonists was retained in the Greek Fathers, monistic Platonism became increasingly problematic, at least in the Western Church, until after hundreds of years, its version of the soul-identity of man was rejected as heretical and there ensued the specific Western development of Christiain Platonism and Gnosticism which I have hinted at above, and which has no counterpart in India and which must therefore be explained by specifically Western historical factors.

All orthodox 'Hinduism'[35] acknowledges and builds on a fundamental canon comprising the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the *Vedanta Sutras*. Within orthodoxy, the rival traditions support their claims by conflicting interpretations of the same scriptures. At the same time, since as long as they do this, i.e., as long as they invoke the common canon the validity of which is never in doubt, they are all orthodox, they tend also to respect each other and live in harmony within the shared social system (which is likewise sanctioned by the same scriptures). Now this essential canon can indeed richly support both monistic and theistic/pluralistic interpretations. The *Vedas* contain mostly ritual *mantras* and prescriptions, but the philosophical and poetic passages seem to be able to support both readings. Most *Upanishads* seem monistic yet some are clearly theistic, while the *Bhagavad-Gita* is unambiguously a theistic work. The *Vedanta Sutras* are so elliptical that they cannot be understood unless an interpretative framework determined by the other scriptures is already decided upon and applied[36].

For Ramanuja and his followers, however, the unity of the All or the Whole did not exclude that it was conceived in 'personal', theistic terms. Nor did it exclude clear-cut divisions within itself. The latter are known in the Madhvaite tradition as the 'great distinctions', such as those between God and nature, between God and the finite beings, between the finite beings and nature, and between the different finite beings. From these positions follows that although the finite beings are distinct from God, the Absolute being, they are still of the higher spiritual nature and uncreated. It was this position in particular which in the Platonic form was anathema from the standpoint of the newly and slowly established Christian orthodoxy.

Buddhism of course is widely understood, at least in the dominant schools, to have rejected the higher individual identity. Yet it was as adamant as Hinduism in its insistence on the absolute necessity of the insight that we are not identical with the body and the mind. The pedagogical devices used by both religions to

hammer home this basic point are almost endless in their variation and ingenuity. What is more important here, however, is the degree to which they are successful. I hold that a serious person who has once truly assimilated something of this message by but a fragment of the means available, will in time find it futile seriously to question it. Not only the basic 'Hindu' scriptures mentioned, but the central Buddhist works of the *theravada*, Pali canon like the *Dhammapada*, have the kind of sublime simplicity that bears witness to the seemingly superhuman insight that is their origin[37]. It is the divine sublimity that can only be at hand when the simplicity is of the expression of basic truths about the nature of reality and of the human predicament that are nevertheless so profound as normally not to allow full integration and assimilation even in the course a lifetime of continuous reading. The goal of the spiritual path as here established is the ascension to a level of purely spiritual existence where our true identity is liberated from its temporary psychic and physical coverings and reappropriates its nature as *sat-chit-ananda* in relation to the supreme spiritual reality of God. This is a long path of practice, but in the light of the Eastern scriptures the direction is unambiguous from the outset and the goal, at least in its 'negative' aspect of what it is that we are released from, is clear.

7 Western and Eastern Gnosis

The gnostics of antiquity were a disaster for the West in the sense that their muddled teachings permitted the secular, immanenist interpretations that are a major cause of the spiritual darkness into which Western culture has in some respects descended in the course of modernity. Even more seriously, the extremism and extravagance of their doctrines and not least their practices compromised the sound Oriental impulse in the West that in a more mature, albeit still imperfect form had been received, upheld, and transmitted by various Platonists. It was not just the Biblical worldview but sheer revulsion that was the motivation behind the campaigns of Irenaeus and the measures of the Church. Yet the resulting literalism condemned the West to a view of the identity of man that precluded the assimilation of the deeper Oriental truths.

In today's cultural climate, many theologians revel in precisely the most untenable and unbelievable aspects of the literal Biblical view of man's true bodily identity because these fit so seamlessly the radical modernist and secularist demands for sensual emancipation and corporeal gratification. In dominant intellectual circles, the mysterious ambiguity of the prophets, St. Paul, and the Revelation of John were long ago abolished in favour of a secular utopian exegesis that dovetailed with Marxism, or, before and after Marxism was respectable, with the most radical forms of liberal democracy. After the breakthrough of radical modernism on a broad basis, after the rejection of Victorian idealist façades, in the course of the twentieth century, the emphasis on the uncontroversial nature and the legalized release of the human body and its increasingly variegated sensual cravings has come to be the top priority on the 'orthodox'-revolutionary agenda. Already the neofideists, headed by Barth, who revolted against nineteenth-century liberal idealism, significantly entered an unholy alliance with modern scientific naturalism as they replaced the view of man as a God with the view of man as an animal.

Now strict Christian orthodoxy really avoids literalistic interpretations and leaves the ultimate eschatological questions about the goal of worldly history and about the nature of the resurrected body open. In unison with the partial truths on the humanistic level that orthodoxy, and Christian culture in general, accepted from Hellenic culture, it has often performed a valuable task in the West in guarding against blind pseudo-idealism, illegitimate religious or political claims based on the authority of the inner light, and premature and extreme asceticism. A mentality shaped by all of these has been present throughout Western history, not least in the radical democrat movements of the immanentized *eschaton*—before Wilhelm Reich and others added the sexual dimension to the revolution.

The word *gnosis* is etymologically related to the Sanskrit term *jnana.* But no representative of Indian brahminical orthodoxy would welcome a typical Western gnostic. Indeed, so adverse would he be to him that he would try to make him understand that what realistically lay ahead of him was lifetimes of patient striving of spiritual practice and the fulfilment of the specific duties of this station within a hierarchically ordered society the stability of which could never be disturbed by mad fanatics such as himself. If the specific qualities of humanistic culture in the West, such as the emphasis on and the rich development of more exclusively moral and aesthetic philosophy, are not present to the same extent, India has nevertheless hardly showed herself less wise, skilled and judicious in the handling of specifically human nature. Indeed, Hinduism and Buddhism are characterized by detailed and sophisticated analyses of human qualities and the structure of human desires, and how they and their corresponding actions form a manifold of human destinies, that are hardly surpassed by Aristotle. The ultimate aim is to guide the individual soul by means of such analyses to an understanding of how it can elevate itself from its immersion in the darker natural qualities of ignorance and passion (*tamas* and *rajas*) to those of goodness (*sattva*), which allow spiritual enlightenment, and disentangle itself from the web of desires and their consequences. But within limits, everyone must be permitted to live out his life on the spiritual level where he or she is at present situated due to past

actions.

8 Synthesis and Philosophia Perennis

But precisely for this reason, it is defensible to hold as I do that the humanistic culture of the West at its best, i.e., when it aims at self-discipline, true moral character-formation, refinement of the aesthetic sensibility etc., and when it acknowledges and is open towards the transcendent dimension beyond it, is compatible with the spiritual truths of the East, and that bridges between and a synthesis of the East and this side of the West are possible[38].

René Guénon, the founder or the 'traditionalist' 'school' subsequently represented by such prominent thinkers as Frithjof Schuon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Titus Burckhardt, Tage Lindbom, Martin Lings, and Seyyed Hussein Nasr, who somewhat absurdly held that for reasons of race and national mentalities, Catholic Christianity, in its medeival form, is and always will remain the divinely prescribed form of religion for Western man, argued that all of the major traditions—much of his work was on islam and Hinduism—had a basically convergent esoteric essence, but that precisely Catholic Christendom, the particular exoterism of the West, could not be saved without a new forceful spiritual impulse from Hinduism. Not only has the historical development since Guénon wrote this made his exoterical territorial division of the world increasingly implausible. His esoterism is seriously and one-sidedly prejudiced in favour of the monism of *advaita vedanta* and Jewish, Christian and islamic monistic mysticism. The question of religious pluralism must be addressed from within a more adequate understanding of the nature of the respective traditions, and the formula of pluralistic coexistence and of unity in diversity correspondingly modified and refined[39].

What I have said this far may seem more like a historical background to the question of the prospects and preconditions of spiritual personalism. It is not. History is never merely a background. The questions of prospects and preconditions are inseparably bound up with the historical considerations. Furthermore, the discussion of the questions require at least a preliminary definition of the concept of spiritual personalism, which can best be given with the help of the historical perspective. I trust this will now have been accomplished to the extent that is needed for my present purposes. In the introduction to the first volume of his *History of Philosophy,* Frederick Copleston declared that he accepted the Thomistic view that there existed a perennial philosophy, and that for him this perennial philosophy was Thomism. If the theistic and pluralistic forms of the *vedanta* can be described as spiritual personalisms, I suggest that spiritual personalism is an alternative designation of as well as an alternative version of the perennial philosophy. Not only is theistic *vedanta,* in its general formulations, a universal philosophy; the imperfectly corresponding spiritual personalism of the West summarizes and epitomizes much of the best achievements and deepest insights of Western culture.

The fact that many philosophers, at least in the past, would claim that their own positions represent the perennial philosophy for the simple reason that they hold them to be true, does not mean that there is no one philosophy that is truly the perennial one or comes closer to it than others[40]. As a support for this claim there could be invoked in greater detail—and the details to be worked out or elucidated are of course very many—the authority, traditional as well as philosophical, of the Western and Eastern systems and currents that I have outlined above. Much more would of course have to be said about the extent to which the West has reached the positions of the perennial philosophy in comparison with the East, especially with regard to the idea of God.

9 Philosophy and the general culture

When we talk about the prospects and preconditions of spiritual personalism, we must distinguish between philosophy and the culture in general. The nature of Western philosophy was defined by the Greeks, and above all by Socrates and Plato, against religious and—in Weber's sense—'traditional' authority. For a while it entered into a tenuous synthesis with precisely such authority in the form of the Church, and then broke free again in *liaison* with modern science. Defending a humanistic philosophy that basically draws on the anti-*scientistic* currents of modern philosophy while selectively appropriating the insights of classical philosophy, Claes G. Ryn complains that because of the narrow self-definition and especially the truncated view of reason of much contemporary philosophy, it fails to fulfill its task of explicating conceptually and in general doing justice to the intuitive wisdom of the great seers of the human race, such as Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Goethe[41]. In the East, philosophy never had to dissociate itself from religious and traditional authority, because that authority was already in itself so eminently philosophical in comparison with the polytheistic religion and 'mythology' of the Greek world. Defining the true and deeper universality of what he calls a value-centred historicism, and defending a 'higher cosmopolitanism', Ryn is very much open to a global inspiration of philosophy. He is also aware that in Buddhism and Confucianism too there is already a conceptual elaboration of the intuitive insights[42]. But what if Western philosophy began seriously to do justice to the insights of the great intuitive wisdom of the 'Hindu' sages? Building in central respects on the insights of Irving Babbitt, a keen student of Buddhism and Confucianism[43], Ryn is well aware that any attempt at a true understanding of the sages of the East would

have to involve at least what he would describe, with Babbitt, as 'ethical' practice, that mere theoretical ratiocination in the one-sidedly rationalistic Hellenic tradition would not be enough even for theoretical insight itself. Yet if the reorientation of philosophy in the direction of a humanistic exposition of the wisdom of Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare and Goethe would be vastly enriching and beneficial, a serious attempt at assimilation not only of Buddha and Confucius but of the vedantic tradition, and the spiritual experience with which it is linked, by the best Western minds, would have the potential of radically changing dominant Western modes of thought in a way which neither philosophy as Hellenic rationalism nor even as dialectically expounded intuitive insight as hitherto practised will be able fully to account for. In other words, it could revitalize Western philosophy like nothing else.

Babbitt's student, T. S. Eliot, once said that the Western philosophers looked like schoolboys in comparison with the Indians[44]. Western philosophy has had and still has a way of hiding from itself the luminous truths of the Orient and not least of insisting on an overemphasis on our temporary psycho-physical identity—even in its anti-scientistic, humanistic and idealistic varieties. The prospects for a change in the direction of what can be described as the spiritual personalism of the East, depends on the preconditions, which may be said to be mainly three:

First, a change in—often a redefinition of—philosophy away from scientistic reductionism on the one hand and postmodernism on the other, involving a creative and selective rediscovery and reappraisal of forgotten resources of Western philosophy. Continuously and patiently entering into the details of the reductionist arguments, dualist philosophers like Richard Swinburne, John Foster, and Charles Taliaferro successfully defeat them. Late-Wittgensteinians and postmodernists are prone to adopt some kind of 'non-reductive' holism (Richard Rorty even speaks of 'non-reductive physicalism'). These positions too are refuted by the dualists. Yet the latter adopt the Western body-soul or body-mind dualism alone, and the important distinction from the perspective of spiritual personalism is not between dualists and 'non-reductive' holists: according to the *vedanta*, the soul or the mind is indeed part of physical nature, or of what we experience as physical nature, albeit a 'subtle' part. The real dividing line is that between spiritual identity on the one hand and psycho-physical identity, dualistic or holistic, on the other. To the forgotten resources belong not least, and proximately, those of modern personal idealism, which, broadly defined as assimilating and integrating many of the core insights of broadly 'personalistic' thought in the European past, represent perhaps the most relevant recent expression of the efforts of the Western mind to synthesize theism and philosophical idealism, and can therefore, despite its limitations, serve as the basis on the Western side for a true bridge-building between East and West that includes for the first time the personalistic-theistic dimension. In some respects, the intellectual climate of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries were perhaps more conducive to comparative philosophy and theology of the kind that seeks a true, deeper understanding rather than political change: despite the romantic leanings, lingering nobility of mind and a true spirit of idealistic elevation has to be compared to a more thoroughly established, if sometimes less militant, materialistic atheism and a postmodernism that accepts everything in accordance with an insidiously ideological relativism or tolerates everything due to mere lax indifference. Comparative studies of Bradley and Shankara were made, but unfortunately, the relatively fruitful climate of idealism was destroyed before either the Western personal idealists had had time to discover Ramanuja, or the followers of the latter to discover personal idealism[45]. Older Western resources will also have to be reassessed and adjusted along lines I have here directly or indirectly indicated.

Second, a change in the general intellectual climate that reduces the strong ideological[46] influence on and distortion of much academic philosophy. A spiritual personalism that is true to the best traditions of the East and of the West would have to resist the decadent, nihilistic drift of liberal democracy and present itself as the credible alternative to radical modernism and postmodernism that it truly is. Rationalism and postmodernism remain firmly locked in the modern dialectic outlined by Babbitt. While reductionist scientism rejects true spiritual culture outright, postmodernism make impossible a renewal of it by its gross lumping together of Descartes with Plato and even Oriental spirituality as one monolithic, oppressive logocentrism.

Third, an enhanced dialogue with representatives of the authentic Oriental tradition of spiritual personalism who also have some familiarity with Western philosophy and can thus better explain their own positions to Westerners.

The prospects of a spiritual personalism in philosophy are thus partly related to the prospects of a spiritual personalism in the culture in general. Souls wholly lost in tired scepticism and a vegetating mediocrity of rights and instant gratification can hardly take a serious interest in the ideas discussed in this article. As part of a broader creative traditionalism of the kind advocated by Claes G. Ryn, and expressing itself in multiple forms of cultural, academic, and religious life, spiritual personalism could itself contribute to stirring the 'last man' from his slumber and inspiring a new vibrant cultural climate, shaped by an ecumenical orientation towards realization of higher values, ethical wisdom, true self-actualization, and spiritual communion.

10 Spiritual Personalism and the 'New Age'

But there enter also other considerations with regard to the general cultural climate. In its moderate and higher forms, modern liberalism, and the enlightenment and romantic currents on which it builds, has opened Western society to the possibility of receiving a new spiritual impulse from the East in a fruitful climate of what I prefer to call a *qualified* pluralism. Despite the lingering materialism of old-style naturalistic scientism and the liberationist sensualism of contemporary revolutionary extremism, the West is in fact already decisively shaped by massive new Oriental influences. They are still filtered through specifically modern Western phenomena, such as a general romanticism, hankerings for an original, pre-oppressive, pantheistic and maternalistic paradise, radical democratism and progressivism, utopistic messianism, and, not least, humanistic psychology. The result is the new kinds of spirituality that are often described, in terms that reveal directly their true lineage of gnostic millenarianism, as 'New Age'-spirituality. Yet as such, even in this watered-down and streamlined form which for the most part the Oriental influences seem unavoidably to assume in this context, they still at least have the effect of establishing the existence of a higher self, and thereby radically to relocate human identity to the spiritual plane. Characteristically, this must not, for the new spiritualism, obviate the full identification with the body, the senses, and nature. Rightly turning against rationalist exploitation of nature, the new spirituality seeks to defend the sacrality of nature which was in reality upheld by all premodern spiritual traditions. Yet this is characteristically alloyed with a programmatic, distinctly romantic absence of discernment and restriction with regard to human desires: the higher self is often brought in merely to help satisfy them all and to increase power and self-esteem regardless of the moral quality of the psycho-physical character.

