Human Nature:
Stable and/or Changing?

Edited by
John P. Hogan

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PREFACE

In the fall of 2010, the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy sponsored a seminar on "Human Nature: Stable and/or Changing?" The seminar was held in Washington, DC. A group of scholars from Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Senegal, and the United States discussed this sensitive and complex topic. The issues were introduced, and discussions led, by Professor Edward Alam of Notre Dame University, Lebanon. Readings discussed included: Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*; Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*; Etienne Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*; and Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Discussions and debates were highly spirited and drew on a broad interdisciplinary approach, primarily Philosophy, but also, Anthropology, Economics, Religious Studies, and Science. Metaphysics vied for expression amidst the rising tide of Culture Studies and Sub-Altern Studies, as well as Globalization and Gender Issues. The following chapters are the result of this lively cross-cultural interchange. Except in a few instances where clarification demanded change, the gender-language of the authors is left in place. The editor expresses thanks to Maura Donohue and Nancy Graham, for their cross-culturally sensitive and meticulous editorial assistance, and to Professor George F. McLean, General Editor of the series, and Dr. Hu Yeping, Assistant General Editor, for their assistance in bringing this volume to publication.

John P. Hogan

HUMAN NATURE, HUMAN IDENTITY: WINDOW OR WALL?

JOHN P. HOGAN

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to imagine a more volatile subject than that of "human nature and identity," and it gets only more touchy when the words "change" and "stability" are added to the mix. During a casual conversation, I mentioned the subject of our seminar to two well-educated senior-citizen friends. Each had his own immediate response: the first said, "Oh, that sounds like such an impossible topic, so vague;" the second said, "…of course human nature can't change!" but then added sheepishly, "right?" Most people would probably agree with both comments. And, indeed, there is more than an once of truth in the two responses. Nonetheless, the topic, as illustrated in the Council on Research in Values and Philosophy 2010 seminar, not only is still hotly contested in philosophical circles but seems to be a precondition for the search for human fulfillment in these changing times.

The issues involved in the debate over this question are complicated by the onrush of globalization, intercultural communication – whether "clash" or "dialogue" – and, indeed, political, economic, and religious differences. Polarization has become the new order. A recent newspaper article succinctly summarized the US political scene: "…we're now split not just over what we ought to do politically but also over what we consider to be true….Liberals and Conservatives have access to the same information, yet they hold wildly incompatible views on issues ranging from global warming to whether the president was born in the United States to whether his stimulus package created any jobs" (Chris Mooney, "Politics is all in our Heads," *Washington Post*, April 15, 2012, B1). Moreover, cultural differences add further to the divide, especially given the quantification of society and the prevalent "do your own thing" mentality. The profundity of "identity" and "authenticity" in the human search gets lost in the shuffle.

Questions of evolution, history, and culture are lined up, either in clash or dialogue, with classical and metaphysical thought. The very "nature" of the term "nature" is called into question. Indeed, the concept of nature has taken on many guises from Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas, down to Freud and contemporary "constructivists" and "transhumanists." To open a possible path, human nature and identity might better be understood as a more flexible "heuristic structure," a window, not a wall. As Bernard Lonergan puts it:

> In every empirical inquiry there are knowns and unknowns. But the knowns are apprehended whether or not one understands; they are the data of sense. The unknowns, on the other hand, are what one will grasp by insight and formulate in conception and suppositions….For what is to be known by understanding these data is called their *nature* (Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* [New York: Philosophical Library, 1970], p. 36).

This kind of heuristic approach opens the way to historical and intercultural reflection while still seeking a metaphysical core. We all seem acutely aware of what divides us but have nary a clue to what might bring us together. Indeed, daily this is becoming a global issue. The tragedies of the last century as well as, ongoing suffering, have made the definition and justification of human rights a most pressing necessity. But the task of understanding human identity or nature and its authenticity or dignity, which these rights are meant to defend, has proven elusive, even as the need intensifies. In some ways we may be moving ever further from achieving that task.

The seminar discussions began with a review of Western classical thought, Plato and Aristotle, and then moved to examine the critiques from Ockham and Bacon, through Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Hume, down to some post-modern philosophers, and Rorty. The very term "nature," whether in its substantive or adjectival form, has changed radically over the last few centuries. Moreover, changes in meaning to the substantive form of the term necessarily bring about changes in the meaning of the adjectives that qualify it. Thus divine and human as describing "nature" have been drastically altered. These conceptual changes, which began in the West, are now being felt across the globe as the related epistemology of the *via moderna* and its sciences impose themselves.

Clearly, Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution are central to the debate. Seeing the relation between the metaphysical and epistemological movements, on the one hand, and their subsequent influence on Darwin's biology, on the other, is imperative for understanding and addressing the changes in meanings that have emerged with respect to human nature. Thus, the seminar turned to the nature of science in order to determine the necessary but not restrictive role of sense experience and its relation to the imagination and the intellect. Nature, and hence the human essence or identity, as the proper and unchanging object of the human intellect is the metaphysical and existential basis for human dignity and hence, human rights.

However, these findings raise more questions. To the degree that human nature or identity is stable, must it be said to be immutable and thereby an impediment to human progress? Or, if changing, to what rights does it entitle one? When, at what point, and for how long? For direction, the seminar looked to some recent groundbreaking phenomenological,

existential, hermeneutical and intercultural developments, as these contribute to philosophical anthropology, ethics and aesthetics.

READINGS

To open the discussion, participants read Pierre Hadot's, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Hadot deals with the meaning of "nature" and its remarkably complex history. Since the role of Metaphysics in Philosophy has diminished, Hadot's treatment of the historical development of the idea of nature helps to reestablish its relevance. This discussion, including the notion that nature "hides itself," allows the reader to see how the recognition of historicity, the development of nature and self-identity, and the corresponding plurality of cultures have complemented the classical treatment of nature.

From there, participants turned their attention to arguably the most important book in modern times on nature, Charles Darwin's, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859). This volume highlights the ongoing debate about what is meant by "human nature." Etienne Gilson's, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009; original French. 1971, English 1984) was used to argue some of the philosophical implications and limitations of Darwin's great work. To allow for and, in a sense, to fill the metaphysical vacuum in current philosophical trends, the modern terms "identity" and "authenticity" were used to complement the term "nature." The relevance of the metaphysical search into what it means to be human today gains a cogent modern voice in Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Here the links between the traditional metaphysical discussions of nature and contemporary accounts of "identity" and "authenticity" emerge and are made relevant to current, personal, social, cultural, and political contexts, at least in the West.

TRADITIONS AND THE PRESENT

The question of the meaning of "human nature" has long stymied philosophers. It is difficult but ever with us. Definitions have usually been vague, such as the limited range of human possibilities; the human tendency or capacity for only those actions which are common to all humans despite cultural differences; the rationality of the human as distinguished from other animals. Key nagging questions remain and have dominated the discussion. "Is there some qualitative difference between humans and other animals, or is it all a question of quantities and balance? Is there one key thing that all humans have, or is there a range of qualities, irregularly dispensed? And most crucially, is human nature inherently good, bad, or indifferent?" (*The*

Oxford Guide to Philosophy, ed. Ted Honderich, "Human Nature," [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], p. 402).

These questions have been filtered down through the Western tradition and have now been fertilized by cultural currents, psychology, feminist and gender studies, cybernetics, and religious studies. In particular, Eastern philosophy and religions have shed new light and raised new questions. Likewise, the rise of historical consciousness has given greater importance to the particular and the contingent. Indeed, change is now at the center of "human nature." Nonetheless, historical consciousness presents an in-between position which retains the relationship to tradition, but links it to the present and future. As we will see in the papers presented here, the encounter of Western thought with African, Chinese, Indian and Middle-Eastern philosophies hits hard on these very questions. These trends give a deeper meaning to "identity" and open the way to a more realistic grasp of "authenticity," that may be understood as "a transformation of our stance towards the world and self, rather than simply the registering of external reality" (Douglas Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity* [New York: Columbia Univesrity Press, 1998], p. 4; quoted in Brian J. Braman, *Meaning and Authenticity: Bernard Lonergan and Charles Taylor on the Drama of Authentic Human Existence* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008], p. 98. For an overview, see George F. McLean, *Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times* [Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2010]).

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The papers assembled here while not exactly representing a "clash of civilizations," were not, by any stretch, harmonious. Western intellectual imperialism, colonialism and the negative impact of globalization was an ever-present echo, as was, at times, a sense of cultural, religious and nationalistic isolation – both Western and Eastern. Nonetheless, the search was always honest and open and the interchange frank and friendly.

Part I, "Classical and Modern Views, Post-Modern Contexts," presents a broad theoretical field for the articles that make up the rest of the book. Here, some parameters on human nature and change are staked out. In Chapter I, "Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Status of Political Community," Cheng Nong assesses Aquinas' "naturalness of the state" and examines the different interpretations of his assessment of the political community and its role. His claim is that Aristotle's emphasis on sharing and participation in the political community is diminished in Aquinas by submission to a divine order, thus weakening the bond between being a citizen and being human. In Chapter II, "Newman's Quest for Human Authenticity," Peter M. Collins mines Newman's sermons and his *Grammar of Assent* to illustrate that Newman's "ideal of human authenticity is fulfilled practically in his theory

of (religious) knowledge" and that both change and permanence permeate his theory of authentic being and knowing.

Chapter III, "Human Identity, Changing or Stable: Shankarite and Heideggerian Perspectives," by Vensus George traces the paths of two major thinkers – one, Eastern, the other Western – regarding human nature. Both Shankara and Heidegger propose an intellectual and a personal approach to the attainment of a stable and authentic human existence: Brahman experience and Being experience. Both thinkers, in spite of differences of time and culture, are similar in pointing the way toward a humanness that is beyond time and culture. Chapter IV, "Metaphysics and Human Nature in Hans Jonas' Philosophy," by Ozanam Vicente Carrara unpacks Jonas' vision which looks at human existence through the prism of ecological problems and the technosciences. Jonas finds the true human as a being-identity made in the image of God. He defines human being as responsibility. In Chapter V, "Realists and Contructivists on Human Nature," Darius Dobranski begins his study of human nature with three rather strange "family trips" – one, to a factory site proposing to manufacture human corpses, the second, to a maternity ward, and the third to a hospital transplant unit. The outings are all presented as case studies for reflection on the human body and, in a sense, through the body, the nature of human nature as a philosophical problem. With Max Scheler and others as guides, the author surveys "realist and contructivist" approaches to Philosophical Anthropology and concludes with a call to avoid arrogance and the temptation to be "too snug and too secure." Even with seemingly far-out advancements in bio and reproductive technology, we can still know that "nature" is a gift and what is "natural" and what is "not natural."

Part II, "African Perspectives," takes on the tough, delicate, and sometimes deeply personal questions involved in the search and retrieval of African identity. Modernity, colonialism, race, culture, religion, poverty, environment and political structures are all stirred creatively in an "African Pot." Chapter VI, "Human Identity in The Ubuntu Worldview," by Christine Wanjiru Gichure, examines the *Ubuntu* mythologies which inform the Philosophical Anthropology of the Bantu people of East Africa. She closely analyzes the concept *ntu* that brings together "heart, will and intelligence." This is the core of the human, *Ubuntu*-personhood, that distinguishes the human from the animal. "A person that totally lacks *Ubuntu* is therefore likened at times to an animal or [even] a stone which has no heart." In Chapter VII, Ike Odimegwe presents the "Dialogics of Integrative Identity." From a philosophical but also a personal perspective, the author seeks to locate the human in the broader context of nature and animal nature. He then explores the meaning of human nature in the African context, under the lens of Western modernity. Finally, he "seeks an understanding of how the integrative concept of human identity develops from the concept of human nature and thereby provides an answer to the

crises of identity posed for the contemporary human person by the growing impact of modernity."

Chapter VIII, "The Disputed Humanity of the African: An Essay in the Philosophy of Modernity," by Martin F. Asiegbu, deals with the thorny questions concerning the decolonization of the African mind. He provides a commentary on the expression, *"humanite contesteé,"* (disputed humanity) of Eboussi Boulaga, the Cameroonian philosopher. The author explores the African experience of an imposed Western modernity and concludes that "[T]he intellectual liberation of the African is the greatest obstacle the African faces at present." Chapter IX, "Rethinking Human Nature: African Values and Creative Evolution," by J. Chidozie Chakwuokolo, attacks the key question: is human nature fixed or evolving? The author claims that answering this question will enable us not only to understand our nature and identity but also to forge a global morality. He traces this line of thought through historical and scientific developments both orientated toward the African "principle of complementarity." In his conception of human nature, he brings together a form of creationism and evolution which might form the basis for a global "creed of peace."

Chapter X, "Science and Human Nature: A Confusing Dynamic of Reality," by Samuel Asuquo Ekanem, indicates that neither Philosophy nor Science, in their separation, have really shed much light on the meaning of human nature. The issues are complex and discussions have created an epistemological vacuum. The author, thus, proposes a combined "philo-scientific" approach. His survey, spanning from Plato to Wilson's Sociobiology, calls for a speculative and imaginative linkage bringing together Science and Metaphysics. Only such a holistic approach can even come near understanding "the complex nature of man." Chapter XI, "The Concept of the Human in Human Well-being," by Uchenna Okeja, discusses the notion of "well-being" in an African context, by recounting experiences of Chinua Achebe and others. He compares Western concepts of well-being with those of Africa. From here he moves on to the distinctly human. For his African understanding, he also turns to the concept of *Ubuntu* which points to the centrality of relationality. Being part of a community is focal to African ethics and thus to "humanness" and human well-being as experienced in Africa.

Part III, "Perspectives from China and India," brings some of the great Eastern traditions into dialogue with Western thought. The nature of the person, whether human nature is good or bad, and the humans' openness to transcendence – the divine, all inform the lively debate on stability and/or change.

Chapter XII, "Human Nature and Flexibility: Some Confucian Views," Shi Yongze unfolds the differences in ancient Chinese Philosophy concerning human nature. He deals with change and the assessment of Confucius' followers concerning the "goodness" or "badness" of human nature. He concentrates on Mencius and Xunzi's opposing viewpoints. His

conclusion is that while their views differ on the surface, they "have a common goal for approaching or becoming a 'sage.'" Both have interpreted the thought of Confucius correctly – but differently. Both maximize education and growth in human nature – going with the flow of time and life. Chapter XIII, "Nature and Human Nature: Ancient Chinese and Western Philosophy," by Li Xiadong, begins with a summary of key concepts in Chinese traditional thought: *Dao* (Way); *Ren* (Person); and the relation between Other and Self. From these concepts he traces a path from the Chinese notion of "harmony" through "nature" to Taylor's "authenticity." The difference between Chinese and Western thought is that ancient Chinese Philosophy focuses on the flowing process of nature, while Western thought focuses on the origin of nature. The author emphasizes that a deeper mutual understanding can bring the two views closer together.

Chapter XIV, "Human Nature in Vishishta-Advaita-Vedanta: Yumuna's Divine Verses," by Ruzana Pskhu, attempts to lift Hadot's "veil" of nature through a close reading of Yamunacarya (918-1038) who strongly influenced Ramanauja (1017-1137). The true nature of the human is "consciousness," which opens the way to God – bliss – and power. The author analyzes a Vishnu hymn about Lakshmi who possesses all the divine attributes of Vishnu but hidden under her veil. Like Lakshmi, every human being, although "veiled," is an attribute of the highest reality –Brahman. In chapter V, "The Lion and the Sheep: A Sikh Response to Nietzsche," Sandeep Singh Dhillon contrasts the Nietzschean "superman" with Sri Guru Gobind Singh's "Khalsa," the pure, complete and perfect man. Different from Nietzsche's self-centered, intellectual and social bully, the Khalsa, the "lion," is a kind of saint-soldier who represents the "next stage of human evolution." This human leap, contrary to Nietzsche's, is a conscious effort linked to faith in God.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The interchange represented in the chapters that follow form a rich mosaic. The hermeneutical thread that can be traced through them has two strands: first, there is a clear effort to find, grasp and put to use a common core in human nature and second, a realization, or rather, an acceptance, that history, change, and particularity are part of our "nature," and, indeed, our freedom. Human nature, defined metaphysically as an unchanging reality, the "sameness" that unites us, has been under attack but never really dispelled. John Henry Newman alerted us to the new reality: "Growth is the only evidence of life" and "to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." The question here is how to be faithful to the philosophical quest. Can change be reconciled with the metaphysical tradition and relativism avoided?

A number of resources for sorting out these two strands and opening a window to bringing them into sync may be found in some recent hermeneutical thinkers – Gadamer, Lonergan, and Taylor come to mind. For

Gadamer, "[W]e are born and raised in a particular locale, language and symbol system, culture and civilization, through which we are enabled to understand and relate to others. Finite beings have no privileged position to which all things are present or in which they are present to all. In our human condition everyone has to be somewhere. What we need to discover is how we can be enabled by our distinctive culture and begin to make it work for us in interacting with others." (George F. McLean, "Introduction", Kwame Gyekye, *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity* [Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004], p. 3; see Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised edition [New York: Continuum,1989], esp. pgs. 305-371).

This same kind of response can be heard also in Bernard Lonergan's answer to the blockages caused by what he referred to as the "classical mentality" or "ahistiorical orthodoxy." Fred Lawrence explains:

> Lonergan's response to this problem was hermeneutic. It involved a critical acceptance of modern history and modern science…Coming critically to terms with human facticity and historicity, he transposed his earlier groundbreaking interpretation of Aquinas's thought on grace and freedom in his 1972 work, *Method in Theology.* For Lonergan integrity of method as hermeneutic demonstrates that in the post-modern (or any) era, science, scholarship, philosophy, and theology can only be genuine in the measure that they 'head one into being authentically human (Braman, *Meaning and Authenticity*, p. 47)

The "authentically human" for Lonergan means the human subject becomes existential as she realizes that it is for her to decide what kind of person she wants to be, what she makes of herself. The person constitutes the self through choices and decisions (Braman, *Meaning and Authenticity,* pp. 48-59; see Bernard Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, Vol. 18 of *Collected Works* of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Philip J. Mc Shane, [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001], p.242). Nonetheless, these choices and decisions are grasped from a "horizon" and build on a tradition. The metaphysical core is there for Lonergan, but functions as a heuristic structure – a window, a frame – through which reality is grasped and opens the human to becoming authentically human.

As change becomes much more of the abiding reality of this post-modern, globalized world, thinkers like Lonergan and Taylor become important guides to sorting out human nature and identity. Taylor's way of seeing authenticity as a transcendent moral ideal by which one acts as one ought rather than as one wants and Lonergan's description of authenticity as self-trancendence which entails a threefold transformation or conversion that is intellectual, moral, and religious resonate with the spirit, and even the

anguish, in the papers that follow. The language and cultures may be different but the search is similar.

As our authors from around the globe demonstrate, we need to heed the advice of Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Gyekye and "look over the wall of culture to perceive a common humanity." Nonetheless, as Gadamer, Taylor, and Lonergan illustrate, culture, tradition, change, and historicity provide the horizon, the window frame from which, and through which we look.

PART I

CLASSICAL AND MODERN VIEWS,
POST-MODERN CONTEXTS

CHAPTER I

AQUINAS, ARISTOTLE, AND THE STATUS OF POLITICAL COMMUNITY

CHENG NONG

THE ISSUE

It is widely held that Aquinas, following Aristotle, asserts the naturalness of the state. For him, unlike for Augustine, the state is not just a remedy for the fall and humanity's original sin. Even if there were no fall and original sin, men would still live in political community, because they are naturally inclined to be political animals. However, some commentators argue recently that for Aquinas, the political community is not an end in itself but an exterior good. In other words, the political community merely serves as an instrumental means for achieving human goods. Its role is hardly more than securing peace and justice.

John Finnis is representative of this perspective. He claims: "it is easy to read Aquinas as holding that the state's common good is the fulfillment (and thus the complete virtue) of each of its citizens, and that government and law should therefore promote that fulfillment…Plausible as it is, as a first reading of many passages [by Aquinas], this interpretation of Aquinas must be rejected."[1] Finnis draws a sharp line of demarcation between the political common good and "basic human goods": "the common good specific to the *civitas* as such – the public good – is not basic but, rather, instrumental to securing human goods which are basic."[2] None of the basic human goods is in itself specific to the political community.[3] These basic human goods belong to the inner life and personal life of a human being, whereas the public good is concerned with the maintenance of peace and justice. According to this interpretation, the naturalness of the political community simply implies that it is an indispensable means to achieving basic human goods, and the idea that the goal of the legislator is the cultivation of citizens' virtues is also questionable.

Henry Veatch is another proponent of this interpretation. He makes his case a little bit differently: "the common good of any social whole is never an ultimate end or end in itself; instead, any such common good needs

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[1] John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 222-223.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 247.

[3] Finnis lists the seven basic values as "life, knowledge, play, aesthetic experience, friendship, religion, and freedom in practical reasonableness." In *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford, 1984), p. 155.

to be conceived as a social system or social organization or social order designed and disposed so as to make various of the goods of life available to the individuals who make up the community".[4] For Veatch, the political community falls into "the class of exterior goods" which includes goods such as money, honors, water and other natural resources. It is not a good worth choosing for its own sake, let alone an ultimate end.

Not surprisingly, this line of interpretation evokes strong criticism among the commentators who stand by the traditional interpretation. According to one critic, Aquinas follows Aristotle in stressing "that political society is a 'basic human good'…, that we have a natural inclination to life in *political* society, and that the goal of the legislator is the development of *virtue* in the citizen"[5] (original emphases). Another critic argues that Aquinas clearly identifies the ultimate end with the common good, and in doing so, "he has chiefly in mind the human ultimate end attainable in this life and the political common good, that is, political community".[6]

The two sides of the debate are diametrically opposed to each other. This situation itself calls for explanation. According to Finnis and Veatch, Aquinas's view is quite Lockean in that he sees politics as essentially a matter of maintaining external order. According to their critics, Aristotle's doctrine of the city's naturalness has a strong resonance in Aquinas's political theory. How can Aquinas invite so radically opposed interpretations? Is it possible that Aquinas's understanding of the state is more complicated than both sides of this debate supposed? Or is there some important feature of Aquinas's political thought which is missed by both sides?

To understand why Aquinas invites so different interpretations, we need to attend closely to the differences between Aristotle and Aquinas. As I will show in the following discussion, for Aristotle the highly political character of the city is essential to the naturalness of the city, whereas given Aquinas's commitment to the universal divine order, he cannot follow Aristotle in upholding this idea of the political. As a result, the nature of the political community in Aquinas's thought becomes ambiguous, thus making it possible to read him in radically different ways.

ARISTOTLE AND THE NATURALNESS OF THE CITY

To a large extent, Aristotle's political thought is characterized by his

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[4] Henry Veatch, *Human Rights: Fact or Fancy?* (Baton Rouge, 1985), p. 127.

[5] See Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas, John Finnis, and the Political Good", *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 337-374.

[6] Gregory Froelich, "Ultimate End and Common Good", *The Thomist* 60(1996): 609-618.

doctrine of the naturalness of the city.[7] This doctrine seems easy to understand. If one attends closely to Aristotle's discussion, however, one will find that his account is more complicated than most might suppose. To know the exact meaning of this doctrine, we will have to attempt a reconstruction of his related arguments.[8]

Aristotle's theory of the city's naturalness is a teleological account. He famously holds that man is by nature a political animal. What distinguishes the political community from pre-political human partnerships, in his view, is its "self-sufficiency." Although the exact meaning of this self-sufficiency is quite ambiguous, Aristotle makes it clear that it does not refer to the city's economic or military function. The city cannot be equated with a union of trade or a military coalition. While these functions are indispensable to our survival and prosperity, the city is the highest community essentially because it aims at the "good life."[9] A general account of the good life can be found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to it, to know what is the highest good for human beings, one needs to know what are the characteristic activities of human beings. The good life is a life in which a person manifests excellence in these characteristic activities. The highest good is the human flourishing, or the full development of the whole of humanity.[10] Obviously, this account presupposes a metaphysics of natural teleology that maintains the existence of a genuine human nature which develops into actuality only through a process of transformation.