Furthermore, in line with the romantic current to which it unknowingly belongs, personality is routinely rejected as signifying nothing but the limitations of the 'five-sensory' awareness on the level of man and anthropomorphism of the kindergarten kind—bearded, life-denying old Patriarch among the clouds—on the level of God. Significantly, there is a massive consensus in this new current of Westernized Eastern spirituality that the higher self of man is identical with God, according to the familiar teachings of romanticized *advaita-vedanta.* The rationale behind the endless talk of 'infinite potentialities' is that we ourselves are really God. There are no distinctions between *atman* and *brahman* or within *brahman,* and the *atman-brahman*-God that we all are and that is all there is is essentially impersonal. Once we start actualizing it, we can tap into its energy to have all we want and create heaven on earth etc. So although this spirituality does indeed radically relocate human identity in the right direction in comparison with the psycho-physical identification, and even contains insights wholly unknown to materialism that are true as far as they go, it is still something quite different from spiritual personalism and the transcendent orientation of theism that is part of it. One of the most fundamental preconditions for a spiritual personalism in the West is therefore that romantic monism is supplemented by the reinforced presence of the theistic schools of *vedanta* in the West.

Yet, again, although it is conceived in impersonal terms and its use is often doubtful, a higher spiritual self is at least recognized. To the extent that this is so, if for no other reason, this new form of spirituality in the West could perhaps be at least the harbinger of a new advance in understanding[47]. For all its flaws and superficialities, the speed with which the new spirituality is spreading and seems to be rising to the position of the dominant popular worldview in the West may mark a momentuous historical change and even signal the downfall of materialism in the course of the third millennium. Once such advance is secure, it will be easier to work from the position of the vaguenesses and incoherences of the cultural climate created by the new spirituality in the direction of a more strict and rigorous Eastern-inspired spiritual culture than from a simple return to literalistic Christian orthodoxy and/or scientism and a rejection of the Western New Age- spiritualists *en bloc* as the misguided and gullible ignorants that in other respects many may well be. Indeed, signs of a 're-enchantment' of the world on a higher cultural and intellectual level can already be seen in Western society.

11 Transcending the Fatal Limitation

Yet for the long-term prospects of spiritual personalism, the more direct new impulses of the East must surely also be combined with a creative restoration, in new and flexible forms adjusted to the needs and the plight of liberal democracy as well as to the reception of the Eastern light, of the central insights of the foundational cultural traditions of the West, the classical and the Christian. Not least among the services that new authentic Oriental inspiration can provide is that it will make it easier to see through the Baconian and Rousseauan dialectic of Western modernity and to reinforce a real Western pre-modern cultural reconstruction, a selective return and renewal in the world of modern technology and political and commercial institutions. The reason why a distinctly Western creative traditionalism is also needed is that it alone will make possible a more precise historical understanding of the specifically modern and Western admixtures from which the truths of the new spirituality must be distilled. The latter is hardly possible without such critical self-knowledge on the part of future cultural leaders of the West.

It has not been my argument that our psycho-physical nature is unimportant—merely that it is not our true identity. In man's historical, phenomenal existence, a close relation between the body, the mind, and the spirit is surely a fact. All psycho-physical traits, yes, even our physical environment, reveal *something* also about our spiritual personality. But they can never exhaustively reveal the fullness of the latter, our real identity. What they manifest can of necessity be only a certain temporary state in the process of reciprocal influence between the true spiritual essence of our being and the temporal, historical, psycho-physical existence that defines human life. No single psycho-physical state, not even all psycho-physical states taken together, can fully and with perfect authenticity express our personal identity. What the 'covering' as such reveals about us is only the kind and the degree of the phenomenal conditionings and illusions with which we have temporarily and mistakenly identified because of our desires. The historical states of our phenomenal manifestation can only reveal more or less of the transcendent personal core by allowing it to shine forth through the psycho-physical sheath. With progressive actualization of our higher self, the sheath is reshaped and brought into harmony with it, and our spiritual personality can be ever more fully and truly expressed through our sensual nature. Our relations to others and our whole external, phenomenal world can then indeed to some extent be spiritualized. But the goal of the process is also the means without which this is impossible: the reviving and the deepening of our dynamic, loving relationship with God.

In controlling the psycho-physical 'covering' and its lower proclivities, redirecting its underlying structure of dreams and desires, and realizing and harmonizing its higher potentialities and values in a way that promotes spiritual self-actualization, not only is the tradition of classical humanism highly valuable and uncontroversial as far as it goes: the Bible is a goldmine of wisdom and sacred truth that no religious Westerner would be without. As I have indicated, there is much to be said even for Christian orthodoxy, in comparison with the secular illusions of much liberal theology[48]. Yet I suggest that classical humanism and literalistic orthodoxy too should be supplemented and revised along the lines of spiritual personalism here introduced. In the new millennium, the foundational Western traditions will have to be restated in a way that is conducive to transcending their fatal limitation: the taboo against knowing who we are.

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Notes:

1. Any standard work on Hinduism and Buddhism can be consulted for more details about these teachings. I use the key terms as understood by the major commentators on the *vedanta.*
2. The many different views of the soul—of different kinds of soul and levels of soul, etc.—in these traditions cannot and need not be distinguished here.
3. J-P. Vernant, 'La personne dans la religion greque', in I. Meyerson, ed., *Problèmes de la personne* (1973), 35-36; cf. Erwin Rodhe, *Psyche* (1890-1894 (1910)), II, 131-133, 185-186, *et passim.*
4. R. Hirzel, *Die Person: Begriff und Name derselben im Altertum* (1914).
5. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture,* I-III (1939-1944).
6. I am grateful to Prof. John Barton of Oriel College for discussing the meaning of the Hebrew word with me.
7. As with the shadowy soul of the departed in Homer's Hades, this unity is rather confirmed than challenged by the passages on the postmortal life of the sheol. James Barr has challenged the view of the exclusive holism of the Israelite soul-body-understanding and pointed to passages which use the terms *nephesh* and *ruah* in a way that seem closer to the Platonic understanding (Isa. 26:9, Ps. 86:13), yet the presence in other passages, and not least the broader cultural and doctrinal influence of the holistic view can hardly be denied; James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (1992).
8. On literalism in the understanding of this notion, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body* (1995). Among the doubtful assessments of Gnosticism in Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels* (1979), at least her explanation of why the resurrection of the body came to be accepted as orthodox seems in some respects plausible; *op. cit.* (1990), 37-41, 54, 59-70.
9. This also had to do with the fact that especially in neo-Platonism, there was added to the soul identity an eternal individual 'intellectual' identity in the second Plotinian hypostasis; Émile Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie,* I:2 (1931 (1961)), 463-464. Philo had used *pneuma* as a synonym of both *nous* and *psyche;* Harry Wolfson, *Philo* (1948), I, 102. It is also fitting that Jean Daniélou speaks of 'esprits' in the context of Origen; even more interestingly in the context of my argument, he speaks of 'esprits personnels', and 'êtres spirituels personnels'; 'La personne chez les pères grecs', in Meyerson, *op. cit.,* 119-120.
10. 1 Cor. 15:44 speaks of a *soma pneumatikon* (Vulg*: corpus spiritale*), formulations which were seized upon by Christian Platonists as support of their views; Biggs, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (1886 (1970)), 111, 225-227. Yet the meaning is rather the ordinary body as 'spiritualized' than a different body of a spiritual kind. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-36.
11. 1 Thess. 5:23.
12. The term spirit has of course not been used only in

the Pauline sense in subsequent Western theology and philosophy. It often has a wider meaning, sometimes close to the mind or the soul, sometimes closer to the meaning in which I here use it.

13. Roger Benjamin holds that '[l]'idée de la personne est…rélativement récente…L'idée est apparue à des dates diverses dans des sociétés qui en ont pris peu à peu conscience, sans arriver dans la plupart des cas à lui donner un contenu précis'. He quotes the sociologist Marcel Mauss to the effect that 'La croissance s'est faite…"au cours de longs siècles et à travers de nombreuses vicissitudes, tellement qu'elle est encore, aujourd'hui mème, flottante, délicate, précieuse, et à élaborer davantage."' *Notion de personne et personnalisme chrétien* (1971), 12 (Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie* (1950), 333).
14. See Hirzel, *op. cit.*
15. Daniélou rightly points out that at the time of the Greek Fathers 'le vocabulaire de la personne…n'est pas encore intégré à l'expérience de ce que nous appelons la personne. C'est pourquoi nous avons parlé d'abord du vocabulaire de la personne, sans qu'il s'agisse de la personne humaine—et ensuite de la personne humaine, mais sans rencontrer le vocabulaire de la personne. Nous trouvons des expériences correspondant à ce que nous mettrons sous ce mot, mais ces expériences n'ont pas encore rejoint le mot.' Daniélou in Meyerson, *op. cit.,* 113-114.
16. Gal. 2:6: 'prosopon ho theos anthropou ou lambanei', Vulg. 'Deus personam hominis non accipit'; cf. Matt. 22:16, Luke 20:21, Rom. 2:11. Cf. also the translations of Gen. 3:8 and 1 Sam. 19:8.
17. 'Zur Geschichte des Wortes Person', *Kantstudien,* 13 (1908), 3.
18. Maurice Nédoncelle, 'Prosopon et persona dans l'antiquité classique', *Revue des sciences religieuses,* 22 (1948), 277-299; M. Fuhrman, 'Persona, ein römischer Rollenbegriff', in Marquard & Stierle, eds, *Identität* (1979).
19. P. Hadot, 'De Tertullien à Boèce. Le développement de la notion de personne dans les controverses théologiques', in Meyerson, *op. cit;* C. C. J. Webb, *God and Personality* (1918), ch. 2.
20. Interesting early alternative definitions are those of Richard or St. Victor—*existens per se solum juxta singularem quendam rationalis existentiae modum*—and Alexander of Hales—*persona est hypostasis distincta proprietate ad dignitatem pertinente;* Joseph Ebner, *Die Erkenntnislehre Richards von St. Victor* (1917); Benjamin, 15.
21. There may be reason to suspect that Thomist, 'Dominican' personalism as developed in the twentieth century borrows freely from the Franciscan tradition.
22. Karl Joachim Weintraub, *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography* (1978); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (1989); Aaron Gurevich, *The Origins of European Individualism* (1995). See also my review of the latter in *Humanitas,* Vol. X, No. 2 (1997).
23. 'Irving Babbitt and Personal Individuality', *Appraisal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2000). Ethical mediation is of course a matter of disciplining the psycho-spiritual nature, but Babbitt considers the higher will that accomplishes this to be transcendent even in relation to the psychical level.
24. A good introduction to Voegelin's thought is his *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (1968).
25. The dialectic is particularly obvious perhaps in so-called 'existential Marxism'. See Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (1975), *passim.*
26. Even before this, modern, increasingly rationalistic forms of Platonism had of course existed ever since the Renaissance.
27. Uncompromisingly employing the methods and the ideals of rationalism in the effort to comprehend and control a reality which it understands in the quintessential romantic terms of the unconscious, psychoanalysis tellingly merges the two constitutive strands of Western modernity.
28. Marx, it will be remembered, defined the essence of man as his 'true collectivity'; the practical politics that followed from this were sufficiently well known already in the 1930's. The true relation between Soviet communism and personalism can be studied in an article in the Soviet journal *Bolshevik* in 1949, reprinted in *The Personalist* 39 (1958) ('American Personalism: "Philosophic Devilry"'). Personalism is condemned as 'reactionary' and the leader of the Californian school of American personalism is called a 'liar', who glorifies imperialistic war with 'the cynical frankness of a bandit'. A better case may of course be made for the compatibility of social democracy and personalism.
29. Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (1994). The first thoroughgoing criticism of theosophy from a stricter (Eastern) traditionalist perspective was that of René Guénon.
30. These Indians were of course thoroughly familiar with the British and their mindset at the time.
31. The *Shri-bhashya.* Ramanuja's position is termed *vishishtadvaita,* qualified non-duality.
32. The Oxford Centre for Vaishnava and Hindu Studies was founded in 1997 to promote chiefly the study of this branch of Indian philosophy and religion.
33. Other interpretations are those of Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka, and Chaitanya. See e.g. Eric Lott, *Vedantic Approaches to God* (1980).
34. For the Western development of the concept of the personal God, which I will not discuss here, I refer to C. C. J. Webb, *God and Personality* (1918).
35. The word is of Western, or possibly Muslim,

origin, and does not signify anything at all in the vastly differentiated religious world of India.

36. Apart from this canon, the monistic and the theistic-pluralistic traditions have their own specific scriptures, none of which can, however, contradict the basic canon.
37. I am of course not denying that the parables of Christ or the epistles of St. Paul have a similar sublimity.
38. Babbitt's essay 'Buddha and the Occident', which accompanies his translation of the *Dhammapada* (1936), contains many insights in this field that are still central.
39. The work in this field by philosophers of religion like John Hick and Keith Ward deserve special mention.
40. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the Swedish nineteenth-century personal idealist Christopher Jacob Boström made a distinction between 'God's philosophy' and 'man's philosophy'. When Aldous Huxley used the term 'perennial philosophy' (*The Perennial Philosophy* (1946)), he was, characteristically, strongly biased in favour of the *advaita vedanta* and monistic mystic position. When Guénon and the other 'traditionalists' used the term, one of their foremost concerns was to rid it of modern and romantic misinterpretations.
41. Claes G. Ryn, *Will, Imagination, and Reason: Babbitt, Croce, and the Problem of Reality* (1986 (1997)), 72-73, 92.
42. *Op. cit.,* 93.
43. Babbitt's 'new humanist' colleague Paul Elmer More was a keen admirer of the *Upanishads,* but in time, he significantly found the theistic truths of Christianity lacking: he never seems to have come into contact with theistic *vedanta.*
44. Russell Kirk, *Eliot and His Age: T. S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century* (1971), 29.
45. C. C. J. Webb, who can be described as a kind of personal idealist, was aware of the existence of Indian theism (*op. cit.* (see note 35), 88), but he wrote well into the twentieth century. Somewhat earlier, this aspect of Hinduism had been discovered by Swedish personal idealists, but no in-depth comparisons were made. Later in the twentieth century, the personal idealists were discovered by some theistic vedantists.
46. It will have been evident that I use the term in the pre- or non-Marxist sense.
47. In the writings of Paul Brunton, the pioneer of yoga and meditation in the West, published in the 1930's and 1940's, we find an ethically and intellectually more rigorous—and stylistically incomparably superior—introduction to what he called the 'Overself' (significantly a term similar to Emerson's 'Over-Soul').
48. In religious terms, my position could perhaps be expressed in the following way: I am less interested in defending Christian heterodoxy than Hindu orthodoxy.

PERSONALITY AND PRETENCE

Richard C. Prust

This paper follows on from from my 'Being Resolved, Having Identity, and Telling One's Story' in *Appraisal* Vol. 4 No. 1, which was is concerned with a certain assumption we make when we accredit a *personal* nature for some of our interactions. When we think we know somebody *personally*, when we think we know *who* he or she is, we necessarily make an assumption about the character of that individual's resolute action. It used to be philosophically common to attribute personality to a substantial self. In that metaphysical context an agent's action was understood to be resolute by virtue of something about the substantial agent that caused it. What I want to contend is that there is something to be found in the very character of somebody's resolute action that identifies that action as personal, action we see as the realization of personality. There is, in other words, something we assume about the character of somebody's resolute action such that, when that assumption is warranted, the action is identifiably a realization of that somebody's personality.

This feature of the character of action we regard as resolute can be manifest both to the agent acting and to others watching. My concern in this paper will be with the way an agent characterizes his own action when he regards himself resolved to do something. What I want to demonstrate is that he *pretends* to a unique status for his action and that he therefore bears the character of his action in a unique way. This bearing I will call personal pretence. To be a person, I will argue, is to bear a pretence that the character of one's resolve uniquely identifies a personal meaning for what one is doing. In a word, pretence is a necessary condition for personality.

Let me begin by trying to describe what it is about somebody's action that makes it credible as 'resolute.' I think we can find our footing in a certain phenomenological observation about resolve, namely, that we accredit the presence of resolve only when we believe that certain other elements of the agent's intentional life are being projected just then under some modification he is making in the interests of the resolved upon accomplishment. If now, in mid-morning at this philosophy conference, you tell me that you are resolved to get home before dark tonight, I may be lead to expect that you intend to forego a friend's late afternoon paper, perhaps apologize to her for missing it, forego a long gossip session in the parking lot, things of that sort. If you did nothing whatever to accommodate getting home before dark, your avowal would ring false for me.

Resolve, in other words, is a brawnier concept than mere intention. Intentions presumably can be projected toward their realization without reference to any other intentions: resolve cannot. We only count someone resolved if he has modified the way he projects as least some of his other intentions so that they better accommodate the course he is said to be resolved upon.

But to be resolved is not necessarily to chart the most direct course for the accomplishment of some intention and then accommodate all of one's other intentions to it. There may be people who obsessively sacrifice their whole life to one intention, but happily such monomania is rare. What resolve does require is that if we imagine that another intention of ours could be modified in its projected execution without compromising its accomplishment, modified so as better to accommodate the resolved upon action, such a modification is incumbent upon us.