These statements are widely agreed to be the central principles of Aristotle's political theory. For our purposes, however, they are overly general and ambiguous. Many questions remain unanswered. Why is the city the key? Why cannot people pursue the good life in their pre-political relations? What is special about the city that makes it the only self-sufficient unit for the full development of human nature? While we can infer that the city is natural to man perhaps because the city serves an indispensable role in the development of human nature, the substance of this special role needs

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[7] Here I deliberately use the term "the city" because for Aristotle the smallness of a political society is an constitutive element of the naturalness of the city. The fact in turn means that the naturalness of the city cannot be automatically extended to the kingdom, much less empire. This kind of extension needs to be justified. But I will not elaborate this point here.

[8] For a complicated discussion of the problem, see Wayne H. Ambler, "Aristotle's Understanding of the Naturalness of the City," *Review of Politics*, 47 (April, 1985): 163-185. The problem with Ambler's paper is that it focuses overly on the ambiguity of the doctrines, thus making it difficult to take them seriously.

[9] Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by Carnes Lord (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), book I, chap. 3.

[10] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Terence Irwin, the 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999) book I, chaps. 7-8.

to be spelled out. As Aristotle reminds us, to know what is the good life, one needs to know what are the characteristic activities of human beings. Accordingly, to know what is the significance of the city for the pursuit of the good life, we need to know what is the characteristic activity of human beings relative to the city.

It is worth noting that Aristotle does have a more specific discussion touching upon this issue of the city's naturalness. In Book I of the *Politics*, he describes the city as some sort of ruling relationship, comparing it with pre-political relations of man and woman, master and slave, and parent and children. According to Aristotle, there is a basis in nature for the constitution of all these pre-political relations. Man should rule over woman because man's rational capacity is superior to woman's; master should rule over slave because slave's reason is limited and needs to be guided by a wise master; parent should rule over children because the latter's rationality has not yet fully developed.[11] However, the same reasoning cannot apply when it comes to the political relation of the citizens. The citizens are all free and equal. There is no natural standard by which we can decide who is to rule and who is to obey. The ruling relation among free and equal citizens can never be natural in the same sense as those pre-political ruling relations are.

Three observations can be made about this discussion. First, ruling activity is at the heart of Aristotle's notion of politics. As shown above, his standard statements about the city, the good life, and the pursuit of human perfection are all overly abstract. To know how these elements are connected with each other, one needs to know what the political life of the city involves. Aristotle's comparison and contrast of pre-political and political relations offers us exactly such an account. By this account, the political life of the city is to be understood in terms of ruling relationships. Aristotle's model is a paradigmatic case of what is called ancient constitutionalism,[12] which understands the constitution of the state by substance rather than by institutional forms. Put another way, who is to rule is not a secondary question that can arise only after the institutional arrangement of the city has been established. Rather, this question of who is to rule is equivalent to the question of the constitution of the city *per se*. As Aristotle clearly indicates, the identity of the city consists in the way the city is constituted, and the constitution of the city hinges on who is to rule.[13] Considered this way, ruling or sharing in ruling is the characteristic activity in politics.

Second, one central doctrine of Aristotle's political theory is about the city's naturalness, but his discussion of ruling relations reveals that there is an element of artificiality deeply involved in the constitution of the city.

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[11] *The Politics*, Book 1, chaps. 4-7, 13.

[12] See Charles Howard McIlwain, *Constitutionalism: Ancient and Modern* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008).

[13] *The Politics,* Book 3, chap. 1-3.

Since there is no natural standard by which to tell the ruler from the ruled among free citizens, people have to make choices in this regard. In contrast with pre-political human relations, the political relation is more like a human artifact than a natural product. Seen in this light, it might not be far-fetched to say that Aristotle also has his own founding problem.

Third, this discussion of ruling relations in no way undermines the naturalness of the city, as some commentators maintained.[14] The naturalness of certain sorts of ruling relation and the naturalness of the city, as Aristotle understands them, are two distinct issues. The former concerns the entitlement of participating in political life, while the latter concerns the significance of the ruling activity for the pursuit of the good life. Furthermore, since Aristotle's discussion of the first issue grants that all male and free adults are in principle entitled to rule, his account of the naturalness of the city thus applies to all free male citizens.

It is in Book III of the *Politics* that Aristotle clearly deals with this issue of the unnaturalness of political ruling relations. His solution is straightforward: citizens should all be entitled to rule, and in practice they can rule by turns: "when [the regime] is established in accordance with equality and similarity among the citizens, they claim to merit ruling in turn." [15]

This is a highly political solution to a typical political problem. On the assumption that citizens are all equal, there is no natural way to select the ruler among them. Thus the question of who is to rule becomes politicized in that any solution is contestable. On the other hand, ruling by turns suggests a prospect of all citizens sharing in rule and being ruled. There is a widespread participation in the governmental process, and ruling becomes a characteristic activity of the city.

This solution is not merely an expedient measure. For one thing, Aristotle indicates that ruling by turns "accords with nature" insofar as citizens are all free and equal. However, the fundamental rationale for sharing in rule must be found in Aristotle's teleological account of human nature.

Aristotle's ideal of human perfection is presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Although he does not systematically explain the connection between this ideal and the political life of the city, it is beyond doubt that this ideal is deeply embedded in the public life of the city. There are many indications about this connection in the chapters on the virtues of justice and of friendship among citizens.[16] However, it is in the *Politics* that Aristotle examines the issue of political ruling relationships among citizens, making it possible to fully understand the role of political life for the pursuit

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[14] For an example, see Wayne H. Ambler, "Aristotle's Understanding of the Naturalness of the City", *Review of Politics*, 47 (April, 1985): 163-185. Ambler's analysis overstates the ambiguity of this doctrine.

[15] *The Politics,* Book 3, chap 6, 1279a 8-10.

[16] *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 5 and 7.

of human excellence. He identifies the features of political relations as distinct from those of pre-political relations, and takes sharing in rule as a natural result of this situation. Furthermore, in his vivid description of the best regime in Book 7 and 8 of the *Politics*, Aristotle shows what an active engagement in political life means for a typical citizen in the city. A person can pursue a virtuous life to a certain extent in pre-political relations, but there will be serious limits to his moral effort if he is separated from active politics. Political life constitutes a fundamental dimension of human perfection. Political activities involve deep engagement with fellow citizens, collective deliberation, public spirit, military courage, and wholehearted dedication to a larger order. According to Aristotle, the "excellences" manifested in these characteristic activities constitute an integral part of human perfection. Seen in this light, ruling or sharing in rule becomes essential to the development of human nature.

To press the point further, the naturalness of the city is intrinsically connected with widespread political participation. The city is natural insofar as it is essential to the teleological development of human nature; and the city can serve this role because ruling or sharing in rule is a characteristic activity of human beings. The *political* community is natural to man precisely because it is really and highly *political*, and man is by nature a political animal precisely because only as an active citizen can he fully become a human being.

To be sure, there are many passages in the *Politics* upholding the merits of kingship and aristocracy. However, a distinction has to be made between Aristotle's discussion of the classification of regimes and his view on the significance of sharing in rule. The point to be appreciated is that political activity is indispensable to the development of humanity. Only a citizen sharing in rule is a citizen in the full sense of the term, and only such a citizen has chance to realize human flourishing. This point holds true no matter how the city is constituted. If the regime is ruled by the elite few, then only these few people enjoy the access to highest perfection; if the regime is a republic, then the possibility of the good life is open to a larger public.[17]

AQUINAS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

It is not a coincidence that Aquinas is widely seen as a follower of Aristotle as far as moral and political life is concerned. Aquinas claims that human life is "complete" in this world only in the political community, and that the political community is "the ultimate end" for human beings in this

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[17] Mary P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics.* (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1992), Introduction; Christopher Nadon, "Aristotle and the Republican Paradigm: A Reconsideration of Pocock's *Machiavellian Moment*," *Review of Politics*, 58 (July, 1996): 677-98.

world. These sound quite Aristotelian. On closer examination, however, some fundamental differences between the two thinkers arise with regard to the issue of the political community. If my interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of the city's naturalness is correct, Aquinas's notion of the political community loses sight of the characteristic activity of human beings that is specific to the political community. As a result, the status of Aquinas's political community becomes problematic.

Early Christianity was characterized by an eschatological mentality. Over time, however, the church tended to be reconciled with this world, and the goal became building up an all-embracing Christendom on earth. One aspect of this transition was to reconcile pagan philosophy and Christian theology, that is, reconcile reason and faith. During this process, the stoic doctrine of natural law came to be modified and extended to provide a platform for a rational understanding of the social and political order within a general theological outlook. As D'Entreves observes, "if a basis was to be provided for human relations independently of the higher requirements of Christian perfection, surely there must be a knowledge of ethical values which man can attain with the sole help of his reason. There must be a system of natural ethics. Its cornerstone must be natural law."[18]

For our purposes, what is worth noting is the emergence of the idea of the independence of law from the state. The natural law doctrine presupposes a universal order, whereas the state is typically a particular community. In the context of the doctrine of the natural law, the arrangement of human affairs is understood essentially as a legal order rather than a political order. A line is drawn between the judicial and the political, and "law is by its origins of equal rank with the state and does not depend upon the state for its existence." Within this context, some people even go further "to base the state upon some ground of law, to make it the outcome of a legal act"[19]

Aquinas is the paradigmatic case of this intellectual development. The doctrine of the natural law plays a major role in his theological system, setting the tone for his social, legal and political ideas. Through the mediation of natural law doctrine, Aquinas can make room for a natural order within a divine world and integrate Aristotle's thought into a Christian system. What is relevant to our topic is that this reconciliation has a price to pay. To base the authority upon the ground of natural law means that Aristotle's emphasis on ruling or sharing in rule will be replaced by the model of judicial administration, and that the dynamic picture of civic participation in Aristotle will give way to an authoritarian picture of judicial government. As indicated above, for Aristotle, participation in the governing process is the characteristic activity of human beings in the city. If Aristotle's emphasis on sharing in rule drops out of the picture, we will

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[18] D'Entreves, *Natural Law*. pp. 33-38.

[19] Alexander Passerin D'Entreves, *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1959), pp. 16-17.

lose sight of the specific nature of the political community, which distinguishes it from other human partnerships. As a result, Aquinas's claim of the naturalness of the city will be groundless.

Aquinas is interested in Aristotle's natural teleology of human nature because he intends to establish a rational understanding of moral and political life within Christian theology. Because of his preoccupation with the systematic account, Aquinas cannot do justice to the complexity of Aristotle's account of the city. A typical example in this regard is Aquinas's discussion of "natural inclination." Although Aristotle often talks about the teleological nature of human beings, his discussion is quite flexible. By contrast, Aquinas's account of human "natural inclination" is much more explicit and systematic. In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas offers a classification of human natural inclination, dividing it into three classes. The first class of inclinations are related to those man has in common with all substances, such as seeking after self-preservation; The second class are related to those inclinations he has in common with other animals, such as sexual intercourse and education of offspring; the third level of inclinations are the tendencies corresponding to reason, which involve natural inclinations to know the truth about God and to live in society.[20]

Aristotle does not juxtapose the lower desires for self-preservation and sexual attraction with the higher aspiration for society. He rather tends to separate them from each other and focuses his attention on the higher potential of human nature. By contrast, that Aquinas places both lower desires and higher tendencies under the same category "natural inclination" seems quite un-Aristotelian. Aquinas claims that his notion of "natural inclination" is teleological and has nothing to do with causal necessity. To say that something is natural, he explains, just means that it is desirable from the perspective of reason.[21] But it seems doubtful whether his account of natural inclination can draw a clear line between teleology and causality. There is much to be said about this issue, but here I will emphasize just one point, namely, Aquinas's notion of natural inclination tends to connect it with some fixed object, thus making it difficult for him to accommodate the complexity of Aristotle's discussion of political ruling relation. As Finnis summarizes, Aquinas's epistemological principle for considering the nature of an active being is as follows: "the nature of X is understood by understanding X's capacities or capabilities, those capacities or capabilities are understood by understanding their activations or acts, and those activations or acts are understood by understanding their objects".[22] On the other hand, as shown above, Aristotle is quite flexible in dealing with the topic of politics. Without such an attitude, he would not be able to develop a highly political understanding of the naturalness of the city.

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[20] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, I-II, q.94, a.2.

[21] Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory,* Chap. 3.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

This way of understanding human nature is deeply connected with the legalistic approach to morality and politics in Aquinas's thought. Actually, his classification of human nature cited above appears in the "Treatise on law" in the *Summa Theologica,* where Aquinas gives his famous description of the three precepts of the natural law, which strictly match the three sorts of natural inclinations in man. Furthermore, it is not accidental that Aquinas's representative writing in politics is *On Kingship.* This subject illustrates the direction in which a legalistic approach tends to go.[23]

Therefore, in Aquinas's thought, the problem of the city's naturalness is separated from the political nature of the city. He downplays the problem of the constitution of the city, not regarding political ruling relationship among citizens as a central issue of the city. Given his embrace of the natural law doctrine, Aquinas does appreciate the idea of the active citizen. He cannot develop the idea of political activity as distinct from a legal order. For him, the political community is part of a universal order. The naturalness of it is entirely a metaphysical problem, having nothing to do with citizens' participation in the governmental process. As stressed before, according to Aristotle, the city is natural to man because ruling or sharing in rule is a characteristic activity of human beings and because being active in politics is a constitutive dimension of human flourishing. However, since Aristotle's emphasis on sharing in rule is neglected, Aquinas's claim for the city's naturalness will lose its most fundamental rationale. In Aquinas's thought, the status of the political arena is seriously obscured, and accordingly Aristotle's view on the specific relevance of sharing in ruling to the good life is ignored.

Given this situation, it is hardly surprising that Aquinas seems not concerned about the ambiguity or complexity in Aristotle's account of the city's naturalness. For example, in Question 92 of the 'Treatise on Law" in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas quotes from Book I of the *Politics*: "the virtue of every subject consists in his being well subjected to his ruler"[24] This sentence is from Chapter 13, Book I of the *Politics*, which concerns pre-political relations rather than political ruling relationships. The issue of this chapter is that "in general we may ask about the natural ruler, and the natural subject, whether they have the same or different excellences."[25] Since Aristotle argues that the political ruling relationships among free and equal citizens differ in kind from pre-political relations, his discussion of "the natural ruler and the natural subject" will be irrelevant to political relationships. Actually, the cases this chapter examines are precisely the typical household relations of master and slave, male and female, and

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[23] Aquinas, *On Kingship*, trans. by Gerald B. Phelan; rev. by I. Th. Eschmann (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982), especially Book II, chap. 1.

[24] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q.92, a.1.

[25] *The Politics*, Book 1, chap. 13, 1259b 32-34.

parents and children. [26] However, Aquinas ignores Aristotle's complex discussion about the distinctiveness of political relationships. He simply applies Aristotle's arguments regarding household relations to political relationships, thus showing his divergence from Aristotle on the political nature of the city.

On the other hand, it can also be anticipated that Aquinas places great emphasis on the arguments by Aristotle concerning the dependency of man on law and justice. In Book I of the *Politics*, Aristotle indicates that, when separated from law and justice, man is the worst animal of all; and the virtue of justice is a feature of a city, for the administration of justice is the principle of order in political society. [27] Chapter 10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* offers a more detailed account of the role of the compulsory power of law in cultivating virtue. [28] While it is possible to interpret these passages in the direction of the discipline of law, the general line of Aristotle's thought will cast doubt upon this reading. However, for Aquinas, these passages are essential to understanding the legalistic nature of the political community.

Aquinas's intention is to establish a rational understanding of human order and to set up a continuity between the imperfect beatitude in this life and the perfect beatitude in God. To achieve this end, it is enough to demonstrate that human beings are naturally inclined to live in society and that they live under the order of natural law. The specific nature of the political community is not a great concern to him. As a result, on one hand, Aquinas has a general affirmation of human natural inclination towards social life and, on the other hand, he makes explicit arguments to base authority on law. As regards the distinctive nature of the political community as distinguished from other forms of social relations, Aquinas offers no specific treatment. In other words, the specific status of the political community remains ambiguous in Aquinas's thought.

Therefore Aquinas's understanding of the political community is based on two elements: the moral end of the political community, and judicial government. Finnis's observation captures this feature well:

> Can a state's common good, being the good of a complete community, be anything less than the complete good, the fulfillment – *beatitudo imperfecta* if not *perfecta* – of its citizens? … the question seems equivalent to another: What type of direction can properly be given by governments and law? Aquinas treats the questions as substantially equivalent, because he has stipulated that a state is a complete community and given complete community the purely formal description: a community so organized that its government and law give *all* the direction that properly can be given by human

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[26] *The Politics*, Book 1, chap.13.

[27] *Ibid.,* Book I, chap 2,

[28] *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book 10.

government and coercive *law* to promote and protect the common good, that is, the good of the community and thus of all its members and other proper elements.[29]

This seems a fairly coherent notion of the political community, but it is difficult to find a place within it for Aristotle's sense of the political. The sections below will further examine the two elements of Aquinas's political community, namely, the disciplinary government and law, and the concept of the common good.

A UNIVERSAL ORDER OF LAW AND DISCIPLINARY GOVERNMENT

For Aquinas, "the whole community of the universe is governed by divine reason. …the very idea of the government of things under God the Ruler of the universe has the nature of law."[30] This is a universal legal order, and we as human beings live under it by nature. How can we find the necessity for politics in such a universal order? To be sure, in principle it is not absolutely inconceivable that the active citizen and political participation is required by a legal order. It is more reasonable, however, to expect that such a universal kingship will undermine the necessity for public politics. In *On Kingship*, Aquinas makes parallel God's universal government and man's particular government:

> In things of nature there is both a universal and a particular government. The former is God's government whose rule embraces all things and whose providence governs all things. The latter is found in man and it is much like the divine government. Hence man is called a microcosmos. Indeed there is a similitude between both governments in regard to their form…[31]

Note how this reasoning in *On Kingship* naturally leads to kingship rather than a republic. Under such circumstances, even the central concern of ancient political philosophy, namely, the problem of the best regime, tends to lose its significance. As Strauss shows, in Aquinas's theory, the natural law is higher than a discussion of the best regime. Natural law has been promulgated by God through *synderesis* and is in effect always and everywhere – even in a bad regime, or even among the people who do not live in a city. The natural law requires the observance of the decalogue and the moral precepts it embodies. Such a moral code applies indifferently to all societies regardless of what type of regime they are. The natural law has

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[29] Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, pp. 221-222.
[30] *Summa Theologica,* I-II, q.91,a.1.
[31] *On Kingship*, book II, chap 1, pp. 53-54.

no preference for any particular form of regime; instead, it requires that a set of precepts be observed in all regimes.[32] In the context of Aquinas's system, the problem of the best regime seems not important precisely because judicial government takes over the role accorded to politics in Aristotle.

Aquinas's notion of the political community finds perhaps the clearest expression in his discussion of human law. Since the natural law only postulates general precepts, every society needs to create positive laws to address particular situations of its own people. As Aquinas puts it, "the general principles of natural law cannot be applied to all men in the same way on account of the great variety of human affairs, and hence arises the diversity of positive laws among various people"[33]

Human law or positive law, by definition, concerns the government. Thus Aquinas's understanding of human law directly reflects his view on the nature of the political community. He has the following to say about the role of positive law:

> Man has a natural aptitude for virtue, but the perfection of virtue must be acquired by man by means of some kind of training….it is difficult to see how man could suffice for himself in the matter of this training, since the perfection of virtue consists chiefly in withdrawing man from undue pleasures, to which above all, man is inclined, and especially the young, who are more capable of being trained. Consequently, a man needs to receive this training from another whereby to arrive at the perfection of virtue…But since some are found to be depraved and prone to vice and not easily amenable to worlds, it was necessary for such to be restrained from evil by force and fear…this kind of training which compels through fear of punishment is the discipline of laws.[34]

So Aquinas's state essentially serves a disciplinary role, training people through their fear of punishment. The state is a disciplinary institution under the universal order of law. The whole human world seems to be a huge training camp, where under the supervision of the state, people try to shape themselves into virtuous dispositions

In light of this passage, the distinctiveness of Aquinas's notion of the state is easy to discern. On the one hand, in contrast with Aristotle's city, Aquinas's state is reduced to the execution of human laws, and this discipline of laws is necessary because man is typically vulnerable to

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[32] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 144.

[33] *Summa Theologica,* I-II, q.95, a.2.

[34] *Ibid.,* I-II, q.95, a.1

vicious temptations. Following this line of thought, it will be hard to see how man is naturally inclined to the state. On the other hand, unlike the Augustinian or Lockean state, Aquinas's state is directly involved in the moral training of its subjects. Its end is the promotion of people towards the perfection of virtue, not merely securing peace and justice so that people can pursue the good life on their own.

Aquinas not merely ignores Aristotle's sense of the political, but reduce the role of the state to the disciplinary function, thus further undermining the naturalness of the state. Moreover, he grants that some people can cultivate virtue independently of the state. He says, "as to those young people who are inclined to acts of virtue by their good natural disposition or by custom, or rather by the gift of God, paternal training suffices."[35] If the family training could be sufficient for some people to pursue excellence, living in the political community will not be a constitutive component of human flourishing. Given this picture drawn by Aquinas, people are, by nature, embedded in the universal order of law, but their relation to the state is essentially contingent.

Since Aquinas's state is characterized by disciplinary government, a question naturally arises: how does a disciplinary government do more than maintaining external order? Put another way, does the discipline of laws only concern the external behavior of citizens or is it aimed at their interior dispositions? Aquinas claims in many places that the legislator should aim at cultivating virtue. However, in practice human laws can only be directly applied to the external behavior of citizens. So to support his claim, Aquinas needs to assume that the distinction between external and internal is easy to transcend, and that the effects of discipline will go beyond external behavior to internal character traits. This assumption holds true in a way and to a degree, but there is always an uncertainty about this matter. In many cases, there is no necessary connection between external performance and interior disposition. As Aquinas admits: "It is always through perfect virtue that one obeys the law, but sometimes it is through fear of punishment, and sometimes from the mere dictate of reason, which is the beginning of virtue."[36] This uncertainty can undermine the effort of the legislator, and mere external performance leaves no trace in the mind of the actor. Finnis's Lockean interpretation of Aquinas catches this point but overstates it too much. Aquinas notices the complexity of the situation and concedes that things can go either way. This complicated standpoint makes him open to different interpretations.

AMBIGUOUS NATURE OF THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

Perhaps Aquinas is more self-conscious than we supposed in reducing the political character of the state, since it is well known that he

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[35] *Summa Theologica,* I-II, q.95, a.1
[36] *Ibid*., I-II, q,92, ad 2.

translates Aristotle's "political animal" as "social and political animal". William of Moerbecke, the Latin translator of the *Politics,* translates this phrase as "political animal." Aquinas follows this translation in his commentary on the *Politic*.[37] But in the *Summa Theologica* and in several other works relating to politics, Aquinas constantly uses the phrase "social and political animal."[38]

Another example in this respect is from the "Treatise on Law" in the *Summa Theologica*. As mentioned before, Aquinas divides what he calls a "natural inclination" into three classes. The first two kinds are inclinations humans share with non-humans; the third set of inclinations are those peculiar to human beings: "… there is in man an inclination to good according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him; thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God and to live in society."[39]

It is very remarkable that in his representative account of human inclinations, Aquinas chooses the phrase "live in society" rather than "live in *political* society". The fact suggests that Aquinas does not feel it necessary to explicitly indicate that the "society" concerned here is the *political* society as distinct from other forms of human relationships. He is merely concerned to establish the existence of a general inclination in human nature toward society.

This is the least, and indeed, the most we can say about this sentence. Any further attempt of interpretation provokes controversy. The key question is: how are we to interpret the term "society" in this sentence? Here we have another example regarding how Aquinas is open to radically different interpretations. Finnis, following his Lockean interpretation of Aquinas's notion of the state, argues that Aquinas intends this "society" to mean non-political society as opposed to the political state, "Aquinas's many statements that we are 'naturally political animals' have nothing particularly to do with *political* community"[40](original emphasis). On the other hand, the defenders of the traditional interpretation, such as Dewan, insists that the term "society" refers to "political society," "just as the inclination to know was focused by Thomas on knowing about God, so one would do well to consider that the society he has in mind is the most perfect form of society, the complete society. And that, as Thomas teaches, is the *civitas*, not just the friendship found within the limits of domesticity."[41] Finnis overstates his case. As we have seen in the previous section,

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[37] This gives us a good example of why we should be careful when trying to infer Aquinas's political thought from his comments on Aristotle, since he tends only to paraphrase Aritotle's idea rather than state his own ideas.