Let me try to state this a bit more formally. Suppose person P is deliberating on two courses of action, C_1 and C_2, which tend to bear on one another's successful accomplishment. Suppose that there are two ways C_2 can be accomplished, W_1 and W_2, but while both W_1 and W_2 would serve to advance C_2 equally well, W_1 would preclude, jeopardize or impede C_1, and W_2 would not (or would not as severely). Such being the case, P is resolved upon C_1 only if he holds himself accountable to projecting C_2 according to W_2. Informally: someone is resolved to follow some course of action only when he is resolved to adjust other elements of his intentional life accordingly where possible.

Some of those other intentions may be unavoidably counter-valent to his resolve, and we do not necessarily charge them against his resolve when he fails to modify them. Certainly we would make allowances in our judgment if we perceived that he was ignorant of the conflict or of the possibility of avoiding it. But if he were knowingly to act in a way that unnecessarily precluded, jeopardized or impeded what he said he was resolved to do, I believe we would begin to doubt his resolve.

So then our earlier requirement that resolve assumes the modification of some other course of action can be strengthened to say that all other courses of action must be accountable to being modified if possible, lest resolve be diminished and compromised. Resolve is only truly resolve when the agent is willing to modify all of his intentional life to accord with it as best he can imagine doing without impeding or precluding those other intentions. The important point I want to emphasize is that in resolve the range of an agent's intentional life accountable to his resolve must be nothing short of the whole of his intentional life.

Let me shift the perspective on this point back to that of the first person. For me to recognize my action as

genuinely resolved given my characterization of it, I must assume that all of my intentional life, all of its various elements, are being accommodated to that resolve as best I can imagine within the constraints posed by the demands of my other intentions.

It is this assumption of a resolute agent -- that all his other intentions are being executed in ways that best accommodate his resolved upon action as best he can imagine -- that constitutes the most fundamental level of what I am calling personal pretence. Any resolute individual pretends to be projecting all of the elements of his intentional life according to whatever modifications best accommodate his resolve within the constraint that those modifications do not undermine the success of those other intentions.

If we back off from our characterological analysis of a specific projection of resolve and look at the broader context of somebody's intentional life, we would expect to find any number of courses of resolve identifiably being advanced imaginatively at any given time. We are, in short, variously resolved. But if the range of accountability to any course of resolve is the whole range of the agent's intentional action, then our courses of resolve are unavoidably accountable to one another. That is what makes us perpetual internal negotiators.

It is part of the eternal cussedness of it all that we are continually confronted with conflicts in the courses we project. This means that to resolve upon one course of action we may have to sacrifice another; we may have to project its dissatisfaction as it is presently projected. We do this either by forswearing the conflicting course or altering it in some substantial way, reconfiguring its character in some way we did not anticipate in our earlier projections. There is no way around the conflict as long as both count as elements of our intentional life.

It is fashionable these postmodern days to recognize such conflicts as the last word, to depict human life as an agony of competing intentions, as it were, a field of contentions. Counteractions are indeed likely to be at play in the lives of just about all of us, but I think it is a mistake to let this insight blind us to what seems equally obvious, that there is in just about all of us an ongoing process whereby we try as best we can to reconcile what is contentious among the courses of our resolve. To assume the accountability of resolve to the whole of one's intentional life, including all of one's other courses of resolve, is to accept the commission to continually renegotiate the co-ordination of one's intentional life, a process wherein sometimes intentions themselves get modified, not just the modes of their execution. In as much as we are made accountable to the whole of our intentional lives by the very logic of the imaginative feat whereby we project resolve, the whole of our intentional lives must be claimed imaginatively for the adequate exercise of any practical reasoning we do as resolute beings. We must imagine our way into the field of all our intentions so that we can grasp how (if at all) those elements bear on one another. These bearings derive chiefly from how our intentions have been configured in our earlier projections of resolve. The picture that emerges here suggests that to manage a global interrelation of our intentions we have to imagine ourselves as a field of resolutions, a comprehensive field in almost continual in need of better resolution as a whole.

If I am right in seeing an overall project of resolving one's intentional life as a whole implicit in the logic of what it means to be variously resolved, then it seems reasonable to conclude (against the postmodern celebration of contingency) that it is by no means arbitrary how one decides among contending resolutions. If one could claim, purely on the basis of practical reason, that a certain course of action narratively projected, optimized better than any other the realization of one's intentional life, then it seems reasonable to insist that that narrative would bear a rightful hegemony over one's intentional life. Its advance, its protagony, if you will, would represent the greatest realization of the agent's intentions and therefore of his personal agency.

The icon of irresolution is often hoisted up into the place personal identity once had in the halls of what were once called the humanities. If my argument is cogent however, this is counterintuitive. Whatever personal story best accomplishes us as intentional agents bears a natural hegemony over us. The plain truth is that if we found no such centre to somebody's resolute behaviour, no integrating action which pretended to be the most successful imaginable, then we would not honour personality in that somebody. We would only see discrete foci of resolve. If the foci were comprehensive enough, we might speak of the agent as having multiple personalities. If they were not, we could speak of him only in terms of his behavioural patterns, not his personality.

My conclusion is that while postmodernists are right to emphasize what modernists have tended to ignore—that there are contentions among our intentions and strains in the negotiations among them—we can and do realize personality among our contentions, not necessarily by making them all disappear, but by being committed to whatever course of action we imagine can best realize them. It is this assumption about our narrative commitment—that it optimizes the realization of our intentional life—which constitutes us as persons. Personality has to be based on pretence.

IRONY AND ITS LIMITS
AN ESSAY ON RICHARD RORTY

Giorgio Baruchello

1

As it is fully developed in his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*,[1] Richard Rorty's 'liberal utopia' presents the open dismissal of philosophy as an instrument to achieve any ethically or politically relevant goal. 'Narrative,' and not 'theory,' is the right kind of instrument in such matters.[2] Instead of relying on its traditional speculative justification, the 'narrative' of liberalism is to be grounded in radical ethnocentrism.[3]

As Rorty argues, all forms of rational justification are inherently, hopelessly circular. We should not be ashamed of accepting the conclusion that 'the truth,' or 'the good,' are that which we ourselves, *hinc et nunc*, believe to be true, or good. Any moral or political view is fundamentally relative to the ethnos in which it originates. Consequently, there is nothing abhorrent in trying to preserve what (he thinks) we have, namely Western bourgeois liberal democracy, for we cannot figure out any better alternative in Western, bourgeois, liberal, democratic terms.[4]

According to Rorty, there is no way to justify rationally, once-and-for-all, any ethical or any political system. Irony, i.e. the utterly sceptical distrust for any ultimate theoretical foundation, lies at the core of his worldview. Still, he thinks that, amid his fellow-citizens, there are enough material wealth, propensity to love, and pragmatic reasons, which would allow to support liberal democracy and oppose fascism. Rorty's 'irony' is, in this sense, liberal irony.[5]

With regard to such a 'liberal irony,' I intend to illustrate how self-undercutting Rorty's stance is in favour of both theoretical contingency and liberal solidarity at the same time. Moreover, I want to sketch how Rorty's liberalism seems to be entailing a non-circular justification, on which the rhetorical appeal of his entire project relies. A non-ironic, traditional, theoretical foundation could be revised behind Rorty's own project, in other words.[6]

2

Rorty thinks that we have no way to reach any so-called 'God's eye viewpoint,' namely an absolute standpoint from where we can scrutinize neutrally our moral and political beliefs. We are 'trapped' within man-made categories of understanding. We are that which our ethnos is. We are a bundle of traditions and practices, which are the outcome of our natural evolution, and which are aimed at coping successfully with the environment.[7]

Against traditional metaphysics, Rorty uses Darwin and Dewey. He combines together the ideas that we are natural creatures fighting for survival and that our intellectual creations are instruments to satisfy our tasks. There is no deep spiritual or rational structure to be found in the world, as well as there is no profound, hidden 'nature' or 'essence' inside us, from which ethics or politics may be derived. On the contrary, Rorty's 'liberal utopia' deals with the notion of 'a societas' inside which 'Morality is a matter of…"we-intentions", [i.e.] the core meaning of "immoral action" is "the sort of thing we don't do"'.[8] In other words the principles guiding our moral and political lives 'are reminders of, abbreviations for, [the] practices [of our ethnos], not justifications for such practices. At best, they are pedagogical aids to the acquisition of such practices.'[9] Liberalism itself, then, is what people in the West 'believe in, and so much better for us.'[10]

In favour of this Western belief, Rorty states that 'liberal institutions [have] facilitated the sense of human solidarity,'[11] and that 'liberals are the people who think that cruelty is the worst thing we do'.[12] In brief, since 'cruelty is horrible,' solidarity constitutes its opposite, and liberalism, more than any of 'the available alternatives' in the field,[13] is the right kind of political organisation in order to maximise the chances of success in this direction.[14] 'Liberalism,' in this way, can be defined then as aversion to cruelty.[15]

With regard to 'irony,' Rorty writes:

> I shall define an 'ironist' as someone who fulfills three conditions: (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she encountered; (2) she realizes that arguments phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself.[15]

As a consequence, 'liberal ironists' are to be seen as opposed to 'liberal metaphysicians,' namely people like Rawls or Habermas, insofar as the former:

> [D]o not believe that there is… an order beyond time and change which both determines the point of human existence and establishes a hierarchy of responsibilities… [and who] are far outnumbered (even in lucky, rich, literate democracies) by people who believe that there must be one. [… Thus,] whereas [the liberal metaphysician] thinks of the high culture of liberalism as centering around theory, [the ironist] thinks of it as centering around literature (in the older and narrower sense of that term—plays, poems, and, especially, novels).[16]

In addition to this, the liberal ironist's function is to enlighten her fellow-citizens, who are still lost in the midst of theological and metaphysical illusions, such as those of a 'final vocabulary,' or of the human being having an 'essence or nature,' or of 'being in touch

with reality,' or of 'representing the world adequately.' Using Rorty's expression, the liberal ironist has to 'redescribe' her vocabulary – she must shutter their worldviews with her sceptical and Nietzschean hammer.[17] The goal is the construction of an ironic, liberal state, in which the need for philosophical inquiry has disappeared together with any hope of a theoretical foundation of the existing practices.[18]

3

Rorty's liberal irony is dangerously misguided, insofar as the distinction between the two disciplinary (sive professional sive vocational) categories of 'narrative' and 'theory' is misguided, particularly if applied to non-philosophers. Precisely, in the reality of literary production, it is quite difficult to distinguish between the two parties, namely the 'metaphysical' side and the 'ironic' one. It is not always the case that the desire for absolute, universal, necessary grounds for the legitimisation of democracy, or of liberal values in general, comes only or mainly from one party alone.[19] Moreover, it is difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction between the search for the rational foundations of the favoured social structures, whether they be a common 'human nature' or a 'fundamental worldly order,' and their support via appeal to sentiment. The two methods usually go together, especially in a highly rhetorical area such as the literary one. Rorty's 'poets,' in other words, cannot be sharply opposed to the despised 'metaphysicians,' for they cannot be said to do the job he wants them to do.[20]

For instance, just to mention some of the names to whom Rorty himself refers:[21] Dickens cannot be easily described as an intellectual who did not believe in a universal, intrinsic dignity of all human beings, based on 'justice, religion, and truth.'[22] Nor can Zola be regarded as distrusting the notions of 'objective truth' or 'nature,' especially with reference to science.[23] The same can be said of George Orwell, to whom Rorty devotes an entire section of his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Whereas Rorty claims: 'somewhere we know that philosophically sophisticated debate about… objective truth… is pretty harmless stuff,' Orwell stated that 'the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world… frightens me much more than bombs.'[24]

Additionally, Rorty's liberal irony is also misguiding, insofar as it invokes a total 'poeticization' of the ethical and political sphere (and scientific, too).[25] Instead of making the spectrum of plausible alternatives more nuanced, Rorty's rejection of the distinction between argumentation and persuasion 'jumps' to a modern version of emotivism.[26] Yet, this is not the only option available. Masters of rhetoric such as Giambattista Vico,[27] and, in more recent times, Chaim Perelman,[28] should remind us that the choice is not between rigid Leibnizean calculus and Behaviourist TV-ads. These two dimensions do exist, but as the extreme poles of a series of degrees of probability (or verisimilitude) in which demonstration and persuasion co-operate.[29] Rorty is too swift, radical, and uncritical in his move from 'clear and distinct ideas' to 'guts' and 'hearts,' or perhaps, from Plato to Protagoras. His 'anti-rationalism' makes all realms of knowledge become the same sort of 'conversation.'[30] But this is not necessarily the case. Even in a non-dogmatic, or 'anti-metaphysical' context, one thing is an ordinary 'chit chat,' in which our prejudices are deployed without much care, another is a 'dialogue,' in which our prejudices are brought to the surface and scrutinized.[31]

A second reason to see Rorty's 'liberal irony' to be misguiding is that the total 'poeticization' of the ethical and political sphere does not leave us with any answer to the totalitarian threat. We can only appeal to the interlocutor's heart, or, if we allow for a more generous interpretation of Rorty's message, to contingent pragmatic reasons. Still, in either, or even in both instances, the totalitarian counterpart may refute our appeals, for they being equally or less acceptable than its own grounds; as well as it can demonstrate that there are pragmatic reasons to ground its own case.[32] Yet, Vico and Perelman would remind us once more, we do not share with the interlocutor the emotional and the pragmatic spheres alone: we share also the sphere of rational debate, or we would not be able to communicate at all, nor would we recognise each other as counterparts – not even fighting ones. Thus, instead of 'purging out' possible means of interaction, we should use them together with those that we already have. Our faculties are not mutually exclusive.[33]

4

One might wonder: how can such a confused political philosophy be so successful? Why is Rorty regarded so often as a contemporary *maître à penser*?[34]

Rorty's brilliant style and his epochal break with the analytical tradition may furnish part of the answer. Additionally, originality and exquisite versatility cannot be denied, especially in terms of synthetic vision, and of innovative, intriguing insights. Plus, so I believe, there is a further, hidden reason that justifies the worldwide appeal gained by much of his thought. It is my opinion, in fact, that something extremely intuitive, rooted in many a culture, if not in all of them, lurks behind Rorty's ethnocentric, ironic liberalism. Behind the lines there is something so basic as to cast doubts on Rorty's contingency itself, namely that he is just working in a determined, highly circumscribed, social-historical frame of reference, and that 'No well-grounded theoretical answer' can be given in reply to the interrogative "why not be cruel?"'[35]

Sketching briefly what I believe this 'something' to be like, I take Rorty's definition of liberalism – i.e. aversion to cruelty—as to involve a universal, 'natural'

principle of pain-avoidance.[36] Suffering, especially when unjustified, or gratuitously inflicted, is seen as horrendous in all cultures,[37] and it is not surprising that more than a few thinkers assumed it to be the source of normativity itself.[38] Lucretius, Jeremy Bentham, and Peter Singer, just to name a few, are examples of such a trend.[39]

Then, if this were the case, there would be a common thread linking all sorts of 'we-intentions,' i.e. the shared beliefs that Rorty places at the origin of all moral and political convictions of an ethnos, and which he believes to be relative just to the selected one. In other words, the rhetorical power of Rorty's anti-cruelty message would rely on a minimal, universal, grounding, normative *fil rouge*. Rorty would be exploiting some sort of anthropological datum, namely the recognition of the fact that the human being tries to avoid pain as much as possible, because such is its 'nature.' And whether such a 'nature' were a biological-evolutionary given, or the deliberation of a *rationis foro interno*, this is not a problem for my thesis, since there would be always and nevertheless a ground to answer the question 'why not be cruel?'

Interestingly, Rorty's writings 'betray' a few hints towards such a non-ethnocentric and non-ironic interpretation of his liberalism. First of all, Rorty's three key-terms 'cruelty,' 'humiliation,' and 'suffering,' which delimit most of his ethical and political reflections, are always treated by him as species of pain. Secondly, in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity we read: 'What binds societies together are common vocabularies and common hopes. The vocabularies are, typically, parasitic on the hopes.'[40] Richard Rorty distinguishes between a moral-political vocabulary and a set of social hopes, on which the former stands. There is a terrain that is prior to the formulation of an ethnocentric, rhetorical nexus of moral values and political goals. Thus, in the case of the alleged circular vocabulary of the 'liberal ethnos,' there would seem to be some pre-liberal hopes, on which the specific vocabulary relies. And which spes would be found thereby is not difficult to imagine, for: '[W]hat unites [the subject] with the rest of the species is… susceptibility to pain… [i.e.] a common selfish hope, the hope that one's world – the little things around which one has woven into one's final vocabulary – will not be destroyed.'[41]

In brief, here lies the possibility of envisaging a pain-avoidance principle in Rorty's philosophy: all human beings—'our species'—tend to refrain from pain. This is the hope that binds people together in societies. Maybe it is not the only hope capable of this, as Thomas Hobbes would state instead; maybe it is not a sufficient condition, but merely a necessary one. Still, it would allow for a well-grounded answer to the question 'why not be cruel?'