[38] D'Entreves, *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought*, p. 25 no.1.

[39] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q.94, a.2c.

[40] Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, p. 246.

[41] See Dewan, "St. Thomas, John Finnis, and the Political Good", *The Thomist* p. 368.

Aquinas's state is different from the Lockean one in that it aims at the perfection of the citizen. In this sense, it is difficult to draw a clear line between society and the state by reducing the latter's role to securing the external order. However, Dewan's interpretation makes little sense either. If Aquinas intends the term "society" to refer to political society, why does he not make it clear? After all, when speaking of the inclination to know Aquinas explicitly indicates that it concerns "the truth about God."

Moreover, Aquinas's conception of the common good also evokes confusion. In Aquinas's system, the universal order of law and community constitute two focuses, whose relationship with each other could become a problem. Hence Aquinas's question: "Whether the law is always something directed to the common good?" His answer has to proceed in two steps. In the first step, he claims that "the law belongs to that which is a principle of human acts," and the first principle of human life is the ultimate end, namely, "bliss or happiness," therefore the law must take into consideration this ultimate end. Then the second step: "Moreover, since every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect; and since one man is a part of the perfect community, the law must needs regard properly the relationship to universal happiness."

Thus law must be directed to the common good.[42] This discussion typically illustrates the tension between the universal law and community. It seems natural to think of law as directed to the individual's acts. By contrast, one has to give a reasoning to connect law with the common good.

What is worth noting is that the second step can hardly count as an argument: "since every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect; and since one man is a part of the perfect community…" Although Aquinas immediately refers to Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, his quotation is restricted to Aristotle's two abstract claims: justice serves to procure the happiness of the city, and the city is the perfect community. As I repeatedly indicate, Aquinas has no account concerning public politics as the characteristic activity of human beings in the city. Therefore he cannot substantially establish the significance of the political community for human happiness. What we have is no more than various abstract and thus empty assertions.

Froelich tries hard to anchor Aquinas's common good on the political community. However, he cannot find substantive discussion in Aquinas about the political nature of the common good. So his basic strategy is to stress the all-inclusive nature of the common good, and then equate it with the political community, since the political community, by definition, is the perfect and complete community. For instance, he writes, "Thomas identifies this more perfect common good as the life of political community itself, for as a member of this communion of persons, just as within a friendship, the individual finds an essential element of his or her flouring". The individual may find an element of his or her flourishing in the

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[42] *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q 90, a 2.

communion, but Froelich cannot specify why the communion must be political community and show what is so special about the political community for human flourishing.

Here again we see the ambiguity of the conception of the common good invites radically different interpretations. Finnis will take this as evidence for his argument that Aquinas's state is merely instrumental to the pursuit of human flourishing. On the other hand, the other side will stress Aquinas's repeated assertion of the end of the political community. In fact, this unspecific character of the common good is quite common to the Thomists. The same case can be made about Maritain.[43] As indicated above, it is largely due to the separation between a universal order of law and a particular community.

CONCLUSION

Aquinas's theory presents a universal order of law. Based on this account he argues for the continuity between human order and divine order, between all levels of community, and between this world and final life in God. It is also this continuity, however, that renders the political nature of the political community obscure.

Aristotle can capture the political character of the city because he gives prominence to ruling or sharing in rule, the characteristic activity of human beings in the city. This understanding also gives substance to his doctrine of the city's naturalness. By contrast, Aquinas places the emphasis on judicial government to the exclusion of public politics, thus losing sight of Aristotle's notion of the characteristic activity of human beings. Although he repeats Aristotle's abstract principles, including man's natural inclination to society and the moral end of the political community, he cannot give them a substantial account. In the context of Aquinas's system, it is difficult to argue that living in the political community constitutes an integral part of human flourishing.

As a result, in Aquinas's thought the nature of the political community is essentially vague and ambiguous. On the one hand, his state is not really Aristotelian because he cannot appreciate the significance of sharing in rule for the pursuit of human perfection; on the other hand, his state is not really Lockean because he sees human perfection as the end of the discipline of laws. In the debate we have discussed in this paper, neither side pays sufficient attention to the ambiguity of Aquinas's view. To better understand Aquinas's political thought, this ambiguity must be further explored.

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[43] Jacques Maritan, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966).

CHAPTER II

NEWMAN'S QUEST FOR HUMAN AUTHENTICITY

PETER M. COLLINS

INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper suggests two explicit questions: 1) what does "human authenticity" mean theoretically to John Henry Newman? 2) how does a human being actually become an authentic person? A third question is implicit: which elements in this theoretical and practical quest are subject to change, and which features can be considered permanent? This particular topic and these questions were prompted by an invitation to attend the 2010 Fall Seminar sponsored by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP), The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.[1] The title of the seminar is "Human Identity or Nature: Stable and/or Changing?" The statement of the challenge to be confronted in the five-week (fifteen meetings) seminar is initiated with the following paragraph: "The tragedies of the last century have made the definition and justification of absolute human rights a most pressing necessity. But the task of understanding human identity or nature and its authenticity or dignity which these rights are meant to defend has proven elusive, even as the need intensifies. Indeed, in some ways we may be moving ever further from achieving this task."

In the remainder of this statement of the issue(s) to be addressed according to the prospectus, it is noted that radical changes in the use of the term "nature" have occurred during the past two hundred years, seriously affecting and altering attendant adjectives such as "divine" and "human." Despite these changes, it is suggested by the CRVP statement of challenge that "Nature, and hence the human essence of identity, as the proper and *unchanging* object of the human intellect, is the metaphysical or existential basis for human dignity and hence human rights" (emphasis added). The next paragraph continues with two central questions: "But therein lies our dilemma, for to the degree that human nature or identity is stable must it be said to be immutable and thereby an impediment to human progress? Or, if changing, to what rights does it entitle one: when and for how long?"[2]

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[1] The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP) was founded and has been guided by George McLean, OMI, for many years.

[2] These citations are taken directly from the "Challenge" described in "An Invitation, The Fall Seminar, Human Identity or Nature: Stable and/or Changing? October 18-November 19, 2010, Washington, DC."

In aiming to contribute to the search within the discussions of the seminar for principles concerning human authenticity which preserve human dignity and rights, promoting genuine human fulfillment, I propose this brief investigation of selected aspects of the thought of John Henry Newman (1801-1890). In general, the aim is to understand Newman's theoretical description of human authenticity in accord with selected sermons (primarily from the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* of 1828-1843),[3] with significant attention to how this authenticity is lived out in the process of human knowing (as he describes it in the *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 1870).[4] The consistency between the theoretical description of an authentic human being and the practical process of genuine human living (specified in acts of knowing) will be analyzed. Therefore, the thesis of this investigation can be stated as follows: Newman's quest for human authenticity involves *theory* and *practice* in a manner manifesting *change* and *permanence*, the focus of his search being the struggle of the human person to *know* God the Creator – and to *live* accordingly. The next section (II) of the paper, then, is devoted to Newman's theory of the "good life," involving human authenticity according to the selected sermons. Section III pertains to authenticity in human decision-making which he explains in the *Grammar of Assent*. In the Conclusion (IV) Newman's extraordinary emphases upon subjectivity and objectivity in human knowing and living, along with some important ramifications, will be analyzed. Finally, further attention will be afforded the question of permanence and change in Newman's theory and practice of authentic human being and knowing.

Before proceeding to the next section (pertaining to the "good life"), some background will be provided concerning Newman's two religious conversions and the major sources to be utilized. Newman's absolute faith in the God of Christianity is related to the fact of his two religious conversions, the first in 1816, when, as a fifteen-year-old, he became convinced that true religion (Christianity) requires religious doctrines. He came to believe that one must embrace specific religious beliefs, which he did then as an Anglican, in order to be an authentically religious person (one directed toward genuine happiness in this life enroute to the next). About 1840, as a clergyman of the Church of England and tutor in Oxford's Oriel College, he became involved, along with a group of Oxford dons, in an effort of moral and doctrinal reform in the Church of England. A central doctrinal question arose concerning whether Anglican teaching could be authenticated by a historical connection to the Fathers of the Early Church. Participation in the Oxford Movement (1841–1845) culminated in his acceptance into the Roman Catholic Church at Littlemore, just outside Oxford in 1845. He resigned from Oriel and St. Mary's University church

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[3] John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 8 vols., Vol. I (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1966).

[4] John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, A division of Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955).

(as required), eventually became a Catholic priest, joined the Oratorians of St. Philip Neri, and founded an Oratory in Birmingham.

While John Henry Newman was a "man of God," he also was a "man in the world," a fact patently evident in these selections from the *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. Although these sermons predate Newman's conversion from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, it has been said that in the legacy of Newman's written works they form one of the strongest bonds of the link that Newman himself represents between the church that he left and the one that he joined in 1845. In fact, on the basis of this idea, he allowed "his lifelong friend and curate of Anglican days," William Copeland, to publish the aforementioned volume.[5] Further evidence of Newman's rootedness in this world while reaching out to the Divine can be found in his theory of knowledge, which is developed most fully in *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, published in 1870, twenty-five years after his conversion to Catholicism. This will be considered very briefly in the third part of this paper in order to point out one example of how, in Newman's view, (Christian) faith and reason must be united in any successful effort to know the world and to know God as means to achieving human authenticity, which is inevitably accompanied by happiness in this world and in the next.

THEORY OF THE "GOOD LIFE": HUMAN AUTHENTICITY IN SELECTED SERMONS

John Henry Newman's search for human authenticity entails both theory and practice. His teaching itself is a matter of the word and his own personal example. The former, of course, put forth a moral ideal, one which accounted for the facts of his times and something "beyond." A recent example of this notion of ideal has been offered by Charles Taylor in a 1991 book, entitled *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Taylor defines a moral ideal as "a picture of what a better or higher mode of life would be, where 'better' and 'higher' are defined not of what we happen to desire or need, but offer a standard of what we ought to desire."[6] A most crucial distinction raised here,

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[5] Lawrence F. Barmann, S.J., "Introduction," in Lawrence F. Barmann, S.J., ed., *Newman at St. Mary's: A Selection of the Parochial and Plain Sermons* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1962), xii.

[6] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 16. What we "ought to desire," according to Taylor, is self-development, something *beyond* the self, dialogue with others, and an openness to horizons of significance (these horizons being backgrounds of intelligibility which are noble, independent of my will, and meaningful in shaping my life). Not incidentally, the term "authenticity" used here also was inspired by this volume of Taylor. While his conception of authenticity in this book does not approach the religious dimension of Newman's view, it can be noted that Taylor proceeds in a manner not entirely dissimilar to that of

essential to any notion of "ideal," is that between what *has been* and what *is*, on one hand, and what *ought to be*, on the other hand. This notion is so central that one could contend that an ideal is identifiable with what ought to be.

Hilary Putnam, in *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life*, provides a perspective on the notion of the ideal in explicating the "moral perfectionism" of the Jewish philosophers Rosenzweig, Buber, and Levinas. He says that these three advert to such ancient questions as "Am I living as I am supposed to live?" and "Am I making the best effort I can to reach my unattained but attainable self?" These three philosophers are perfectionists in their searching for the good life "because they always describe the commitment we *ought to have* in ways that seem impossibly demanding; but they are realists, because they realize that it is only by keeping an 'impossible' demand in view that one can strive for one's 'unattained but attainable self'" (emphasis added).[7] It might be added that while a perfect ideal (of the "good life") is impossible to attain because absolute perfection in the human state is unreachable, striving for the ideal can be seen as useful because no one is *completely* aware of personal limits.