5

Naturally, I recognise that this principle of pain-avoidance is somewhat vague and imprecise; plus, the absence of a theory of sympathy/empathy makes it difficult to move from a subjective angle to an inter-subjective one. In truth, I do not intend to deepen this issue much further on this occasion. Yet, I hope that it is evident why it can become a theoretical 'anchor' for the philosophical enquirer, who still looks for an answer to the question on cruelty. As I infer out of Rorty's own words, its universal character is strong and manifest enough: it applies to all humans, it binds them together. Also manifest is its grounding capacity, whatever being the exact interpretation that we want to attribute to it: Kantian, utilitarian, or Darwinian.[42] Also patently normative are the consequences, for liberalism, as we saw before, is the ethical and political model that better enhances solidarity, which, as Rorty says: 'has to be constructed… in the form of an ur-language which all of us recognise when we hear it'[43] And pain seems to be just the pivotal element for this 'ur-language,' for pain 'is what we human beings have that ties us to the nonlanguage-using beasts [and to] victims of cruelty, people who are suffering.'[44]

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Notes:

1. Rorty (1989), xv.
2. I write 'last' and not 'latest' intentionally, for Rorty's following book, *Achieving Our Country*, is a political pamphlet that does not intend to be a piece of philosophical research at all. This happens because, first of all, Rorty believes disciplinary borders to be fluid, if not absent. Secondly, because Rorty rejects philosophy in lieu of a more general form of writing that he labels variously as "narrative," "literature," "social criticism." See Rorty (1989), 61-9; see also Rorty (1991a), 197-202 and Rorty (1992), 54-6.
3. Other relevant sources on Rorty's 'ironic liberalism' and 'ethnocentrism' are the essays 'Antirepresentationalism, ethnocentrism, and liberalism,' 'Solidarity or objectivity?', 'The priority of democracy to philosophy,' 'Postmodernist bourgeois liberalism,' 'On ethnocentrism: A reply to

Clifford Geertz,' contained in Rorty (1991a) 1-17, 21-34, 175-96, 197-202, 203-10; 'Philosophy as science, as metaphor, and as politics,' 'Heidegger, Kundera, and Dickens,' 'Unger, Castoriadis, and the romance of a national future,' 'Moral identity and private autonomy: The case of Foucault,' contained in Rorty (1991b) 9-26, 66-82, 177-92, 193-8; as well as 'Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality,' and 'Habermas, Derrida, and the Functions of Philosophy,' contained in Rorty (1998b)167-85, and 307-26.

4. Rorty (1989), 44-58.
5. On wealth see Rorty (1991a) 197-202 & Rorty (1996); on love, Rorty (1996) & Rorty (1998b) 167-85, 202-27; on pragmatic reasons, Rorty (1991a) 175-96, 203-10 & Rorty in Saatkamp (1995) 197-205.
6. More on this issue is in my essay 'Painful Liberalism,' which is to be published on *Bijdragen Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie*, University of Utrecht.
7. This claim might be taken for a renewed form of transcendental idealism, but Rorty strongly opposes this reading of his philosophy, insofar as he presumes that we are also and primarily worldly creatures, whose linguistic faculties do not pertain to any super- or extra-natural realm.
8. Rorty (1989), 59.
9. Rorty (1989), 58-9.
10. Rorty (1991a), 207.
11. Rorty (1989), 197.
12. Rorty (1989), xv.
13. Rorty (1989), 197
14. Rorty's definition of cruelty is borrowed from Shklar (1989), namely 'the imposition of pain by a stronger party on a weaker one for the attainment of some goal.'
15. Also this definition of liberalism is a borrowing from Shklar (1989).
16. Rorty (1989), 73.
17. Rorty (1989), xv and 93.
18. Nietzsche is surely one of the major 'heroes' in Rorty's intellectual Pantheon; see Rorty (1989), 98-108.
19. '[A] postmetaphysical culture seems to me no more impossible than a postreligious one, and equally desirable' [Rorty (1989), xv].
20. I take 'liberal values' to be the set of 'standard 'bourgeois freedoms;'' Rorty (1989), 84.
21. The Heideggerean 'poets' oppose the 'theorists;' see Rorty (1989), 96 and Rorty (1991b), 17-20.
22. Two exemplary 'heroes' of Rorty's: see Rorty (1991b), 78-81 and 183.
23. '[I]t is impossible for any fabric of society to go on day after day, and year after year, from father to son, and from grandfather to grandson, punishing men for not engaging in the pursuit of virtue and for the practice of crime, without showing them what virtue is, and where it best can be found—in justice, religion, and truth' [Dickens (1841)].
24. 'Je ne veux pas peindre la société contemporaine, mais une seule famille, en montrant le jeu de la race modifiée par les milieux. Si j'accepte un cadre historique, c'est uniquement pour avoir un milieu qui réagisse; de même le métier, le lieu de résidence sont des milieux. Ma grande affaire est d'être purement naturaliste, purement physiologiste. Au lieu d'avoir des principes (la royauté, le catholicisme) j'aurais des lois (l'hérédité, l'énéité). Je ne veux pas comme Balzac avoir une décision sur les affaires des hommes, être politique, philosophe, moraliste. Je me contenterai d'être savant, de dire ce qui est en en cherchant les raisons intimes. Point de conclusion d'ailleurs. Un simple exposé des faits d'une famille, en montrant le mécanisme intérieur qui la fait agir. J'accepte même l'exception' [Zola (1869)].
25. Rorty (1989), 183; Orwell (1968), III, 88-9.
26. On ethics & politics: Rorty (1989), 60-1; Rorty (1998b), 180-5; on science: Rorty (1991a) 31-34, 157-58.
27. On argumentation and persuasion: Rorty (1989), xv, 16-20, 23-34, 51-3.
28. See Vico (1988), chapter 1.
29. See Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), 53-6, 61-2, 256.
30. The field of Aristotle's 'dialectical knowledge.'
31. Rorty (1991a), 60-2.
32. See Mitscherling (1989).
33. See Marsonet (1996).
34. 'All new arts and sciences should be added to those we already posses enlarging our stock of knowledge, as far as necessary, so that human wisdom may be brought to complete perfection' [Vico (1990), 3-4].
35. 'Rortyan' Philosophical and non-philosophical literature': Geras (1995), Jackson (1992), Olds (1997).
36. Rorty (1989), xv-i.
37. The same considerations apply, *a fortiori*, to Judith Skhlar's liberalism.
38. On minimalism, trans-cultural norms: Kung (1990), Maxwell (1990), 219-28, Shea & Spadafora (1992).
39. Often by coupling it with its opposite: pleasure.
40. Even the masochist knows and shows this, insofar as masochism always involves a selection among forms of pain, as well as complicated procedures to avoid excesses or derangement from the meticulous *mise en scene* of the sadomasochistic love-game.
41. Rorty (1989), 86.
42. Rorty (1989), 91-2.

Continued on p. 137

MICHAEL POLANYI AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE REALITIES AND POST MODERNISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PSYCHOTHERAPY

R. J. Brownhill

1 Introduction

In this paper I want to look at how the development of the philosophy of science has led us to examine the world around in different ways. How it has developed from proposing an impersonal objective stance to reality, to a recognition of the human factor in the developing and understanding of that reality through theory: technically we could call these developments an epistemological approach to reality. At the same time, and this is particularly the case in the social sciences, our notions of reality have changed, moving from looking at reality as a body of chaotic facts to be organised, which was separate to ourselves, to a consideration whether reality is a creation of our own minds or arises from our own discourses. This in its turn raises certain possibilities. Can we have multiple realities or rather views about reality: that is it raises questions about the nature of reality and technically can be said to be concerned with ontological issues? (Harré and Gillett, 1994) If we can have multiple realities then this in itself brings the realities into the social world and part of a world wide discourse but it also means that the discourse will have the features of all discourses. It will be concerned with power both internally and externally, but it will also have a moral dimension and be concerned with notions about what it is to be human, it will also be concerned with economics, and therefore problems about resources and marketability of its products. The discourse will be concerned with communication both internally amongst believers and externally with sceptics, and it will have doubts about the status of its major concern: the validity of its truth claims. The paper will not just be concerned with the researchers attempt to understand reality but will consider how this impacts on the practitioner in psychotherapy, who is working within and with the ideas and concepts of the researcher, and on the client who is not only the object of both the researchers and practitioners concern but also the recipient of the approaches to reality derived from their views.

2 The traditional approach to reality

Until recently the dominant approach for understanding the nature of social reality was the quantitative approach which had been taken over from science. It had certain features which, as the name suggests, were concerned with measurement, looking at things under the category of quantity. It believed that there existed a real world external to ourselves made up of neutral facts and that we had the capacity understand them through sense experience, and develop general theories about them. Its methodology had certain features:

Real facts are there to be discovered by a researcher who is objective, and by objective is meant a researcher who is disinterested and impartial and approaches the facts in an impersonal way.. The research process is reductionist in the sense that phenomena is broken down into its constituent parts with the intention of seeing how the objects actually work. The process is essentially concerned with control: the measurements are carefully taken, and the data collated, and an explanatory theory created out of the facts gained. The researcher hopefully creates order out of chaos, accepting that reality is controlled by causal laws. The criterion of truth which is claimed is that of correspondence to reality, 'a statement is true if it corresponds to reality.' This positivist approach to science and our understanding of reality has over recent years changed within the philosophy of science itself. Karl Popper pointed out that scientific theories could not be verified, although they could be corroborated and even falsified (Popper, 1972). This meant that scientific statements now had the status of tentative hypotheses, waiting to be falsified, which meant they would always remain tentative until found wanting and then dropped from being part of science. The aim of the scientific task was to provide approximations to reality and no certainty existed. Hanson (1956) seemingly rejected causal laws as providing an explanation of reality, and turned to a gestalt approach which looked for patterns in reality rather than causal relations.

3 The Popper/Polanyi Neo-Kantian approaches to reality

The eminent physical chemist, Michael Polanyi (1958), likewise rejected the positivist approach and argued that the perception of gestalten was possible for the scientist and would lead to a greater understanding of reality. In developing his position he introduced certain concepts which seemingly challenged the very notion of the objective and impersonal scientist, for instance, Popper stated, 'I saw in it (Personal Knowledge) only a symptom of a far deadlier disease- the dissolution of the most objective of all sciences, physics.'(Popper, 1974, p.1067) Polanyi used such concepts as 'scientific faith', 'commitment to one's beliefs', 'scientific obsession', or immersion in one's research, which he called 'indwelling', and which ultimately led to

personal knowledge. He also rejected the idea that a hypothesis could be absolutely tested and argued it could not be completely verified or falsified, a view which other philosophers also held (Duhem, 1954, Harré, 1970).

The debate between the objectivity of Popper and the personal knowledge of Polanyi in one sense can be seen as a neo-Kantian debate, which was more important for social science than physical science. (Brownhill, 1999).

Kant (1933) argued that we could only experience things that existed in space and time. However, neither experience nor reason could by themselves provide knowledge. Experience alone could only provide content without any form and therefore provide a meaningless jumble, whereas reason could provide form without content, and thereby be empty. Knowledge could be only gained by a synthesis of reason and experience. This knowledge would be objective because it would transcend the point of view of the person who put it forward and make legitimate claims about an external reality. However, it nevertheless, was not possible to know the world as it was in itself completely separate to all perspectives. His conclusion was that, although I can know the world independently of my view of it, my knowledge of the world of appearances would bear the stamp of that point of view. It follows that. although objects do not depend for their existence on my perceiving them, their nature is determined by the very fact that they can be perceived, as experience contains within itself the features of space time and causality, and therefore organizes the world under such categories. It is therefore the case that in describing my experience, I am referring to an ordered perspective on an external world.

Karl Popper, following Kant, argued that we can only gain knowledge of appearances and could not go beyond appearances to a knowledge of the world of things-in-themselves and that we could therefore test this knowledge by our experience of facts in space and time but had no way of testing any understanding of things-in-themselves. He also thought that all our knowledge was what he termed 'theory laden', that the knowledge we gained was determined by our conceptual framework.

Polanyi also developed a neo-Kantian perspective but argued the scientist's ultimate goal was a knowledge of things-in- themselves and not mere appearances. In arguing this he developed Kant's moral and theological approach to arguments for the existence of God to his own theory about a scientist's understanding of reality. Kant argued in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that we cannot prove the existence of God, and that therefore we cannot in reality know that God exists. However, in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (Kant, 1956) he argued that nevertheless the existence of God is a postulate of practical or moral reason.

His stance was that, although we cannot prove God's existence it does not follow that we are not entitled to believe it. (Hick, 1970) As well as being a theorising intellect a human being is a moral agent who is able to be in touch with reality as it concerns him/her as a moral being. As Hick argues, when the practical reason finds it necessary to believe something 'Kant does not speak of knowledge but of faith (Glaube); and one of the limits of theoretical reasoning was to 'deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.' (Hick, 1970, p. 53) The 'Glaube takes the form of certain metaphysical facts which are presupposed in its own operation: namely human freedom, human immortality and the existence of God.' (Hick', 1970, p.53)

God is for Kant the ultimate source of all things: the supreme thing-in-itself, and Polanyi adopts certain facets of Kant's moral philosophy and theology to develop his own theory about the understanding of reality. It is through faith and commitment to our own beliefs that we can move beyond appearances to a deeper understanding of reality, an understanding we cannot prove but which we believe to be true. The obsession with our research or indwelling in the clues of perception is the practical process of heightening our understanding. It is a highly moral task for a scientist is bound to the truth as he/she sees it (the Kantian notion of having a 'good will'). Like the Kantian moral person, the Polanyian scientist needs to exhibit that which is intrinsically good, that which is good in all possible circumstances, and that can only be a 'good will'. He is bound by his scientific conscience's commitment to the truth. A good will for Kant is the highest good in one sense of the term (Summum in the sense of supremum). (Hick, 1970,p.54) However it is not the highest in the sense of the most perfect good (the summum in the sense of consummatum.) (Hick, 1970, p.54) The perfect state of affairs must consist of more than moral goodness, 'For if all people were virtuous but were also in pain and misery, their virtue would still be intrinsically valuable but the total situation would not be the best possible. The best possible requires not only moral goodness but its crowning with happiness.' (Hick, 1970, p.54) In Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* the final end of the process of evolution, the fulfilment of human life, and, he argues, whose final stages are led by scientists is an 'unthinkable consummation'. (which is presumably Kant's *summum consummatum* or 'kingdom of ends').

Polanyi,then, believes a scientist can go beyond appearances to the understanding of things-in-themselves but in arguing this he allows the understanding to be a personal construct, although that construct, which the scientist claims has universal validity, needs to be checked by other peoples' beliefs: by the interpersonal knowledge of the community of scientists.

Both Popper and Polanyi have allowed a personal element to enter into our understanding of reality.

Popper argues that our basic conceptual framework understands objects in space and time in an ordered way (a strictly Kantian position). Polanyi, in seeing the task of the scientist through Kantian metaphysical spectacles, and argues that we can understand the world beyond appearances through our own personal constructs through our own insights, and indwelling, and commitments to our beliefs, and that these constructs can be checked by the communal constructs of the scientific community through their interpersonal knowledge. Nevertheless, Polanyi like Popper is a realist and believes that our constructs or models are not just models but provide accurate information about the real world (Polanyi, 1967), and therefore have behind them a universal and therefore objective claim that they are true. (Brownhill, 1981) 4 Social Science and the Development of Multiple Realities and Post Modernism

The debate about the nature of the physical scientist's task is repeated and developed as social science is considered, where it becomes more obvious that the conceptual apparatus of the researcher is important, and that theory is used to identify important and relevant items from the complexity of human experience.

It appears that a theory functions for a realist in two ways: it is involved in the creation and experiencing of facts but it also strives to anticipate reality by moving beyond immediate experience and developing new concepts about what reality may be like.

All science uses two interrelated tactics. It has an analytic scheme required to reveal, identify, partition, and classify the items which make up an area of study. Then there is an explanatory scheme required to formulate theories descriptive of the mechanism productive of the items which are being analysed. (Harré, 1969) The analytic schema helps us to find order, pattern, and meaning in the chaotic flow of human activity, for instance, concepts like 'woman,' 'driving', 'chatting', etc. Nevertheless, much activity is not taken into account, so more analytic concepts need to be generated to give us a better understanding of the nature of reality. Concepts like 'barrier signals', 'relic gestures', 'tie signs', and 'status displays' enable us to improve our empirical study of social life.

What is happening is that ordered patterns emerge and improve our explanations of phenomena. But how these ordered patterns produced? In the natural sciences scientists try to discover the mechanism which produces the pattern. However, as the generative pattern is hidden from view, the scientist will try to find a 'simulacrum'of the real but unknown pattern generator.

The imagined generative mechanism has to conform to some general description of how scientists think the real world is. This general description can be called 'a source model'(Harré 1979, p. 235). An explanatory method must be based on a source model or interpretative framework (Polanyi, 1959) that make our concepts coherent and credible to other researchers.

Generally speaking we can see that there are five ways of looking at reality.: one is the notion of the realist, that there is a reality 'out there' to be understood. There is therefore an inquirer, the subject and a reality the object.. We saw that with neo-Kantian approaches of Popper and Polanyi that there was a recognition of a person's conceptual apparatus, although both remained realists. However, it was only a short step to argue that our understanding of the real world was 'theory laden' or personal knowledge (personal constructs), and, although we claimed objectivity for them they could only be approximations to the truth (the real world). Why then stick to the concept of external reality independent of ourselves? Why not look at them just as personal constructs? (Kelly, 1955) This threatened, indeed, destroyed the notion that we could remain objective by testing our concepts against reality. This certainly became a major approach in the social sciences. The next step was to argue that rather than personal constructs, differing notions of reality developed in specialist communities, who within the communities looked at the world in a special way with their own language, rules, principles, and methodologies to explain the world. They provided interpersonal constructs to explain the world and participated in there own game. For instance the notion of the social construction of reality is expressed in discourse psychology in the work of Harré and Gillet, (1994), and their development of Wittgenstein's study of meaning in his *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein, 1953).