While the "good life" does not necessarily connote an other-directed, moral life – or any particular direction – neither does the notion of authenticity; both have to be analyzed, interpreted and directed toward certain meanings and actions. In introducing a book entitled *The Good Life*, an anthology of positions in this regard, the editor wonders "why this question is of pressing importance, in the modern world." Citing E.H. Erikson's view that the "contemporary patient 'suffers most under the problem of what he should believe in and who he should – or, indeed might – be or become,'" the editor of this collection of visions of the good life associates this problem with such phenomena as feelings of meaninglessness, emptiness, depression, unrelatedness, disillusionment, cynicism, purposelessness, and hopelessness. He concludes, "As this situation shows, the question of the good life is more than just an optional entertainment for the leisured elite; it is a dire necessity for those trying to go on living in a harsh and often baffling world."[8] To me this kind of concern falls clearly under the heading of awareness of human identity, or

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Newman: from a pronounced emphasis upon the individual and personal to the need to "go beyond" subjectivity toward an objective reality.

[7] Hilary Putnam, *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life*: *Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Wittgenstein* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 59, 72.

[8] Charles Guignon, "Introduction," *The Good Life*, ed. Charles Guignon (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999), xi-xii. Taylor introduces *The Ethics of Authenticity* with a summary of contemporary problems in terms of a threefold malaise: 1) individualism, which diminishes meaning; 2) instrumental reason, which eclipses ends; and 3) "soft despotism," which threatens freedom. See Chapter I, "Three Malaises."

clarification of an ideal of human authenticity. John Henry Newman has some answers – and a clear direction in which to search for further answers.

The orientation of Newman's search for human authenticity – his own, and that of his parishioners and students – can be located in two kinds of sources: his preaching and writing, on one hand, and his life, on the other hand. In fact, his preaching and writing overlap to some extent because, as an Anglican, he always wrote out his sermons, whereas, after becoming a Catholic priest of the Oratory, only those sermons prepared for special occasions were written out and submitted for publication. As noted above, the focus here will be on selected written sermons given at St. Mary's university church in Oxford and published in the volume, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. For a somewhat more practical application of the principles, we will consider not his life, as such, but his theory of knowledge as found in *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. While this is more theory, it points to a plan for rendering life-determining (as well as other) decisions. Before citing selections from the sermons themselves, some background concerning them along with their basic aim and spirit will be clarified.

The first of eight volumes of the one hundred ninety-one sermons constituting the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* was published in 1834. The basic aim of these sermons must be appreciated in the context of the central motive of Newman's entire life: "the Triumph of Truth, Christ the Logos of God, in his battle for the minds and hearts of individuals, and, ultimately, for the world as a whole." He called his lifelong enemy Liberalism, better known today as secularism, understood by its representatives as the promotion of a world without God.[9] The spirit of these sermons suggests a central principle at stake in Newman's appreciation of the process of humanization: Christ, he says, "calls us through our natural faculties and through the circumstances of life" in this world.[10] The human response requires a struggle and a trial. The dualism is evident: the *material* world is a sign and a type of the *spiritual* world. To Newman the primacy always went to the latter because the key to understanding the world is the Cross of Christ: we must live a spiritual life in a material world.[11] To achieve this, we must bring together another dualism: we must *know* what is true and real – and *live* in a manner faithful to that reality. This reality is God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the human person in the world must attempt to live the life of Christ Crucified.[12]

The assertion that Newman was "an intellectual who distrusted the intellect" foreshadows central features of his theory of knowledge, but in the present context suggests the subordination of the intellect to a "moral sense." This approach is fundamental to appreciating our selected sermons, and forecasts the necessity of a Christianization which requires the world as

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[9] Barmann, "Introduction," *Newman at St. Mary's*, xi.
[10] *Ibid*., xx.
[11] *Ibid*., xvii.
[12] *Ibid*., xv.

well as a certain detachment from the world. It embodies the practical principle that the more important decisions of life are never made solely by means of strictly (inductive or deductive) logical reasoning.[13]

The primary purpose of the following citations from Newman's sermons is to assist us in investigating details of the meaning to which he gave the "good life." How does one think about human living in order to become an authentic human being? To Newman, as we know, "success" here signifies the attainment of temporary happiness in this life and eternal happiness in the next life. It entails "unifying" *material* and *spiritual* realities in *theory* and in *practice*, as noted. The dual realities refer to the constitution of the unified human person, as such: a physical body animated by a spiritual soul. This dualism also designates the material world in contrast to the "higher" world or the supernatural, all that pertains directly to the Supreme Reality or God. The second dualism, theory and practice, refers to how human beings think about human authenticity in relationship to how they live their lives. The ideal of "unity" in the first case, material and spiritual, entails being in this world somehow in such a manner that enables one to know and to meet God. This process involves both thinking and acting. The reflection of Newman on the matter (of the good life) we find in a limited manner in these selected sermons. For the living or doing side of this, we will consider in the next section not his life, but aspects of his theory of knowledge which represent his guide to rendering life-directing decisions. What we need to seek further (especially in the conclusion) is the degree of consistency between the Newmanian theory in the selected sermons and the practical living suggested in his theory of knowledge.

The editor of *A Newman Synthesis*[14] has chosen to cite short passages of Newman's sermons, primarily from *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, in a series of chapters. My choice of passages comes from three consecutive chapters: XVI – "The Next World," XVII – "This World," and XVIII – "Between this World and the Next World." An important feature to note is the virtual inseparability of the three topics, a factor in itself suggesting from Newman's viewpoint the ideal of unity by living in this world while reaching beyond it toward the next world.

"The Next World"

Newman wishes to highlight the pre-eminence of the next world and does so by contrasting it with this world, which is merely accidental to our

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[13] Owen Chadwick, *Newman* Past Masters Series (Oxford, New York; Oxford University Press, 1983), 36-38. See also Fabio Attard, S.D.B., *Conscience in the "Parochial and Plain Sermons" of John Henry Newman* (Valletta, Malta: Midsea Books, Ltd., 2008), 224.

[14] Erich Przywara, S.J., ed., *A Newman Synthesis* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945).

being, an "outward stage" he calls it, serving as a trial for realizing the fulfillment of our being with God, in the next world.

> We should remember that this life is scarcely more than an accident of our being – that it is no part of ourselves, who are immortal; that we are immortal spirits … and that this life is but a sort of outward stage, on which we act for a time, and which is only sufficient and only intended to answer the purpose of trying whether we will serve God or no. (*Parochial and Plain Sermons* [hereafter P.S.], iv, 221-22) (P.285)[15]

Newman denigrates this world as "disappointing" and "unfinished," and yet, as a sign of hope, a foreshadowing (in the following passage) of the splendor and grandeur of the next world.

> To those who live by faith, everything they see speaks of that future world; the very glories of nature, the sun, moon, and stars, and the richness and beauty of the earth, are as types and figures witnessing and teaching the invisible things of God. All that we see is destined one day to burst forth into heavenly bloom, and to be transfigured into immortal glory. Heaven at present is out of sight, but in due time … will this visible creation fade away before those greater splendors which are behind it, and on which it at present depends. (P.S., iv, 223) (P.286)

Newman leaves no doubt that this world provides the possibility of – and is a necessity for – "reaching out" to the next world. It is our duty to follow our nature in striving for that end. However, *how* do we do that? How do we attain in and through this world the joys of meeting God in the next world, our ultimate end? It cannot be done, of course, without faith in the word of God, accompanied by the Christian virtues of hope and charity. But, what more practically can be done to authenticate one's life as a Christian? In fact, Newman adverts explicitly to the essence of a Christian.

> This is the very definition of a Christian – one who looks for Christ; not one who looks for gain, or distinction, or power, or pleasure, or comfort, but who looks 'for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.' This, according to Scripture, is the essential mark, this is the foundation of a Christian, from which everything else follows…. (*Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, 278-79) (Pp. 293-94)

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[15] Each citation will be followed by the editor's reference (in parentheses) to the original source, followed by the page number(s) in *A Newman Synthesis* on which the citation is found.

The true Christian is one who "watches" for Christ and not only that, but also one who "ventures out," entailing risk and the necessity of faith.

> …true Christians, whoever they are, watch, and inconsistent Christians do not…. This then is to watch; to be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen; to live in the thought of Christ as He once came, and as He will come again; to desire His second coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of His first. (P.S., iv, 322-25) (Pp. 295-96)

> Our duty as Christians lies in making ventures for eternal life without the absolute certainty of success…. This indeed is the very meaning of venture…. Yes … this is the very reason why *faith* is singled out from other graces, and honoured as the especial means of our justification, because its presence implies that we have a heart to make a venture. If, then, faith be the essence … of a Christian life, and if it be what I have described, it follows that our duty lies in risking upon Christ's word what we have for what we have not … trusting in Him to fulfill His promise…. (P.S., iv, 295-96, 299) (Pp. 286-87)

In conclusion to Newman's thoughts on (the path to) the next world, we find the ideal Christian humbly waiting for Christ, watching for Christ, and venturing out to meet Christ. While Newman sees this world as a springboard to the next world, our immersion in the former is not optional. While he has not neglected this world in describing the next world, Chapter XVI is focused upon this world – without, as has been made clear, attention to the next world as well.

"This World"

Even a passage focused quite entirely upon this world suggests by its characterization of our earthly existence that we ought to be searching for something better. Created good by God, this world has been darkened by the sins of Adam and Eve – which ought to affect our attitude toward it.

> It concerns us (I say) much to be told that this world is, after all, in spite of first appearances and partial exceptions, a dark world; else we shall be obliged to learn it (and, sooner or later, we must learn it) by sad *experience*; whereas, if we are forewarned, we shall unlearn false notions of its excellence, and be saved the disappointment which follows them. And, therefore, it is that Scripture omits even what might be said in praise of this world's pleasures – not denying their value, such

as it is, or forbidding us to use them religiously, but knowing that we are sure to find them out for ourselves without being told of them, and that our danger is on the side, not of undervaluing them, but overvaluing them…. (P.S., i, 326-29) (Pp. 310-11)

In any case, it ought not surprise us, Newman says, to find disappointments outweighing successes in this life – it happened even to the saints! Nevertheless, darkened as it is, this "world's business" possesses inherent value in developing our relationship with God and attaining our ultimate end in union with Him. While our "earthly lot" is subordinate to God the Creator, *we have no other path to God except through our terrestrial existence* – a reality which must govern our earthly activities.

Look through the Bible, and you will find God's servants, even though they began with success, end with disappointment; not that God's purposes or His instruments fail, but that the time for reaping what we have sown is hereafter, not here; that here there is no great visible fruit in any one man's lifetime. …. Even in the successes of the first Christian teachers, the Apostles, the same rule is observed. (P.S., viii, 129-31) (Pp. 312-13)

It is a heavenly ambition which prompts us to soar above the vulgar and ordinary *motives* and *tastes* of the world, the while we abide our calling; like our Savior who, though the Son of God and partaking of His Father's fullness, yet all His youth long was obedient to His earthly parents, and learned a humble trade. But it is a sordid, narrow, miserable ambition to attempt to *leave* our earthly lot, to be wearied or ashamed of what we are, to hanker after greatness of station, or novelty of life. (P.S., iv, 162-63) (P. 304)

Quite characteristically, Newman claims that our mundane endeavors in this world must be carried on with "the heart."

There is one God, and He is Lord of all we are, and all we have; and, therefore, all we do must be stamped with His signature. We must begin, indeed, with the heart; for out of the heart proceed all good and evil; but while we begin with the heart we must not end with the heart. We must not give up this visible world as if it came of the evil one. It is our duty to change it into the kingdom of heaven. We must manifest the kingdom of heaven upon earth. The light of Divine truth must proceed *from* our hearts and shine out *upon* everything we are and everything we do. (P.S. vi, 304-05) (P. 303)

On other occasions Newman also spoke very negatively of this world: in addition to the darkness of it, mentioned above, he also refers to the human being as "a stranger on earth, who has but hired a lodging in it for a season," conducive to an indifference to "the course of human affairs," promoting the person simply "to look on instead of taking part in them." (P.S., v, 62 – 65) (P. 314) This can occur out of frustration and hopelessness; however, in this context, Newman is considering the Christian believer who realizes that an authentic human life rests upon the fact that God "does not separate us from this world, though He calls us out of it. He does not reject our old nature when He gives us a new one; He does but redeem it from the curse, and purify it from the infection which came through and is none of His." (P.S., v, 274 – 75) In more practical terms, this means that:

> … as we must not defraud ourselves of Christian privileges, neither need we give up God's temporal blessings. All the beauty of nature … the advantages of civilized life, and the presence of friends … are but one extended and wonderful type of God's benefits in the Gospel. Those who aim at perfection will not reject the gift but add a corrective … they will not refuse the flowers of the earth, but they will toil in plucking up the weeds. (*Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, 123-24) (Pp. 309-10)

In answer to his own question, "What *is* the real key, what is the Christian interpretation of this world?" Newman is clear:

> Crucifixion of the Son of God. It is the death of the Eternal Word of God made flesh which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His Cross has put its due value upon every thing which we see…. The doctrine of the Cross of Christ does but anticipate for us our experience of the world. (P.S., vi, 84-85, 87-88, 93) (Pp. 311-12)

Since the Redemption by Christ's suffering and death on the Cross (as well as the Resurrection and Ascension) as the foundation of the nature and destiny of every human person, it becomes possible for each person to realize that nature – with supernatural aid from the Redeemer – by making appropriate choices in the course of earthly existence. What are those choices that constitute a positive response to the invitation of Christ to the heavenly banquet, and what does the application of those choices in an authentic Christian life look like? These questions are addressed in further detail in the Chapter XVIII of *A Newman Synthesis*.

"Between this World and the Next World"

We know from what Newman has said in the above passages

concerning the "next world" and "this world" that the latter is a *necessary* path to the former: living in a certain way in this world enables us to meet God – signifying an authentic human life of temporal happiness enroute to eternal happiness with the Creator. Some evidence for the necessity of living in this world as a means to meeting God lies in the fact that God acts in accord with nature – even insofar as miracles represent an "encounter" with nature rather than a suppression of it.

> When Providence would make a Revelation, He does not begin anew, but uses the existing system; He does not visibly send an angel, but He commissions or inspires one of our own fellows. …. Nor does He interfere with its natural growth, development, or dependence on things visible. …. He does but modify, quicken, or direct the powers of nature or the laws of society. Or if He works miracles, still it is without superseding the ordinary course of things. …. Thus the great characteristic of Revelation is addition, not substitution. Things look the same as before, though an invisible power has taken hold of them. This power does not unclothe the creature, but, clothes it. …. The Kingdom of Christ, though not of this world, yet it is in the world and has a visible, material, social shape. It consists of men, and it has developed according to the laws under which the combinations of men develop. It has an external aspect similar to all other kingdoms." (*Essays Critical and Historical*, 144-45) (Pp. 333-35)

In keeping with the same theme, and as noted above, careful observation of noteworthy features of earthly existence point to the need for a fulfillment of this life, for a higher kind of life. The next two passages underline this state of affairs.

> Who can live any time in the world, pleasant as it may seem on first entering it, without discovering that it is a weariness, and that if this life is worth anything, it is because it is the passage to another? It needs no great religion to feel this; it is a self-evident truth to those who have much experience of the world. The only reason why all do not feel it is that they have not lived long enough to feel it; and those who feel it more than others have but been thrown into circumstances to feel it more. (P.S., vii, 158) (P. 340)

> The earth that we see does not satisfy us; but it is a beginning; it is but a promise of something beyond it; even when it is gayest, with all its blossoms on, and shows most touchingly what lies hid in it, yet it is not enough. We know much more lies hid in it than we see…. We are looking for the coming of

> the day of God, when all this outward world, fair though it be, shall perish; when the heavens shall be burnt, and the earth melt away. We can bear the loss, for we know that it will be but the removing of a veil. We know that to remove the world which is seen, will be the manifestation of the world which is not seen. We know that what we see is as a screen hiding from us God and Christ, and His Saints and Angels. And we earnestly desire and pray for the dissolution of all that we see, from our longing after that which we do not see. (P.S., iv, 210-11) (Pp. 342-43)

As far as human living is concerned, however, we know from Newman that "proceeding" from the happiness (mixed with sadness, etc.) of life in this world to the happiness of life in the next world is not automatic. It requires a proper *use* of this world, not an easy task due especially to the hiddenness of God in this world.

> But the true Christian … knows how to 'use this world as not abusing it.' He *depends* on nothing in this world. He trusts not its sights against the revealed Word … he [the true Christian] reads, in the Book of Revelation, quite enough, not to show him what is coming, but to show him that now, as heretofore, a secret supernatural system is going on *under* this visible scene. And therefore he looks out for Christ, for His present providences, and for His coming.… (P.S., vi, 253-54) (Pp. 338-39)

Newman emphasized to his parishioners in the pews the hiddenness of God in this world: God does exist, and He does reveal himself, but not as obviously as we might wish. He merely whispers and provides signs visible only to those who have the faith to see.

> How, it may be asked, can this world have upon it tokens of His presence, or bring us near to Him? Yet certainly so it is, that in spite of the world's evil, after all, He is in it and speaks through it, though not loudly.… He still is here; He still whispers to us, He still makes signs to us. But His voice is so low, and the world's din is so loud, and His signs are so covert, and the world is so restless, that it is difficult to determine when He addresses us, and what He says. (P.S., ii, 248-50) (Pp. 330-32)

Furthermore, those believers who are using this world in a manner compatible with Christian authenticity hide their inner, religious lives, leaving many disbelievers comfortable in their disbelief.

> I do not mean, of course, that a man can be religious who neglects his duties of this world; but there is an inner and truer life in religious men, beyond the life and conversation which others see, or, in the words of the text, their 'life is hid with Christ in God.' … It is then the duty and the privilege of all disciples of our glorified Saviour to be exalted and transfigured with Him; to live in heaven in their thoughts, motives, aims, desires, likings, prayers, praises, intercessions, even while they are in the flesh; to look like other men, to be busy like other men, to be passed over in the crowd of men, or even to be scorned or oppressed … but the while to have a secret channel of communication with the Most High, a gift the world knows not of; to have their life *hid* with Christ in God. (P.S., vi, 209-11, 214) (P. 327)

Newman attempts to persuade his parishioners of the reality of the presence of God in the world and in the lives of His people. However, this hidden presence in the inner lives of authentic believers makes demands upon them: they must be vigilant in order to maintain their union with God and industrious in order to lead others to the Master. Newman's motivation lies in his conviction that our *only* hope for human fulfillment is found in union with God.

> We are in a world of mystery, with one bright Light before us, sufficient for our proceeding forward through all difficulties. Take away this Light and we are utterly wretched, – we know not where we are, how we are sustained, what will become of us, and of all that is dear to us, what we are to believe and why we are being. (P.S., ii, 215-16) (P. 338)

> No one, man nor woman, can stand alone; we are so constituted by nature; and the world, instead of helping us, is an open adversary. It but increases our solitariness. … we shall need something nearer to us. What is our resource? It is not … in flesh and blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy home which God has given us in His Church; it is that everlasting City in which He has fixed His abode. (P.S., iv, 195-96) (Pp. 341-42)

THEORY OF (RELIGIOUS) KNOWLEDGE: PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN HUMAN AUTHENTICITY

Newman defends religious belief as a *rational* undertaking in his last major publication, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870). His primary goal is to describe the process of coming to believe in a Supreme Being as a *reasonable* endeavor. As it turns out, this theory can be

construed as a process of living the kind of authentic Christian life which we have found in his sermons – at least that is the thesis which the following remarks are intended to explore. Although he developed the method he proposes in connection with religious knowledge, it can be applied to decision-making in all concrete situations – trivial decisions (choosing a restaurant) - as well as momentous or life-determining decisions (choosing a career). Before turning to details of his method, we will summarize some of the central principles proposed above concerning how one becomes an authentic human being – that is, a genuine Christian.

1. God and the world (including human persons) are real. ("God" refers here to the Triune God of Christianity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Who is both Transcendent and Immanent.)

2. Human beings live in the world created by God – and are themselves creatures of God.

3. God and the world (including self) can be known by human persons, but in different manners and never completely.

4. A major challenge confronting human beings is to *use* the world in a manner which will bring them into union with God – the only source of genuine happiness in this life as a means to eternal happiness in the next life.

5. Only a life in union with God is capable of providing genuine happiness – in this life and in the next.

6. "Meeting" the hidden God in and through this world requires time, patience, and effort, as well as the grace of God.

7. Also required in the life of a Christian (according to Newman, although not considered above) is a sound education.

Newman published *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* in 1870, but its central features germinated long before that. For example, he uses the term "illative sense" to signify "the power by which the mind generates and evaluates inference" only in this work on (religious) epistemology. However, its fundamental meaning, which bears "one of the most important and fruitful themes of his life's work," pervades the Oxford University Sermons, preached at St. Mary's (which had become the University church by 1828) from 1826 to 1843. The theme of "instinctively appropriate judgments," identified with the illative sense in the *Grammar of Assent*, also is suggested in the 1852 edition of *The Idea of a University*.[16]

The *Grammar of Assent* is not a theological treatise, as such. Newman is not attempting to provide a logical proof of the truth of Christianity. He concurs to some extent, as noted above, with Taylor in addressing human roots in this world, attended on the part of each person

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[16] Martin Moleski, *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 1, 2, 6, 7.

with overwhelmingly personal (subjective) concerns – which, however, must be transcended in the direction of (objective) horizons of significance. Newman is noted for an extraordinary emphasis upon the personal and subjective accompanied by a similarly extraordinary emphasis upon a reality beyond the personal, namely, the ultimate Being, the God of the Christian tradition. Another point already mentioned must be re-emphasized: while his method (involving the illative sense, as we shall see) is formulated within the context of Christianity, it can become operative in other religious and non-religious traditions. In fact, as also mentioned, it can be employed (and *must be* employed?) in all concrete decision-making, from choosing a snowblower to choosing a husband or wife. Basil Mitchell makes the point, in summarizing Newman's approach, from a quasi-academic viewpoint: "Newman undertakes to show that reason [in Newman's meaning] in matters of religion did not operate differently from the way it worked in history, philosophy, or morality." (Concerning morality, one can consult Aristotle's process of phronesis, which unquestionably influenced Newman.) Mitchell denotes three themes characterizing Newman's approach to human cognition: 1) much human reasoning is tacit and informal; 2) most substantive arguments are cumulative in form; and 3) there is no bar to the possibility of tacit, informal arguments achieving certitude – [17]in fact, is Newman not claiming that (what he calls) informal reasoning represents the *only* means to certitude? However, as we will see, this kind of rational process requires education and experience.

Considering the specific aims of a *Grammar of Assent* depends upon definitions of "assent," "inference," and "reason." "Assent means to Newman an *unconditional* acceptance of a proposition. It can be *notional* assent, which pertains to abstract conclusions; or *real* assent, which concerns concrete realities, that is, specific situations. It should be noted in this regard that Newman always emphasized the importance of the real over the notional in human apprehension. In contrast to assent there is "inference," which is the *conditional* acceptance of a proposition.[18] How are these terms used in the *Grammar of Assent?* In Part One Newman considers the nature of assent and asks whether a person can assent to a proposition without complete understanding. In Part Two he turns attention to the nature of inference and asks whether a person can assent to a proposition without demonstrative proof. To both questions he intends to add, "and be *reasonable* in doing so." Formulated in terms of theses, he is contending in Part One that a person can accept a proposition with certitude even without complete understanding – and do so reasonably, in a rational manner. In Part Two the contention is that a person can accept a proposition with certitude even without demonstrative proof (that is, by empirical evidence

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[17] Basil Mitchell, "Newman as a Philosopher," in Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill, eds., *Newman after a Hundred Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 224-27.