The question arises as to what is the criterion of truth for these personal and social construct theories? We have seen that for the realist the criterion is 'are the facts in accordance with reality', the correspondence theory but, in a sense there can be no criterion of truth for construct theories. Their only basis for any claim to be objective and rational is that they hang together, they are coherent, and that they are not internally contradictory, as they are consistent and follow the rules of logic. This has to be the criterion of 'truth'. Researchers try to gain social agreement for a way of looking at the phenomena under review. In practice this means that they have to make public their reflections, and allow them to be critically examined by other practitioners in the hope of arriving at some consensual agreement. This is the attempt to be as objective as possible, as the public dialogue is a form of objectivity, where a theory has to stand on its own feet and meet the criticisms, if it is to be acceptable and become part of the consensus. An objection could be made that this is not really objectivity but a subjective or intersubjective approach, and, in fact, relies entirely on the passions and commitments of the theory consructors with the possibility that the consensus could be totally illusory.

5 The case of psychotherapy

In order to understand phenomena both reasearchers, in the sense of theory constructors, and practitioners need to attempt to gain an 'in depth understanding of a situation'. Harré and Gillett write:

> This requires the kind of understanding Weber calls *verstehen*. It is based on an empathic identification with the other that helps the observer make sense of what the other is doing. Such an approach to the understanding of behaviour can be sensitive to the subtleties of the situation of the other in a way that an attempt to identify and isolate a surveyable number of objective independent variables cannot be. (Harré and Gillet, 1994, p.20)

They go on to argue:

> We would say that we need to know what a situation means to a person and not just what the situation is (say according to a description in terms of physical characteristics as these are seen by an observer) if we are to understand what that person is doing. (Harré and Gillett, 1994, pp. 20-1)

This brings out another dimension to constructionist approaches to reality. If they are personal or social constructs then they are fighting for their mental existence. The internal struggle of communities for theory dominance can be seen in Polanyi's 'Republic of Science' (Polanyi, 1962) where there is a potential conflict between the claims of the discovering scientist, and the decision of the scientific community. He euphemistically calls the decisions of the community of scientists a consensus based on the network of knowledge possessed by the scientists as a whole, but in fact in reality it is a power struggle between the members of the community for theory dominance, and an attempt to gain allies, and supporters by argument and persuasion. (Brownhill, 1973 and Hagstrom, 1965) Like all communities the community of scientists has an internal power structure with top professors, grant distributors, editors of journals, referees, etc. In a sense the criterion of 'truth' is acceptance by the decision of the community of scientists.

There is another power dimension, for internally the scientific community is bound together by a particular way of looking at the world but it can come into conflict with other communities looking at the world in a different way but, nevertheless, claiming the same ground, e.g., Aristotelian and Newtonian science, Lamarkian and Darwinian evolutionary theories, Freudian and Adlerian psychology in opposition to each other but also in conflict with behaviourism, numerous pschotherapeutic viewpoints. All, as we have argued, are ultimately based on a faith in their own source models, and the passions and commitments of their attachment to the content of their disciplines. Like the Church, faith and commitment not only brings about splits in doctrine but heightens conflict with heuristic passion and a determination to defend the purity of the faith.

Jacques Derrida in his arguments about the end of the metanarrative also develops an argument which seems relevant to our theme:

> All that a deconstructive point of view tries to show, is that since convention, institutions and consensus are stabilizations (sometimes stabilizations of great duration, sometimes microstabilizations)... this means that they are stabilizations of something essentially unstable and chaotic. Thus, it becomes necessary to stabilize precisely because stability is not natural; it is because there is instability that stabilization becomes necessary. Now this chaos and instability, which is fundamental, founding and irreducible, is at once naturally the worst against which struggle with laws, rules, conventions, politics and provisional hegemony,but at the same time it is a chance to change, to destabilize. If there was a continual stability, there would be no need for politics, and it is to the extent that stability is not natural, essential or substantial that politics exists and ethics is possible. Chaos is at once a risk and a choice and it is here that the possible and the impossible cross each other. (Derrida, 1996, pp. 83-4)

Derrida goes on to develop arguments about the undecidability of the decision, and that even the most desirable of closures or choices can only be temporary stabilizations (Derrida, 1996, pp. 84-7).

A theory provides a closure, a decision and taken together with other theories gives us a metanarrative, that is, a temporary stabilization of our thoughts about mental reality. The history of psychotherapy shows how differing schools come about. The breakdown of one faith and its replacement by another, or even a gestalt switch from one to another (I am arguing here that change can come about relatively gradually as it is recognised a paradigm is not giving answers or that it may be just recognised that it is inadequate and an immediate change is made to another paradigm which happens to be in existence and looks far more fruitful. Kuhn also seems to envisage a sudden insight into a new and fruitful paradigm and a gestalt switch to a new way of looking at the world without a transitional period (T.S. Kuhn,1964). However Derrida, like Popper, argues that the closure is never complete, and that the dialogue needs to continue until the closure is deconstructed and new closure temporarily agreed on.

The theories and metanarratives are also moral positions concerned with what we think is the truth, our beliefs in it and our commitments to it, and a moral stance about what we think the social world should be like, and sometimes a moral notion, that asks the question, 'What would be self fulfilment?' (A major concern not only of moral philosophers, and political theorists but many psychotherapists.) As practitioners we may have interests in preserving the purity of the metanarrative on which our approach to reality is based, in proselysing, in order to gain converts and supporters. And engaging in disputes and conflicts with other points of view, attempting to show flaws in them, as a basis for arguing that they should not be accepted

but replaced by our own point of view (metanarrative). This, of course, is how a science changes and develops. However, there may also be an internal power struggle which is concerned not so much with emphasising the truth to outsiders, but in improving one's own position, and therefore one's power in a discipline and its continuing discourse.

There are other strategies which are available both for the researcher and the practitioner. They could use a pick and mix approach using certain features from different metanarratives. The problem with this approach is that it leads to a rapid breakdown in the consistency of a point of view, and therefore becomes incoherent, a jumble of personal (subjective) beliefs.

We have looked so far at the nature of different disciplines, its researchers and practitioners whose approaches seem akin. I now wish to turn to the client at whom all the work is ultimately directed.

A feature of the argument so far is that the client needs to be drawn in to the metanarrative, into our points of view. He needs to be taught to understand some of the language and the concepts we use, and develop a faith in it as a therapeutic solution to his/her problems. He needs to recognise its empowering qualities, and develop ownership of the approach by participating in a dialogue with his/her therapist or group.

Ownership means precisely an acceptance of the specialised use of language, and concepts which explain the client's condition, and hopefully will lead to a recognition of the problems faced and their possible solution. Ideally, the client will do this him/herself with the therapist facilitating a self reflective understanding and is therefore empowered to take control of his/her life. A notion akin to the Socratic Method in Plato's Dialogues. Socrates through the question and answer technique leads the pupil to self knowledge. However, this approach assumed the metaphysical background of Plato's forms, that the soul had perceived the forms before it had entered the body, and that it was therefore the task of the educator to provide the right conditions to allow the pupil to recollect this innate knowledge. In the case of the therapist the metaphysical background is replaced by the therapeutic constructs the therapist uses, the client uses these constructs he has internalized in order to gain self knowledge (Brownhill, 1997).

However, it is worth noticing that the word 'empower' is used in the passive sense: the client is empowered to do something. In this sense it means that as clients we are given permission to use the language and concepts of the point of view, the metanarrative, to which we have been recently converted. The notion of permission points to the already existing power structure controlled by the cognoscenti of the point of view, and plays down their role, when, in fact, the opposite is the case, for the clients have been taken over by the gurus, and look out at reality from their point of view. Yet there is a danger within the commercial world of psychotherapy. A new brand sells while faith in it is potent: a faith declines if it does not accrue benefits or if a more attractive option appears. Part of a practitioners job is to maintain the clients belief in the product: to show how the approach is of benefit to the client. The therapy and action proposed must itself be credible and fit into the client's belief system. This suggests that all therapies must be culture bound and are available only to clients who have the ability to recognise some facets of the product offered and its possible benefits. Which leads us to end with two questions: How far does the market place effect the content and practice of psychotherapy? Do the commercial demands of making a reasonable living adversely effect the caring, and truth aspects of therapeutic practice?

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43. Of course, in the case of a Darwinian interpretation, it would be more appropriate to talk about two levels of contingency—i.e. the evolutionary one and the ethnos-related one—rather than about a necessary ground and the contingent ethnos developing vocabularies on it.
44. Rorty (1989), 94.
45. Rorty (1989), 94.

OTHER JOURNALS

POLANYIANA

VOLUME 11, NO. 1-2, 2002

This issue contains articles, in Hungarian, in memory of Eugen Wigner, beginning with a translation of Wigner's and Robin Hodgkin's biography of Michael Polanyi for the Royal Society, followed by articles on Polanyi, also in Hungarian but with short Abstracts in English, and two letters in English by Prof. Brian Gowenlock on Polanyi's years at Manchester and photographs with notes of the staff of the Chemistry Dept.

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AUREL KONAI: TWO REVIEWS

R. T. Allen

The Life and Thought of Aurel Kolnai
Francis Dunlop
Guildford, Ashgate, 2002, 362 pp., 0 7546 1662 2; £49.95 Hbk.

Early Ethical Writings of Aurel Kolnai
Trans., with Introduction, by Francis Dunlop
Guildford, Ashgate, 2002, 230 pp., 0 7546 0648 1; £40 Hbk.

We have already featured Aurel Kolnai several times in *Appraisal*: a 'Re-appraisal' with 3 papers by Kolnai and 2 about him (Vol. 2, No. 1); and reviews of *The Utopian Mind and Other Papers* (Vol. 1 No. 2) and *Political Memoirs* (Vol. 3 No. 2)

Now Dr Dunlop has given us his biography of Kolnai and translations of Kolnai's principal surviving work on ethics, *Ethical Value and Reality* (1926), plus two articles from 1928.

* * * * *

Firstly the Biography. As the author states, Kolnai's *Memoirs* end in 1952, say very little about some periods of his life, conceal some aspects of his personality, and say very little about his own writings. Hence the appropriate of this biography which is also intended to be a general introduction to Kolnai's works. Kolnai was a great writer of letters, many of which have survived, and Dr Dunlop has been able to use them not only to narrate episodes in Kolnai's life but also to reveal his reactions to people and events. He has also used diaries from Kolani's youth and other sources, including reminiscences of persons who knew Kolnai and his own knowledge of the one who supervised his Ph. D. The result is a substantial account of this most interesting person and significant philosopher and political commentator, which sets its subject firmly in the intellectual and political contexts of his varied life.

Those who have already read the *Political Memoirs* will probably be more interested in the surveys of Kolnai's philosophical writings and perhaps the narratives of his 'personal' life. To do justice to the former would take more space than is available and would require some first-hand knowledge of the earlier and untranslated works. Consequently, this review, as well as giving some impression of the man and his life to those who have yet to encounter him, will take up the author's suggestions regarding the question of: why Kolnai, who had considerable gifts for philosophy and political analysis, did not do justice to those gifts and produce a more considerable body of work, and, in particular, to explicate the 'personalism' that informed all his thinking about morals and politics. Dr Dunlop quotes Ferenc FejtÎ, the historian, whom Kolnai met again in Paris in 1939 and with whom he became very friendly, as saying, 'I considered him a very great thinker, who, alas, never expressed himself in a magnum opus'.

Kolnai's life fell into six principal phases, and to cope with all these changes, Kolnai's involvements in political events, his journalism and his philosophical writings, the author alternates between a narrative of the 'external' events and accounts of his political and philosophical development combined with summaries of his principal works, each section going back over former ground and then moving ahead.

Kolnai was born into a well-to-do Jewish family in Budapest, where his father was banker. His parents were not religious Jews but his mother has a strong moral sense which Aurel shared from his boyhood onwards. He soon showed himself as intellectually able and morally serious, excelling at a prestigious Calvinist *gymansium*, interested in languages, chess and mathematics (never sport!), sensitive to the different aspects and atmospheres of districts in towns and cities (never the countryside), composing narratives of imaginary wars among them, and later, the history of *Ulászló* an imaginary Hungary, from which he would send reports of political events. In some respects, he was an awkward child. He was prepared to speak his mind and yet was also timid in the face of established authority. Somehow an 'inner breach' occurred between himself and his parents, which was deepened by frequent illness (which recurred through his life), his love of animals (especially cats and dachshunds) which they probably saw as 'wasted' and as a substitute for love of them, and his support for the Entente against the Central Powers. As in later life, it was the moral position of the parties involved that determined his judgment, in this case Germany's technical supremacy but also moral anarchism, 'smitten with self-worship and a cult of power as an absolute', versus 'mankind ordered in freedom and manifoldness' (note his objection to any levelling and uniformity). Hence, although he was involved at school with the progressive and liberal movements in Hungary, he rejected Marxism and revolution and looked to Oscar Jaszi (a definite father-figure), who, although basing his politics on 'science' (sociology), remained primarily a moralist. Similarly, for a while he adopted fashionable theories such as Herbert Spencer's evolutionism and positivism. Yet in an article, 'Activity and Passivity in the Evolution of Civilization' in Jaszi's *Husadik Százat* (*Twentieth Century*) in 1918,

something very significant of Kolnai himself is expressed behind the Spencerian terminology: viz. that real knowledge implies mental passivity in face of the world in order to be truly adaptive to it. This 'passivity' (perhaps 'receptivity' would have been better, for it requires active attention) would prove to be a permanent feature of his work. He was always care to attend to the object and to note connections and differences among things. Hence he avoided, and was the opponent of the 'great simplifications', such as, in ethics, Utilitarianism and Kant's Categorical Imperative, both of which exalt but one element in the moral life and throw away the rest. Consequently, for all his proper interest in structure and formal aspects, Kolnai's thinking often cannot be easily summarised. He adapts himself and his forms of thought to things, and does not simply assimilate the later to the former.

The hopes engendered by the apparent success of the liberal parties and groups in the establishment of an independent Hungary in the Autumn of 1918 were dashed, for Kolnai at least, when power moved to the Left and Béla Kun formed a Communist government. Because of the great prominence of Jews in it, there was an anti-Semitic reaction when it was overthrown. Kolnai's family temporarily removed themselves to Slovakia and then to Vienna. On his return to Budapest Kolnai immediately made his mark in with a paper on 'Psycho-analysis and Sociology'. He thought that psycho-analysis could be used to counter both Marxism and Reaction, and was commended to Freud when he decided to return to Vienna where he expected to find more scope for his ambition to be a writer. His parents agreed to support him (though they had lost some of their wealth) while studying at university if he also prepared himself for a job, and that support continued up to 1940. For a while he worked on a card-index system for a business in the mornings while attending the university in the afternoons and evenings. By this time he had encountered two persons whose writings would prove far more important than Spencer and Freud: G. K. Chesterton and then Max Scheler. Gradually Chesterton, moved him away from the atheism he had professed at the age of 12, via theism to Christianity to entry into the Roman Church. Scheler's work introduced him to phenomenology and value-ethics, and the doctoral thesis on which he was working came to be titled *Ethical Value and Reality*, of which more later. He also moved away from psycho-analysis which he criticised for its refusal to take a moral stance though it is forced to do so by its very practice and for its 'squinting about for coarser-grained "behindities"'.

He now also tried to support himself and affect the course of events, intellectual and political, by journalism. In retrospect we can see how from this point onwards Kolnai rather fell between two sets of stools. Because of his political aims, he wrote and published articles which could never earn enough for him to live on, but, as became clear later on, he would not write anything for the sake of earning money. Yet neither would he give himself up to more purely academic work, and perhaps have gained a university post much earlier than he eventually did, and so both provide himself with a regular income and, via more weighty publications, perhaps have had some influence on the course of European philosophy. Indeed, one of the reasons which Dr Dunlop suggests (in his Introduction to that book) for the lack of impact of *Ethical Value and Reality*, though it has some good reviews, is the fact that Kolnai was known as a journalist rather than as an academic.

Ethical Value and Reality was followed by: 'Der Ekel' ('Disgust'), in the *Phenomenological Yearbook* for 1929; *Sexualethik* in 1930; 'Der Hochmut' ('Pride'), 1931; and 'Versuch über Hass' ('Hate'), 1935, of which he affirmed both the moral necessity and danger. In connection with the latter, the author notes that Kolnai was accused by those who him well of 'demonising' his opponents, and, later on, that he was always a 'fighter' and needed the stimulus of something (perhaps someone) to be *against*. Kolnai also wrote a book on phenomenological ethics (1932) but the text was lost when sent to a publisher, and he seems never to have rewritten it. By this time Heidegger was eclipsing Husserl, and the sober and realistic trends in phenomenology (the 'classic' or middle Scheler, Pfänder, Reinach) were being forgotten, and perhaps there would not have been much interest in it. The chapter dealing with these years is entitled 'Journalism or Philosophy' and it seems that journalism won. For his one 'big book', in terms of readership (*Sexualethik* was 400 pages long), proved to be *The War Against the West* (Gollancz, 1938), more 'journalism' than 'philosophy'.

Kolnai's politics had taken a more decidedly conservative tone since his youthful radicalism. Yet the deteriorating political situation in Austria, culminating in civil war in Vienna, which the Left lost, and Dollfuss' proclamation of a Christian Corporatist State drove Kolnai into joining Leftist groups, such as the League of Christian Socialists (of which Karl Polanyi was a leading light) and even the (Marxist) Social Democrat Party. But it soon became clear that the immediate menace was Nazi Germany, and he took up the suggestion to investigate the Nazi mentality, largely by visiting Nazi cafés where he read their periodicals. What strikes the reader of *The War Against the West* is how much the articulate German mind had been poisoned, before and outside the Nazi Party, by attitudes that the Nazis turned into a potent political force.

The third period of his life began in 1937 when he left Vienna for London where he had English friends (especially Donald and Irene Grant, and Karl Polanyi who had been there since 1933). But 'Something choked me about England' and he 'bolted' to Paris,

where he stayed for most of the time up to the Fall of France. At this time he became engaged to Elisabeth Gémes who joined him there. Appalled by the attitude of 'peace at any price', he wrote *A Case Against False Pacifism*, which in the end Gollancz did not publish and which the reviser of the text appears to have plagiarised in a somewhat later book of his own. (This and the loss of the MS of the phenomenological ethics were two pieces of sheer bad luck.) The outbreak of war led to temporary internment for Kolnai, who had become a 'German' because of the *Anschluss*, had renounced his citizenship and was then stateless. Although Elisabeth worked hard to get him a visa fro Britain, Kolnai seems not to have pursued the matter as energetically as he might have done. Again one wonders if this, and his many illnesses (Dr Dunlop later argues that he was not a hypochondriac but a 'connoisseur of illness', in others as well as himself), betray a certain weakness of character. Interned again when France collapsed, but moved to La Braconne south-east of Angoulême, he escaped just ahead of the Gestapo and got to Toulouse, in Vichy France, where Elisabeth awaited him, and they married. After further delays, they got to the Spanish frontier, where only a chance remark persuaded the Spanish guard to let them in. Via Lisbon, they eventually arrived penniless in America. For the next five years they had to survive on the generosity of friends and relatives, grants from charitable organisations, and Elisabeth's earnings from sewing buttons on military uniforms. With so many other refugees with whom to compete, Aurel could not obtain any job that would suit him.

Kolnai did not like America, specifically its cult of the 'Common Man' (for whom Copeland wrote a 'Fanfare': there is no indication that Kolnai had much interest in music), whom Kolnai saw as a levelling down and a levelling out, far different from the 'Plain Man' and 'common sense', and the Christian principle of limited and formal equality in virtue of Man's 'basic dignity and rational nature'. From then onwards, Kolnai's political thinking exhibits the Conservatism that he had come to after the events of 1918-9 and which had been overlaid for much of the previous ten years or so. Beyond Nazism he saw the greater threat of Communism and the fatal openness of the usual forms of Liberalism and Progressive Democracy to it: see 'Three Riders of the Apocalypse' in *Appraisal*, Vol. 2, No. 1. He found it necessary to go beyond them, to Christian 'personalism', and to the ideas of 'hierarchy' and 'privilege', as opposed to egalitarian uniformity (compare his youthful reference to 'manifoldness' in respect of the Entente). A book on the post-war reconstruction of Central Europe, *Liberty and the Heart of Europe*, was not completed, perhaps because he saw, ahead of others, that Central and Eastern Europe had already been lost to Communism. Yet Communism is only one form of the ultimate political error of Utopianism, which was to become his principle theme.

In 1945 he obtain his first proper job and regular income as a lecturer at Laval University in Quebec. He had some misgivings about what might be the status of Thomism there, but at first he found no difficulties with it. But rightly or wrongly he came to think that the university held it to be the complete and final repository of philosophical and theological truth. This episode manifested tendency to 'demonise opponents', even to create them, nevertheless his Head of Department, Prof. DeKonnick, continued to speak well of Kolnai. (The author on other occasions even refers to the Kolnais' 'paranoia'.) It was also a part of his reaction against the nationalist regime in Quebec, and the two appear in his 'Notes sur l'Utopie Reactionnaire' (1955) as examples of the self-defeating attempt to uphold some particular historical achievement as the once-for-all realisation of perfection. He was invited to give lectures in Spain (published as *La Divinizacíon y la suma Esclavitud del Hombre*: 'Communism means the absolute subjection of man for an idea whose main content is the absolute sovereignty of man'—and that is the error of all Utopias). They returned via France and England. This where, in 1955, the *Political Memoirs* end. More bad luck for Kolnai was the financial difficulty of the prospective publishers of the *Memoirs* which caused them to withdraw their offer.

At this point, Kolnai's growing unease about his position at Laval, and the award of a grant to pursue his study of Utopias and Utopianism, led him to resign his lectureship and to move to England. Then as now universities were reluctant to employ older people, despite such distinguished referees as J. N. Findlay and H. B. Acton, but in 1959 he obtain a temporary (but continually renewed) part-time teaching post at Bedford College. (He also received donations and allowances from friends and a cousin.) Finally philosophy triumphed over journalism, and he produced a steady stream of philosophical papers, many of which were published, mostly on moral topics: see *Ethics, Value and Reality* (Althone P., 1977). But he could not finish his study of Utopia. The author attributes this to his failure to find or adhere to, a central theme, and there was also the fact that at least some of the ground, studies of particular Utopias, had already been published. He published 'La Mentalité Utopienne' (1960), translated in *The Utopian Mind*, in which the motivation of Utopianism in general, a valuation of 'perfection' above all else, is delineated. In 1970 he suffered a heart-attack. He returned to teaching but died from a second heart-attack in June 1973.

There is much that I have missed out, even on the 'personal' side, such as his abilities and limitations as a teacher; his earlier love-affairs, including one with Irma Gémes who was later to become his mother-in-law; his flirting with pretty female students; his

religious faith, to which the author devotes a short Appendix. But much more important is the body of work that he did produce and the often profound ideas that he did manage to articulate, to which Dr Dunlop introduces us and of which he provides a select Bibliography.

* * * * *

Ethical Value and Reality

The style and contents of Kolnai's ethical writings, and especially of this work, differ from the thin gruel of Utilitarianism and etiolated Kantianism ('universalisability') which, until a more recent revival of interest in virtue ethics, was the staple diet of British moral philosophy for several decades. Consequently, I shall summarise the argument of this short but concentrated book, focusing on its main themes and mentioning some other topics in more detail, and I shall then offer a few general comments on the end.

The proximate motive for Kolnai's choice of theme, as stated in the Preface, is the desire to render moral philosophy effective: it would be untrue to itself if it could not inform practice. But that has ramifications which make the theme very significant and fruitful. To begin with, an adequate study of values will concern 'values *as already effective in reality*, reality *as already directed by value*' (p. 3). Thus he rejects Naturalism according to which value is simply some aspect of reality, value-formalism which delineates only an ideal realm of essences, and any conception of reality, like Kant's, which sees it as devoid of value and even 'hostile' to mind and spirit. He also rejects all 'constructivisms' which start with a clean slate and seek to erect a system of ethics without reference to moral experience. On the contrary, he argues in the Introduction that '*The content of the Good cannot be divorced from its context and the way it is realised'* (p.12). What ought to be done includes how it is to be done, and thus must take into account practical possibilities and abilities, to which principles also apply. The task of moral philosophers is not just to paint a picture of the Good, but also to design the bridges that will lead to it, otherwise they and their philosophy will be irrelevant. The genuine philosopher seeks neither ideals empty of reality, which is then to be adjusted to them, nor the identification of the Ideal with what happens to exist, but 'the Good, quite simply *as* the entelechy of the given good *in* its real relations' (p.13). From this orientation arise the three aspects of ethics with which this book is principally concerned:

> *limitation,* the proper limits of the turn from what exists to what it could and should become;
> *moral emphasis*, the several types and ranges of claims that aspects of life present to us;
> *gradation,* the degrees to which aspects of life may have moral emphasis.

In Chapter 1, 'Ethical Value', Kolnai sets out his general approach to ethics. Ethics is founded upon the moral need and the moral intuitions current in society which are intended to denote objective qualities of good and evil. Pure ethics presupposes this general reference and it is metaphysics which investigates it. Kolnai, in effect, locates the error of relativism in attending *to* moral intuitions without attending *from*, or *through*, them to the Good itself, and therefore to criticising and amending them in the light of that which they intend. The moral facts of society are not mere facts but (we may say) are self-transcending: neither a perfect realisation of the Good nor mere 'practices', but attempts, often partial in both sense of the word, to realise the Good. He does not intend to propose any specific moral principle himself, though a type of 'personalism' will emerge.

He adopts the modern phenomenological emphasis on *values*, qualities that can be directly experienced, and which need no external validation, as the foundation of moral experience and theory, under which the older ethics of virtue can be subsumed, and for which more 'manageable' concepts, such as law, utility and pleasure, cannot be substituted. But (contrary to Scheler) he holds that a focus on value is insufficient, and that the idea of 'end' (Aristotle, Aquinas) is also required because it is central to all conduct. The 'end-state', which any genuine conduct necessarily intends, is part of the total value of the conduct in question. (I think Kolnai ought to have clearly used 'objectives' rather than 'ends' and 'end-states' for those terms suggest ones in which action finishes and to which it is merely a means—the standard Empiricist-Utilitarian view of all action—and that he should have clearly distinguished such self-terminating action from action that is its *own* objective, such as going for a stroll or entertaining a friend.)

Nor is it enough simply to 'grasp' or contemplate values, for its only the existence of a value that gives it its value. Hence *how* values are realised is part of their value: this will be particularly noticed in the valueless pseudo-realisation of values in Utopias where no moral intention and activity would be needed on the part of their inhabitants. He rightly says that his emphasis upon how values are realised—*'we must let the Good flow in upon us through the channels it has itself chosen'* (p. 22)—sets him apart from both empiricists and psychologists (i.e. practitioners of 'psychologism'), on the one hand, and from the 'fanatics of purity and apriority' on the other. Another important lesson of phenomenological ethics is that values are ordered hierarchically, and that is several orders, but, while at times some may have to be disregarded, none is superfluous. Again, this is an explicit statement of one of the most important features of Kolnai's thinking: its attention to the object in its rich entirety. While we are on the subject of phenomenology, we may observe that Kolnai goes beyond Scheler in focusing upon the

phenomena revealed and described rather than upon the elaboration of the methods for reaching them in the manner of Husserl.

Moral emphasis springs from, and the idea of it reminds us of, the richness and diversity of moral phenomena and thus shows the error of all simplifications that exalt one aspect to the neglect of all others. Even moral conduct itself cannot be its own end, which is '*to bring about an ethically desirable state of things, one that is permeated and upheld by the ethical willing of the persons concerned, on the basis of existent moral needs and powers*' (p. 27). While welfare is part of the Good, it is such only as morally willed and sustained and not as impersonally attained or sought from generalised self-interest alone: this is one source of Kolnai's 'personalism'.

The distinguishing mark of ethical values, values *par excellence*, is just this need to realise them or to hinder disvalues. They are 'values of combat' for want of better term (perhaps this manifests Kolnai's own character as a 'fighter', noted above: it certainly shows his moral seriousness). They are concerned with reality being like this or like that, and so moral action aims at 'resolving *problems we cannot choose for ourselves',* with 'decisions which have to be carried out somehow', with what cannot be evaded but is 'commanded' (p.29). This may not be a particular course of action but something that requires some decision.

In Chapter Two, he turns to the limits of the ethical end. Any adopted end must relate to 'an already structured reality' and not to a neutral space, and that imposes various limits upon what can legitimately be judged to be worthwhile and then to be chosen. Some of those limits are: its practicability for the agent in his circumstances; any compulsion of others that it may require, seen essentially in political action, which cannot absolutely rule it out but must render it 'barely justifiable'; other considerations which need to be temporally set aside but which may turn out to be permanent, as with a man who gives himself up to make money in order to be a philanthropist but in so doing becomes inured to a materialist view of life.

Because ethical action must start from existing values, it presupposes that Being or 'the Given' has itself a certain 'foundational value' and that what we act upon is fundamentally good. While the value of every part of the world may be reviewed and criticised, the goodness of the world as a whole is presupposed as the constant background. (In the Notes to this section Kolnai refers to ancient Manichaeism and Gnosticism: readers of Eric Voegelin will be able to add their modern counterparts.) This yields four classes of thing to which ethical conduct must attend:

ethically emphatic variants, the bearers of 'pointed emphasis';
ethically unemphatic variants, the 'ballast' of ethical action, such as technology, the economy;
ethically emphatic constants, the bearers of 'background emphasis', notably persons and social unities;
ethically unemphatic constants, the 'natural' limits of change, such as psycho- physical make-up.

Kolnai notes that particular things may change category, within limits, and the classes can be combined. What makes something an emphatic variant is not just its existence and qualities in themselves but its relation to conduct, its arousal of an ethical *need*, as a present potentiality calling to be realised. Duty alerts us to urgent emphatic variants, pre-eminent over other objects with a pointed emphasis, but goodness cannot be reduced to the content of some duty or other. Bearers of pointed emphasis impose constraints on courses of action that conflict with them. Kolnai mentions two notable ones: the freedom and dignity of persons, and the sacrifice of the present to the future. Yet there are limits upon these limits, as it were, for otherwise they would inhibit virtually all moral endeavour. In respect of the latter one, Kolnai rightly states that Utopianism entails a '*moratorium on morality'* , and that we must accept 'relative end-states' which we must not seek indefinitely to improve, and thus also 'definite decisions, struggle and self-contained spheres of action', plus troughs, peaks, and periods of rest in the tempo of action. This is part of what he would later make thematic as 'the splitness' of human existence, its finitude and situatedness in a world and order or values it has not made, and which the Utopian ignores or vainly seeks to overcome.

A section on the limitations imposed upon and by needs, and thus the theme of sacrifice—not a measure of value and varying in value according to circumstances—shows Kolnai at his best in describing the complications of life and in rejecting all simplifications, such as both the rejection and idolisation of material goods and our needs for them.

The next on Ethical Reform, for ethics is concerned with the institutions catering for the business of life, contains much condensed political wisdom. One example is his distinction between the radicalism, seeking to go to the 'essence' of the matter, digs ever deeper—say, from the particular law to the constitution, to the state, to the modern state in general, and finally to the world itself (or from specific crimes to 'crime and the causes of crime')—and so ends up doing nothing, and that which gives no preference to any one level and is careful to enquire if the values or disvalues in question can be removed from their bearers without destroying the latter and can be transplanted to other bearers. Another is the need, because we cannot foresee what further reforms may be required, to limit reforms in scope and duration (pilot projects, 'sunset clauses'), and that '*genuine reform needs a background of continuity'* and thus a

limit on the number of simultaneous reforms.

The necessary limitations on a morally approvable end, Kolani sums up as:

> the actual presence of *ethical need*, the availability of *moral energy* in the circles concerned, and *respect for emphatic* and consideration for *unemphatic constants*

and as

> the selection of ethical ends should only comprise those states of things *which are kept in being by human decisions or the continuous support of human wills* (p.56).

because moral action can be the action only of persons and never of impersonal entities.

In Chapter 3 Kolnai turns to the theme of gradation. Values limit each other, and thus point to *an order of values*, a hierarchy of emphases and not a scale of amounts, in which each value is valid in itself and qualitatively different, so that no one value can simply override all others, and in which each value has limits to its application where it shades of into others, as justice does to veracity on one side and to peaceableness on another, without any strict substitutability, convertability and transferability among them. Hence they are related by lines of gradation, radiating out from what, in the particular case, is the emphatic (or focal) value, as either what the situation requires or what is most prominent in the agent's will. If, for example, justice is what is required, it does not follow that the honesty implied as 'a less emphatic "by-value"' is therefore lower than justice. Emphasis is 'felt' in both senses, as eliciting a response and as imprecisely grasped, and therefore it spreads out in gradations, descending from or ascending to, the current pointed emphasis. (It is ordinal rather than cardinal.) For example, the value of compassion yields the relative constant that is the rule 'be compassionate', but this cannot be simply applied to persons and animals: compassion for latter has different qualities and moral overtones, and is a graded product of the rule. This means that reality is permeated by values in lines of gradation, and is not, as by an ethics of duty alone, sharply divided into a law that must be obeyed and the rest which is ethically neutral, nor, as in the ethics of duty plus an overview or plan, in which every part of reality has a share in the one emphasis, or rather are morally neutral and but technically relevant to the success or failure of the plan (as aiding or hindering, for example, the Greatest Happiness). In both cases, moral significance is something imported into a fundamentally indifferent reality, and thus can be calculated. (Indeed, we may add, a demand for precision and a calculus of quantities or of logical implications in a strict casuistry, is often the motive behind the great simplifications in ethics.)

Gradation of emphasis entails the rejection of both freedom as the prior requisite of morality and freedom as the result of moral conduct: the former is wrong because freedom would be lost once one has chosen either good or evil, and the latter errs in ignoring freely chosen guilt. Instead, moral freedom is revealed as a freedom in morality but not through it, a growth into a world of values and with it a certain detachment from nature as one becomes permeated and identifies oneself with values ('internalises' them), a certain latitude in respect of the detailed realisation of value because choices have to be made which can be decided by general value-characteristics, and the attainment of a reduction in moral emphasis and tension. As for the splitting of the person (as by Kant) into one of law and one of impulse, that 'betrays both godless arrogance ("autonomy") and mistrustful faint-heartedness' (p. 76).

There is more on gradation in this chapter and Kolnai returns to it in Chapter 5. In the meantime Chapter 4 offers criticisms of selected one-sided ethical approaches, all of which, in one way or another, reject the role of gradation and flatten moral reality into uniformity: Stoicism; the sequence of 'practical value-monism' from Kant to Fichte, Hegel and Marx (especially in relation to the first three of these, Kolnai follows Scheler); the liberalism which seeks justice alone and thus makes irrelevant what is not covered by law, and that which combines it with a plan and so makes everything subject to regulation; and psycho-analysis. In these condensed remarks, Kolnai makes many telling criticisms and reveals many points of deeper connection behind differences on the surface. I shall have to confine myself to mentioning only one in relation to liberalism: that tolerance, erected into a supreme principle without any gradations, enervates and corrupts.

Chapter 5 deals with gradation in the types of value-experience in respect of the relation between value-awareness and objective elements of being. There are four of these: removal or exclusion; mutual disposition and sequence (correctness, co-ordination); their existence in a framework of value (accomplishments, incorporation); and directedness, unlike the other three in not being concerned with the continued shaping of life, but with occasions when feelings, attitudes or aspirations are experience as directly valuable or replete with value, especially experiences of the Holy and of morality itself. I must confess that in this chapter I found it difficult to grasp the connections between the theme and its detailed elaboration and application, and especially how it is all related to gradation, except that exclusion of evil is primarily not a matter of gradation ('Thou shall not' is always more definite than any positive injunction).

In Chapter 6, on persons and responsibility, Kolnai investigates the value of the person himself. Ethics (as practical) focuses upon acts, both as to how the person should conduct himself and how he is (proximately) to be judged. But a person is not exhausted by his acts,

nor are they separable from him: he transcends them yet expresses himself in and through them, and therein lies their value along with that of what they truly intend. There is a gradation from the person through his 'character-attributes' and how he is 'minded' to his acts, and occasions when the person himself is suddenly revealed in a particular act.

In this complex relation of person and act lies responsibility: if the act did not represent the person, then he could answer for it; and if it represented him completely, there would no deep scrutiny, personal integration nor system of acts, and so only a general and no particular responsibility. Taking responsibility goes beyond duty-fulfilment to occasions where personal judgment is the only guide, and also beyond actions to the shaping of the world and for answering to the task with the whole of oneself. Of the 'man of duty' (only of duty), Kolnai says that he is still possessed by pride:

> he does what he ought to do, with no concern for whether the happier for it; . . . . . he does what God [or the Good] tells him to do, but keeps himself inwardly apart from the business; but secretly he takes it in bad part that God did not also make him omnipotent and an accurate judge of the future.

But the man of responsibility is humble:

> he is willing to assist in the business of creation, engaging himself whole-heartedly in the manner assigned to him
>
> Responsibility in the sense of love and, based on this, the multiply graded willingness to take on obligations, is the fundamental principle of the (*single*, though fragmentable) moral or personal world (pp. 154-5).

Although Kolnai has focused upon formal features of ethics, he adds a few amplifications of this moral principle in a personalistic ethics:

1. The person as such is still to be considered even when universal neighbour-love cannot be attained, and in a way that goes beyond 'respect' and limits antagonism, as when enemies still make even minor treaties among themselves. For opposition will be always with us because of value preferences and idiosyncrasies and persons as such.
2. A gradation should be acknowledged from primary ethical values to extra-ethical 'personal' ones, which have an ethical and also spiritual and psycho-physical elements, such as 'pleasant nature', which neither ignores the latter nor places them above the former.
3. Personalistic social theory will abjure any individualistic atomism, national or global collectivism, anarcho-communism which destroys personal boundaries, and hierarchical estates which confines personal wholeness to a transcendent religious sphere. Instead its found will be democracy and then 'a hierarchical social organisation, or better, a hierarchical manifold not only of single individuals, but of overlapping and enveloping group organisations, corresponding to all the different "functional" aspects of social ties in the persons concerned' (p. 157): i.e. neither the levelling uniformity of socialism, 'progressive democracy' and the cult of 'the common man' (to refer to Kolnai's later essays), nor the total enclosure of the person in a Corporatist set of functional organisations. Social freedom, he observes, 'does not consist either in organisation or in its abolition, but in its right qualitative ordering.

In the *Notes*, Kolnai refers to the Guild Socialism of Karl Polanyi and G. D. H. Cole as the nearest approximation to realising personalist social theory, but later he gave up this and other Leftist tendencies displayed in this book, such as the commendatory references to certain forms of socialism and even some aspects of Marxism, for all, like feudalism and often even more so, confine the person to social organisations and roles, rather than support him by them. Chesterton's 'Distributivism' he would also reject as an attempt to halt history in a once-and-for-all distribution of assets. And even here he cites 'the gradation-rich idea of property: the fulness of existence requires a "mine" to go with my being', although mistakenly saying that 'A life of rich and varied ownership . . . . is quite possible under socialism' (p. 160).

Kolnai closes with Concluding Remarks on 'The Possibility of an Ethics Close to Reality', from which I would like to quote two passages:

> The entwinement of value and reality, which provides the necessary framework for any contribution to the ethical transformation of reality, is given to us in the form of that successive limitation and modification of objectively valid moral demands along those lines of ideal or real parts of reality . . . . which we have called gradations of emphasis (p. 163).

Consequently ethics cannot be a 'science of rules' and

> ethical problems are solved by devotion to the immediate ethical data, affirmed at first 'simply' by taking cognizance of them, but requiring also conceptualisation, analysis and effort. (p. 164)

This raises, and contains the germ of an answer, to whether Kolnai really has shown how moral philosophy can be practical. For all the phenomena that he brings to our attention are surely very complicated, and so how can anyone, let alone the ordinary person in the middle of daily life, possibly take them into consideration and apply all these limitations, emphatic and unemphatic variants and constants, and gradations? This is how the great simplifications make their appeal, especially Utilitarianism with its supposedly common-sense and businesslike approach. What is needed, so we are told by pragmatist and rationalist alike, is some that could furnish clear guidance, whether it be a calculus of outcomes or a logically deducible casuistry

of rules and higher rules for deciding between conflicting lower ones. Of course, no such calculus or casuistry has ever been produced, and the whole idea is absurd. But the question still remains of how we can weigh and balance all these considerations. Most readers of *Appraisal* will be able to answer that question: A personalist ethics requires an epistemology of personal knowledge which accredits our unformalisable cognitive powers.

Of course, he could not deal with everything, and sometimes what he does treat requires clearer language and more examples. In that respect, this study is not such a good introduction to his work. But it is such in respect of his receptiveness to the manifoldness of reality, his eschewing of easy and one-sided formulations, his powers of insight and analysis, his moral seriousness and often lightness of touch, and his chosen themes and leading ideas.

Another question which Kolnai prompts, precisely because of his employment of 'gradation' and wholly proper opposition to ethics of laws and duty *alone* (of only what *must* be done, and hence when not doing my duty I am *failing* to do it, so that whatever is not commanded is prohibited), is that of all those moments in life which do not have hardly any pointed emphases at all, when nothing *needs* to be done. Are they therefore outside the moral life?

His answer is in fact to be found, among other things of important, in 'The Structure of Moral Intention' which immediately follows and does not suffer from any obscurities. The agent's intention is more fundamental than his will, for it includes 'the central point of the attitude or the conduct, and the elements of willing, shades of feeling and presupposed beliefs that surround it', which both give the act its full significance and are important in themselves. For

> In the last analysis ethics is concerned with the whole spiritual *being* of man, whose nature is expressed in those relations to *value* which *determine* this being as a whole (p. 169).

Again, we note how richer is the phenomenological approach than the Kantian, Empiricist and Analytic ones.

As against Scheler, who held that any consciousness of one's own moral qualities entailed Pharisaism, Kolnai rightly insists that the central moral concern for the Good as such, to which some explicit reference is necessary, must include some attention to one's own goodness. The Pharisee

> interprets the world with its plenitude of values as 'opportunity' for moral activity. But it is not pharisaical to immerse oneself thankfully and humbly, with the whole of oneself, in this plenitude of values, and consciously to add to it (pp. 171-2).

Moral intentions are directed to:

(a) particular ethical values;
(b) moral rules of conduct observed;
(c) object-goods affected by what is done;
(d) purpose-goods whose bringing into being is aimed at;
(e) temporary, or at any rate impulsively motivating, inclinations, which can be fitted into a phase of morally guided conduct (pp. 172-3).

All of these are legimiate and indispensible in combination, so that enjoyment of what one is doing when, say, reading to a sick uncle, promotes and does not detract from the value of the act. Hence, although Kolnai does not quite spell this out, the cheerful enjoyment of a walk or pursuit of a hobby, of 'the daily round, the common task', has its own value though not commanded—the Pharisee watches television as 'dutiful' relaxation to prepare himself better for duty, and not just because he likes it. As Kolani says at the end, 'underhand confusion and disorderly muddling' are morely to arise from a strict separation of values from 'interests' than from

> a wide-ranging illumination of values as *intermingled* with 'interests' yet also *independent* of and contrasting with them (p. 181).

The overcoming of the Kantian divorce of duty and inclination, and also of the claim that only complete harmony with the moral law is the highest level of moral action, is also the theme of the third item, 'Duty, Inclination and "Moral-Mindedness"'. Kolnai's answer is to question the presuppositions on which both rest, and replaces them with 'moral-mindedness' which contains both

> a general readiness for the good [and] a sketch of the positively moral activities to be made effective and thus more organically and vitally grafts the universally valid formal pricniple onto the special character of the personality (p. 190).

* * * * *

Thanks to the efforts of Dr Dunlop and others—the Bibliography in the Biography lists *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. D. J. Mahoney (Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 1999), which I have not yet seen—we now have in book form a substantial body of previously published and unpublished work by Kolnai plus a biography.

Dr Dunlop has a translation of *Sexualethik* for which he is seeking a publisher, and the only other items which appear to merit republication are some of the other early articles on ethics and some on politics as well. Let us hope that they all achieve the readership and influence that they deserve.

Value Wars: The Global Market Versus the Life Economy

John McMurtry

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'[O]ver 60 per cent of international trade is between offices of the same firms or interlocked partners (5).'

[…]'[A]n estimated 75-90 per cent of cancer afflictions are now environmentally induced (98).'[…]

'[D]ominant private banks and financial institutions have wrested away over 95 per cent of existing currency and credit creation… and have increased both public and private indebtedness to higher levels than in 1929 (126)… [their] currency-reserve requirements… [being] 0-4 per cent (129).'[…]

'[T]here has been over a tenfold multiplication of automobiles since 1950, and a well over 100-fold increase of leisure motorcraft, with these multiplying units typically increasing in horsepower, mileage driven, non-renewable energy consumption, fume effluents (151).' […]

'$2.6 trillion of unaccountable documented damages a year are imposed on [US] citizens by their own corporations, whose fortune 500 do not create but reduce net American jobs. American workers' hours are the longest hours in the industrialised world… Taxpayers' subsidies to these corporations are at least $135 billion per year and growing in the weapon business… Average wages have fallen by 12 per cent since 1980, while the average working week is 60 hours a year longer… Every 12 months 245,000 people are killed by air pollution, corporate hospital malpractice and toxic exposures in corporate workplaces… as 90 per cent of the economic growth was appropriated by 1 per cent of the population… 2 million poor people and parents are in corporate state cages, while infant mortality rates are higher than Cuba and longevity is near the worst of all OECD countries (166).'[…]

'This "free flow of capital" in 1997 Asia transferred $100 billion to currency speculators from their domestic banks, doubled unemployment in leading Korea and bankrupted 90 per cent of its construction companies, destroyed the economy of Indonesia so that vectors of its 220 million people are now plundering the world's most species-rich rainforests in desperation, and occasioned the buy-up of the assets of the Asian tiger 'market miracles' at bankruptcy rates (167).'[…]

'Murdoch's News Corporation made £1,400,000,000 from the production and sale of newspapers in Britain between 1987 and 1999, and paid no corporation taxes… Far from blocking such tax evasion, New Labour granted further tax giveaways to other rich capitalists, slashing taxes on capital gains from 40 per cent to 10 per cent (223, 13n).'[…]

'165,000 corporate public relations professionals now outnumber the total number of journalists who work for all newspapers, radio, and television stations, with 9000 PR firms the source of an estimated 50-80 per cent of the news presented (243, 49n).'

I First of all, McMurtry's *Value Wars* is an impressive scholarly collection of data on the phenomenon of globalisation, which is thereby displayed in its complex array of economic, social, political, and biological implications. Looking at today's mainstream Western media, such data seem to be rarely, if ever, as widely publicised and discussed in any depth as David Beckham's foot injury or as Microsoft's new operative system. Yet, they speak of social and economic tensions concerning billions of human and non-human lives that are being affected in the most ruinous ways. These social and economic tensions are the reality about which morally responsible intellectuals would be expected to care; at least insofar as they maintain their commitment to the understanding of the fundamental grounds of value along which human agency unfolds. Indeed, just because of the amount and of the urgency of the information provided, McMurtry's book is a most remarkable text.

Secondly, McMurtry's *Value Wars* is an impressive scholarly collection of data that are analysed philosophically. Cutting across different fields of inquiry and of human activity, McMurtry's study argues that the corporate take-over of the world's resources increasingly fails to satisfy the defining criterion of capital: wealth that is used to produce more wealth. McMurtry proceeds to expose and resolve this foundational confusion by distinguishing different forms of capital, their regulating sequences of determination, and their systemic effects on life. The result of this analysis is the detection of an ongoing conflict between the requirements of today's leading economic forces and the requirements of life itself. In addition to this result, McMurtry formulates a number of practical guidelines for policy-making to be implemented by the existing world's governments on the basis of the international legal framework available to them.

II The starting point of McMurtry's distinction is the individuation of the regulating sequence of determination of capitalist economy, which Marx first outlined and which neo-classical economists have retained to the present day. McMurtry refers to it as the *money capital sequence*, as monetary wealth is invested (input) in commodity production and/or stocks in order to command more monetary wealth (output). The formal expression of this sequence, which McMurtry had developed in his previous two volumes on globalisation (*Unequal Freedom* and *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism*), is the following: **$ → C → $'**.

'**$**' refers to the initial money input, '**C**' to the

commodities or stocks in which the money input is invested (e.g. the automobile industry, agribusiness, or market-margin speculation), and '**$[1]**' to the money output, which *must* be higher than the input, either by reduction of the input (e.g. cost abatement by down-sizing or avoidance of labour and safety taxes) or by increase of the output (e.g. revenues increase by re-investment in short-term currency speculation or avoidance of capital gain taxes).

The obligation to determine an output that is higher in monetary value than the original input derives from the 'fiduciary duty' existing between the corporate subject and its stockholders, whose assets are expected to increase in value *ad infinitum*, unless the corporate subject ceases to exist (111-7).

To the money capital sequence McMurtry adds the *life capital sequence*. Regularly, throughout the system of economic transactions, ranges of biological movement (or action), felt being, and thought are also invested in the production of means of life, sometimes furthering broader and deeper ranges of biological movement, felt being, and thought.

Recycling industries, public management of community water aquifer, and universal education are examples of what McMurtry conceives as life capital producing means of life producing more means of life in return. The formal expression of the life capital sequence is the following: **L → M of L →L[1]**.

L refers to the initial input of life-capital invested in the means of sustenance and promotion (**M of L**) of wider ranges of life-capital to be obtained as an output (**L[1]**).

With regard to the calculation of this capital, McMurtry expands on the recent, alternative econometrics that have been developed by the UN and by other institutions as to deal with the dimensions of 'human capital' and 'natural capital' (e.g. HDI, IEWB, GPI, ISH, EF, or the Statistics Canada System of Environmental and Resource Accounts). Specifically, McMurtry outlines a comprehensive '*Well-Being Index*,' which is based on a basic minimum parametric of eight life means: 'air quality,' 'access to clean water,' 'sufficient nourishing food,' 'security of habitable housing,' 'opportunity to perform meaningful service or work of value to others,' 'available learning opportunity to the level of qualification,' 'healthcare when ill,' and 'temporally and physically available healthy environmental space for leisure, social interaction, and recreation' (155-7).

The ontological and axiological dimensions with which these alternative econometrics deal have not been and cannot be computed by the Newtonian-physics-modelled econometrics of either classical or neo-classical market theory, which, as McMurtry highlights, deal with 'uniform, invariant sequences' of 'externally observable and quantifiable' objects (101, 104-5). Life is blinkered out *a priori* by such standard system of economic calculus, for it does not display the necessary features of the particular objects that can be handled by it, namely inanimate objects following unvarying patterns of behaviour (100-9).

Indeed, I would argue, the 'ontocidal,' automatic exclusion of these most fundamental dimensions of reality itself, which are *the* pre-condition for the existence of any market economy, can explain why so many prestigious institutions have proceeded to the creation of alternative econometrics. Moreover, if, from a logical point of view, the disconnection of the money capital from the life capital does not imply necessarily any conflict between them, the same disconnection does not imply mutual flourishing either. The variable of life is simply alien to the money-capital sequences. In practice, however, the conflict between the two capitals is ripe, as McMurtry's cross-disciplinary researches are meant to reveal (133-4).

III McMurtry observes how, in the last twenty years, money capital has been taken more and more often as the *only* structure of understanding directing any 'rational' and 'scientific' process of policy-making. In other words, neo-classical economics has become much more than a possible interpretation of certain economic phenomena: it has become the paradigm of human rationality itself (46-8). Through a grotesque combination of *non sequitur* statements, rhetorical rejection of alternative views, mass-media propaganda, culpable denial of historical evidence, and the eschatological (and non-falsifiable) assumption of a deistic 'invisible hand' that will solve all problems, the world's leading 'group-think' has locked many minds within a set of equations reading: 'Global Corporate System = Free Market = Freedom = Democracy = Prosperity = Development' (54).

Personally, I would be prone to concede that such a set of equations becomes hardly tenable before any serious intellectual scrutiny, such as McMurtry's own one (esp. 48-55), but it can prove very effective if 'no alternative' is allowed to exist *ab initio*, for any alternative is bound to be, by definition of the paradigm, 'irrational' and 'unscientific.' In other words, McMurtry's study helps us see how the underlying, unanalysed, *de facto* metaphysical stance of the world's leading institutions (with the IMF and the WTO *in primis*) has become a contractarian doctrine depicting a universe of self-maximising, informed, responsible, and free individuals who trade material goods in the competitive market - all this being done and believed in spite of the *facts* so richly collected in *Value Wars*, which speak of:

inter-dependent, self- and all-minimising individuals [viz. ecocidal global warming, depletion of sources of fresh water, human-activity-related cancers, and losses of life-capital in general (98, 135, 151)],

deprived of the information required to make rational choices [viz. WTO-dictated labelling prohibitions

(261, 72n)],

who, for the largest part, are not trading at all [especially the unemployed masses that cannot trade their labour for wages, or the millions who have to accept precarious jobs since starvation is the only other alternative (96)],

for it is corporate subjects, not individuals, that perform most of the world's trades [The largest 300 corporations, for example, control 98 per cent of all foreign direct investment, and 60 per cent of all land cultivated for export (245, 60n; 162-4)],

with such trades being mainly virtual in nature [financial speculations have counted for at least three quarters of all commercial transactions from the beginning of the 20th century, and regularly squeeze resources from the largest part of society in favour of the world's 1% economic elite controlling the levers of financial power (172-7)],

and such corporate subjects being neither responsible [for corporations enjoy limited liability, as no other citizen does, both at the domestic and, in particular, at the transnational level (193-8)]

nor free [for corporate subjects are bound to their stockholders by fiduciary duty (113)],

nor involved in any competitive market [as what we have in fact is an oligopoly of corporate companies (245, 60n) dictating the rules of the game unilaterally to bribed and/or financially dependent governments (165-9, 202-5, 214-5, 227, 38n; 259-60, 66n), which enforce such rules on their citizens i.e. by operating a continuous governmental interference in the market (181-6, 214-5)].

IV Evidence notwithstanding, it is known how most governments have followed the neo-classical paradigm blindly, or, more appropriately to McMurtry's analysis, life-blindly. Whether they did so willingly or because under financial and/or military threat, they all re-shaped the very fabric of their communities - regularly with dramatic effects on the lives of the populations involved. The quest for maximised money-capital outputs does not stop before anything, and can impair intellectual growth, health, or democracy, if such non-computable entities operate as 'barriers to trade' or as life-enabling, but profit-reducing, 'protectionism.' As McMurtry reports, for instance, 'Sub-Saharan African and East Asian countries like Indonesia and Pakistan now pay up to five times more for debt-servicing foreign banks or military-industrial providers than they do for public education and healthcare' (204).

Value Wars provides an incredible amount of additional evidence, as he also investigates the social and economic misfortunes of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Russia and its former territories, Thailand, the former Yugoslavia, and the United States. Life-capital significant figures in job insecurity, lack of healthcare and education, depression, and suicide have all been increasing in these countries as a consequence of the compliance with the life-blind logic of money capital sequences - all these being losses that, as McMurtry's volume points out, standard GDP figures cannot individuate by their very nature (165-7, 172-7, 214-9).

Most tellingly, as we keep hearing daily in mainstream information media, the language used by the governments involved in this global pattern of 'rational' re-shaping of entire countries speaks of 'restructuring' and 'reengineering' societies through '*necessary sacrifices'* in order to 'compete in the new global market,' as if even the blindest subservience to the neo-classical paradigm could not completely hide the life-destructive implications of its application. Only the European Union, in McMurtry's view, has not succumbed entirely to the neo-classical 'Stalinisation' of the world's economy, and is thus regarded as a model of more life-respectful development (186-8).

V The conceptual limitations of the neo-classical model are most evident when we de-construct the four basic money sequences of money capital along McMurtry's lines of life-capital analysis, which he first fully developed in *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism*.

1. **$ → C+ → $^{1}** [**C+**: to degree that C is life-enabling commodity with minimum or no life-destruction to people and/or to the environment by its production and/or consequences (e.g. organic foods production, self-powered vehicles)].
2. **$ → C- → $^{1}** [**C-**: to degree that C- is non-life-enabling commodity with life-reduction to people and/or environment by its production and/or consequences (e.g. junk food, fuel-driven recreational vehicles)].
3. **$ → DC → $^{1}** [**DC**: a commodity constituted so as to reduce or to destroy life- organisation by its nature (e.g., armaments and cigarettes)].
4. **$ → $^{1} → $^{n}** [Money is transformed into more money with no good or service produced in between (e.g. transnational currency speculation)].

Money Sequence (1) is benign, and to be selected for by the steering mechanisms provided by McMurtry's life-capital econometrics. Money-capital sequences (2) and (3) are the material processes of the 'Corporate Commodity Cycles,' whose cumulative depredations of human and environmental life organisation are not factored into the market value calculus at any stage of their repertoires of eco-dismantling, extraction, processing, transportation, packaging, advertising, consumption, and non-recovered disposal (150-4). (4) is the extreme case of utterly life-detached economy, as it does not even deal with material goods, but only with virtual ones, by means of which, however, it can command over all other operations of the Corporate Commodity Cycles. Financial speculation, private money-creation by inflated assets, and unregulated credit generation are the unseen, inflationary pumps of

the debit-ridden, merger-obsessed 'corporate juggernaut' dictating the path of globalisation (161-77). The unifying economic principle of all steps of this process is one alone, however, namely *externalisation* of the costs of for-profit commodity cycles onto those who do not profit from them (150-4).

VI Thus, in order to counter-balance the harmful pattern of unrestrained self-replication of capital money sequences [especially of the type **(4)**], McMurtry proposes a *life-turn*. The defence of human and environmental life organisation can be achieved by systematic accountability procedures of:

(A) *corporate internalisation rather than externalisation of costs* and

(B) *regulatory reduction or prevention of life harms by the Corporate Commodity Cycles'* through instituted obligations to comply with life-protective regulations as binding articles of international trade and access to other societies' markets.

Trade sanctions are continuously enforced on a global scale. Modern computer technologies allow for instantaneous cross-checking of all major transactions. Hence, as McMurtry suggests, the same ought to be done with regard to the assessment of new types of sanctions to be introduced, these being directed to the fulfilment of life-protecting and life-promoting ends (190-8).

Further, McMurtry's life-turn implies restoring national and international legal sovereignty over corporate fictitious persons, 'who,' for instance, are recognised human rights in their defence (the right to hold private property in particular), but against 'whom' no legally valid accusation of violation of human rights can be formulated (for only State agents in the exercise of official duties can be charged with human rights violations). Similarly, legal responsibility must be re-instituted by removing limited liability privileges, which allow investors to ignore whether they finance private companies involved in murderous or ecocidal activities (198-202).

It may be wondered whether the movement of existing capitalism to a life economy is affordable. McMurtry's life-turn clearly responds by four lines of argument, which my remarks have implied throughout:

(a) It is the current systematic destruction of *life capital* by the unaccountable externalities of corporate money capital that is disastrously unaffordable;

(b) Life-protective standards can be enforced through trade agreements as cost-effectively as protection of private patents and other corporate rights are by incentives/penalties of trade access/tariff or fines;

(c) The current competitive advantage of externalising vast costs onto those who cannot afford them, and the cost-penalisation of responsible corporations, are simultaneously removed by a level playing field of market competition regulated by life standards;

(d) The macro recessionary/depressionary trend of world economies requires a major demand stimulus of life capital protection and formation to ensure the health and security of global citizens in place of the spectacularly wasteful and destructive public investments in and subsidies for military commodities and industrial agriculture.

A succinct exposition of the possible legal procedures to be followed is provided by McMurtry in his conclusive 'Life-Economy Manifesto' (219-20).

VII With respect to the factual urgency of McMutry's life-turn, I suggest the reader to consider that while I am writing this review:

1. The oil tanker *Prestige*, which is involved in the most profitable of trades i.e. oil trade, is sinking off the Spanish coast, pouring tons of highly viscose polluting liquid in the sea;
2. US President George W. Bush is speaking at a NATO meeting in Prague about the necessity of a new attack on oil-rich Iraq, whose population has already been suffering from massive aerial bombings in 1991, eleven-year long economic sanctions causing a UNICEF-estimated 5,000 child-deaths per month, and twenty-three years of dictatorial rule by a murderous tyrant armed by Western weapons industries;
3. Several Indonesian citizens have been arrested under the charge of having organised a homicidal attack in Bali last month, i.e. possibly abiding to the sadly growing logic of terrorist response to the life-blind corporate neo-colonial policies exemplified by the Iraqi case;
4. North-Western Italy has been devastated by another flood, the frequency of which has become annual in the last decade, as a result of global warming;
5. Members of the Southern Italian No-Global *Rete* have been imprisoned and charged with 'ideological crimes,' [*reati d'opinione*] such as 'planning to disrupt the economic order,' and 'interfering with State activities,' as they issued electronic and paper messages criticizing the policies promoted by the G-8 powers.

For these and many other reasons, McMurtry's voice ought to be listened to and his remarks reflected upon very carefully. The issues with which he deals are probably the most serious, for they are issues about life - and death. Too often, even in the scholarly world, insightful voices remain unheard because of political prejudice or convenience. In this sense, since 1989, many liberals have been uncritically prone to side with the libertarian rejection of the Marxian body of knowledge, rather than with the Marxist critical re-examination of the same. Yet, as McMurtry's furthering of Marx' money capital sequence illustrates, much can still be learnt and developed from his writings.

Moreover, McMurtry clearly operates beyond Marx, who presupposed waged labour throughout his analysis

of economic reality. The life-ground to which McMurtry appeals is prior to both libertarian and Marxist frames of understanding, touching a fundamental level of reality, the analysis of which is precluded by their assumptions. Hopefully, this depth of investigation may lead scholars to derive useful insights from McMurtry's text, independently of political preconceptions.

In particular, I am interested in highlighting how liberals can benefit from texts like McMurtry's *Value Wars* in order to verify how today's US-led, WTO- and IMF-implemented globalisation is jeopardising centuries-old structures of social co-existence.

VIII First of all, the free market is at risk. In spite of the dominating rhetoric of liberalisation and deregulation, we are undergoing a process of more and more thorough regulation of international trade in all of its forms. This process is dictated by corporate lawyers to governments, who are made subservient to the whims of the corporate oligopoly by means of financial blackmailing. Debt-strangled countries like Chad or Nigeria can be seen as the most telling examples of how successful corporate financial means of command over entire societies can be.

In a recent interview to *The Observer* (10 October 2001), the former Chief Economist of the World Bank Joseph Stiglitz summarised the merciless logic of this financial '*itinerarium ad diabolum*' in four steps, which McMurtry himself mentions in conclusion of his book (214-5; I follow his wording):

1. '*briberisation-privatisation*' (i.e. corporate-profiting 'market reforms' implemented by corrupt officials),
2. '*capital-market liberalisation*' (i.e. foreign capitals are allowed in the country to drain the national reserves and take control over the nation by debt creation),
3. '*market-based pricing*' (i.e. raising prices on basic life goods as to create political instability and weaken domestic authorities),

'*poverty reduction by Free Trade*' (i.e. mandatory imports of corporate goods, including life-destructive ones).

Yet, also more powerful and independent countries can be compelled to follow the demands of the corporate oligopoly. As McMurtry reports from recent international affairs:

> In Germany, where revenue from corporate taxes has fallen by over 50 per cent since 1980 while profits rose 90 per cent, transnational corporations such as Deutsche Bank, BMW and Daimler-Benz ensured they would nor rise again by threatening Finance Minister Oscar Lafontaine (soon forced out) with a loss of 14,000 German jobs to lower tax zones available under new transnational trade agreements (259-60, 66n)

The rhetoric-inflated 'global free market' is a less and less free market in which self-maximising, informed, responsible, and free individuals are competing in the trade of material goods. Hardly any of Adam Smith's essential freedoms for genuine capitalist trade have been left on the scene:

1. not that of *the consumer*, for several agreements deny it (viz. WTO's prohibition of labels for even 'non-GMOs' and of disclosing 'discriminatory' information on the labour and environmental standards under which commodities were produced, or non-publicly discussed and/or disclosed trade regulations);
2. not that of *the seller*, for most sellers are not free to sell (viz. the paradox of mass unemployment: sellers of their labour are in fact not free to sell);
   not that of *the producer*, whether he/she be the humblest worker or the proudest CEO (e.g. the wage-earner producing goods is subject to the employer's directives, and the entrepreneur is bound to the 'fiduciary duty to stockholders' to maximize profits);
3. not that from *government interference*, for private corporation themselves ask for it on a regular basis (viz. tax deferments, publicly-funded subsidies, government investment in infrastructures, or creation of market opportunities by military action).

Nor left on the scene are three fundamental conditions for genuine capitalist trade - still according to Adam Smith:

1. that it *create work* (unemployment figures have increased in most 're-engineered' countries in the past twenty years);
2. that it create *tangible goods* (as seen, short-term, speculative paper economy has by far overgrown real economy and/or long-term financial investments);
3. that it increase *the wealth of the nations* involved (the endless list of countries affected by the most tremendous meltdowns and indebted to foreign capital shows the failure of global economy in terms of free market economy).

IX Secondly, fundamental liberal freedoms are at risk, if not even the entire framework of rights entrenched within liberal, democratic constitutions. The political goals praised by Benjamin Constant, John Stuart Mill, and Isaiah Berlin, which had been strenuously defended by Western governments against the Soviet menace, have been progressively abandoned after the cessation of that menace.

Indeed, on the basis of the evidence collected in McMurtry's book, it could be argued that after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western societies, rather than 'exporting' liberal ideals, have been 'importing' Soviet-like labour and environmental standards, and the very possibility that certain persons - the Leader, the Party, or the Corporation - may exist, at least *de facto*, above the law that they succeed in creating.

Also, it could be argued that, at least in the last ten years, the enjoyment of personal freedom has become more and more difficult, as it is more and more difficult to possess enough material and temporal

resources to afford any significant self-expression. McMurtry's text helps us to see how the collapse of life-protecting public infrastructures of social well-being (viz. by privatisation of public transports, public healthcare, water resources), the ruination of entire eco-systems, the secretive top-down *faits accomplis* masterminded by non-elected central banks or corporate-lobbied governments, and the imposition of corporate commodities on financially devastated countries are the *macro-level* mirror of the liberticidal realities of which more and more citizens have experience as *micro-level* tragedies, which involve endemic poverty, ever-growing depressive pathologies, non-unionised insecure occupations, and Pavlovian homogenisation of individual behaviour by corporate media (which are most representative of the illiberal tendencies contained in today's corporate industry, as their Skinnerian techniques of marketing propaganda target children and teenagers i.e. *non-adult* individuals that should not be targeted as market agents, for they are not yet intellectually and legally formed to operate as market agents!).

Interestingly, if little open discussion of these issues is visible in the mainstream public arena, it is because the very same corporate media contribute in a more and more decisive way to the generation and distribution of the relevant information - a risk about which Karl Popper had warned his contemporaries a few years before his death. In the academic sphere, we may still enjoy enough freedom of speech to be able to publish texts such as McMurtry's or the present review, although we do not have any realistic chance of reaching any audience as wide as the one reached daily by Nokia or Sony with their advertising campaigns. Whether we will be able to enjoy this freedom for long is not at all clear, as civil liberties are being eroded by anti-terrorist regulations such as the 2001 American 'Patriot Act,' the 2001Canadian Bills C-35 and C-36, or the 2002 Italian exhumation of 'ideological crimes' from Mussolini's penal code.

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