[18] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 209.

or logical processes) – and do so reasonably, in a rational manner.[19] The key to Newman's position in this regard is his expansion of what in his day and in our own is construed by "reasoning." To him "reason" (in general) signifies "the faculty of gaining knowledge without direct perception, or of ascertaining one thing by means of another." [20] *Formal* reasoning is achieved by means of abstract, demonstrative arguments: inductive or empirical as in biology, deductive or logical as in mathematics. *Informal* reasoning (which is the heart of the matter here) is reflection in concrete situations by means of the convergence of probabilities and the illative sense.[21] The "illative sense," a term used by Newman only in the *Grammar of Assent*, is the natural capacity of a human person to appraise the evidence of an argument, and to identify the point at which it warrants a firm conviction (that is, assent or certitude).[22] It likely was suggested to Newman initially by Aristotle's principle of "phronesis," employed in moral matters.[23]

Counteracting the intellectual atmosphere of his time (especially British empiricism), he is subordinating *formal* reasoning to *informal* reflection in determining the most important answers to how one lives.[24]

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[19] Moleski, 16-17. It should be noticed that this agenda leads Newman to insist upon the reasonableness of religious faith, not the truthfulness of the Catholic faith. See also Frederick D. Aquino, *Communities of Informed Judgment: Newman's Illative Sense and Accounts of Rationality* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 49; and Charles Stephen Dessain, *John Henry Newman* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1966), 151-52.

[20] John Henry Newman, "Implicit and Explicit Reason" (1840), *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* [Oxford University Sermons] (1826-1843) (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1966), 257.

[21] Blaise Pascal foreshadowed Newman in clarifying the necessity of a clear distinction between these two kinds of reasoning. For example, see Ernest Mortimer, *Blaise Pascal: The Life and Work of a Realist* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 207. See also Alban Krailsheimer, *Pascal*, Past Masters Series (New York: Hill and Wang, A division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), 46, 48; and Peter M. Collins, "Philosophy and Humanism," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* (37, February, 2008), 181. One edition of the primary source is Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* Trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1966).

[22] See Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., *Newman* (London, New York: Continuum, 2005), 39-40, for a succinct description.

[23] Moleski, 3; John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, in Vincent F. Blehl, S.J., ed., *The Essential Newman* (New York: Mentor-Omega Books, The New American Library, 1963), 326-27. See also Aquino, fn. 37, 70.

[24] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, in Blehl, ed., *The Essential Newman*, 313. Newman asserts that "Abstract arguments is always dangerous … I prefer to go by the *facts*" (emphasis added).

While the former is not denied its own significance in certain endeavors (as in laboratory sciences) and a potentially serious role in informal reasoning, it cannot produce certitude in concrete matters.[25] How, then, does one choose a religion or a career, or which football game to watch? Two preliminary comments are in order. First, this process of informal reasoning is not open to analysis. That is, you cannot trace the steps of the process which have been undertaken in order to validate your conclusion – in fact, neither can you pre-plan the process in accord with some step-by-step program. In other words, an analysis of the process is *not* necessary to the integrity of the process, or to reaching a true conclusion in a rationally acceptable manner.[26] Secondly, Newman stands by an assertion which he formulated with thinkers such as Hume and Locke in view: "We must take the constitution of the mind as we find it, and not as we judge it ought to be."[27] Newman is searching for how, in fact, we *do* think in concrete situations. While he admired Locke in many ways, he concluded that Locke and Hume were unrealistic in their assessments of fundamental human decision-making. So, what does the "real and necessary" method look like?[28] His analogies are helpful: the strands of wire in a cable, and a mountaineer scaling a cliff.[29]

The illative sense is a key factor and is related to Newman's comment, "How a man reasons is as much a mystery as how he remembers."[30] What is this process of reasoning, and in what sense is it mysterious? As defined above, the illative sense is a natural capacity which has two functions in enabling a person to render a certain decision in a concrete situation: 1) to appraise the evidence of an argument, and 2) to identify the point at which this evidence warrants a firm conviction, or assent. The exercise of this natural human capacity then depends for successful functioning upon "the *cumulation of probabilities* independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the particular case

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[25] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 163, 216.

[26] Newman, "Implicit and Explicit Reason" (1840), *Oxford University Sermons*, 257. See also Thomas Vargish, *Newman: The Contemplation of Mind* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), 35.

[27] Vargish, 32-33.

[28] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 229-30.

[29] Newman, "Implicit and Explicit Reason," Oxford University Sermons, 257. Newman describes how one "scales the mountain of truth: "The mind ranges to and fro, and spreads out, and advances with a quickness which has become a proverb, and a subtlety and versatility which baffle investigation. It passes on from point to point, gaining one by some indication; another on a probability; then availing itself of an association; then falling back on some received law; next seizing on testimony; then committing itself to some popular impression, or some inward instinct, or some obscure memory …" until the peak of the mountain (conclusion) has been attained.

[30] Newman, "Implicit and Explicit Reason" (1840), Oxford University Sermons, 257.

which is under review, probabilities too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible." [31] Modeled upon Aristotle's "phronesis," the "directing, controlling, determining principle" in moral matters, [32] Newman extends his method to all matters of decision in concrete situations (particularly, of course, pertaining to religious faith). He refers, interpreting Aristotle and establishing grounds for his own view, to an "authoritative oracle … in the mind of the individual." [33] What does this process look like in action? Imagine a gentleman in search of a wife – he, of course, has come thus far by means of the same process. At this point, he becomes sufficiently attracted to a young lady to consider marrying her – and she is tending to reciprocate his leanings. The physical attraction is clear enough, their interests are compatible, her parents like him and vice versa, etc. However, she has some disturbing features such as an intolerance of Asian people, a missing front tooth, bad breath, etc. As luck would have it, however, she one day wins one million dollars in the lottery. Needing money to pay debts, to buy a car and a home, etc., this, crass as it may seem, turns the tide in favor of marriage: the wedding is soon planned and becomes a reality.

This is, according to one interpreter, "a non-rule-governed process of reasoning, which accumulates probabilities and renders informed assessment about concrete matters," [34] dependent upon an "entire complex of faculties by which we are able to judge truth in the concrete." This complex of faculties goes by the name (again) of the illative sense, and is a very personal, non-verbal process which employs logical reason (induction and deduction), imagination, and emotions (as love and fear) – but not identified with any of them in particular. [35] The illative sense functions "in every step of the process" of concrete decision-making and is "a rule to itself … [appealing] to no judgment beyond its own." In fact, "in no class of concrete reasonings, whether in experimental science, historical research, or theology, is there any test of ultimate truth or error in our inferences besides the trustworthiness of the Illative Sense that gives them its sanction." [36] Excellence in the proper use of the illative sense obviously is not equivalent to the appearance of a whim or instinct. It is dependent upon education and

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[31] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 229-30.

[32] Moleski, 3. See also Aquino, 70 (fn. 37).

[33] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, in Blehl, ed., *The Essential Newman*, 326-27. See also Dulles, 39-40.

[34] Aquino, 48.

[35] Vargish, 67-68.

[36] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 213, 281. See also William J. Wainwright, *Reason and the Heart: A Prolegomenon to a Critique of Passional Reason* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 71, who says that "an exercise of the illative sense is needed to grasp formal argument's *force*."

practice in the development of certain kinds of habits. [37] However, two persons with similarly qualitative education and experience in the same realm of inquiry could *reasonably* derive opposing conclusions. How could this happen? First and foremost, the enormously *personal* character of the process must be borne in mind. No two persons and no two situations are identical: the persons differ in past experiences, emotions, preferences of many kinds, and first principles. The last (first principles) refers to notional "propositions with which we start in reasoning on any given matter." For example, there is right and wrong – self-evident because there is no other evidence. [38]

A few further comments might help to illuminate Newman's process of informal reasoning in reaching certitude in concrete matters. First of all, he emphasizes the significance of love as a means to certitude. This is especially evident in attracting one to Christianity in view of the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ – and, analogously, to the love of a woman in attracting a man to marriage. [39] Secondly, this feature in itself underlines the role of *persuasion* toward a conclusion rather than *proof* of a conclusion. As we have seen, no one can trace the "steps" taken toward a conclusion and prove to anyone that this is right; on the other hand, no one can prove this person wrong. [40] Does this mean that there are no criteria for ascertaining the quality of the decision? No. One commentator suggests three criteria consonant with Newman's own assessment of a positive stance: 1) concurrence of many private judgments; 2) overcoming objections, clearing up difficulties, uniting dispersed facts, consistency with other things known, etc.; and 3) successful practice (a pragmatic principle). [41] This method of Newman clarifies his view that probability is not opposed to certitude; on the contrary, only by means of probabilities do we attain certitude. This method, as employed by Newman, illustrates that the nature and extent of subjectivity and variations among human persons is not evidence or disproof of objective truth. In fact, for Newman, only this engagement of one's internal, personal consciousness of self can pave the way to a certain judgment concerning objective values, such as those of the Christian

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[37] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, in Blehl, ed., *The Essential Newman*, 326-27. See also Dulles, 39-40.

[38] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 66, 69, 216. These first principles, Newman makes clear, are notions rather than images and are abstractions from facts. They are not basic truths prior to experience and reasoning, as innate ideas. See also Aquino, 83.

[39] Vargish, 55, 66-71.

[40] Moleski, 48. As the father of one of my former students said of his son's marriage a few years after the fact, no one who knew them thought that this relationship would work, but they are as happy as one can imagine.

[41] Wainwright, 68-69.

virtues.[42] In other words, truth for Newman is not relative – although the illative sense clearly is.[43]

CONCLUSION

Two questions remain to be considered in conclusion to this analysis of Newman's search for human authenticity. One pertains to the manner in which his conception of human nature in the selected sermons is exemplified in a practical kind of way in his informal method of reasoning. A second major question to be addressed briefly concerns changing and permanent features in human nature, as Newman sees them. The approach to the first question presumes the theoretical meaning of Newman's view of the "good life" extracted from selected sermons in the second section above. To begin, we can recall his meaning of "human authenticity," a major challenge confronting each of us is to *use* this world in a manner which will engender our union with God, the only source of genuine happiness in this life as a means to eternal happiness in the next life. It might be necessary to return to some of those passages cited above, primarily from his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* of his Anglican years, in order to appreciate two features of the process: the importance of living and valuing life in this world, while simultaneously stretching beyond this world to meet God through faith, hope, and charity. The paradox of the simultaneity of this effort is suggested, in part, by the fact observed above that Newman's consideration of *this* world in these sermons necessarily seems to entail attention to the *next* world, and vice versa. This undoubtedly stems from the fundamental fact of Newman's experience of God as Transcendent and Immanent: God the Creator is in this world, within each one of his faithful creatures; but God is also a Supreme, Ultimate Being who transcends this world. The idea of human persons becoming truly themselves in the image and likeness of God, therefore, happens in this world. Humans meet God while still in this world.

Of what does this "meeting" consist? By what means is it achieved? The more complete approach to Newman's response would require an examination of his entire assessment of the "Christian life."[44] However, what I propose here is to consider how his theory of (religious) knowledge, especially from the *Grammar of Assent* as just surveyed, provides a glimpse of this process of *becoming* a genuine Christian, and thereby an authentic human being, that is, a person directed to self-fulfillment in a pattern ordained by God. It must be remembered, as a preface to this consideration, that the method of knowing in question is what Newman calls "informal reasoning," which is a non-rule-governed process, incapable of reflective analysis, by means of which the human person, through the illative sense, is

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[42] Dulles, 40-41.

[43] Wainwright, 65-66.

[44] For example, see Ian Ker, *Newman on Being a Christian* (London: HarperCollins, 1990).

able to appraise the evidence inherent in the cumulation of probabilities and to identify the point at which assent (an unconditional certitude) is warranted. This method is real and necessary in that it is the *only* method which enables a person to attain certitude in concrete matters, the most important of which to Newman in this context is ascertaining the true religion. The illative sense engages an entire complex of faculties and circumstances and avenues (including, possibly, formal reasoning) which provides for believing in the God of Christianity with certitude, and doing so without formal argumentation (induction or deduction) and without complete knowledge. This kind of faith, in Newman's account, is the most proper end of the employment of this method – despite the fact that other conclusions are existentially possible, and that the method itself is viable in rendering other (non-religious) momentous decisions as well as in countless trivial decisions confronted in daily life.

Again, the question being addressed here is how Newman's notion of human authenticity, as portrayed in the first major section above, is to be lived out in accord with his theory of religious knowledge, summarized in the second major section above. We must look, then, at Newman's view of informal reasoning as a practical process of living – which a process of making decisions in concrete situations naturally tends to be. In fact, Newman refers to informal reasoning as a *living* process, one that depends not upon a preprogrammed performance, but upon responding to existential alterations in a person's environment: physical environment, as well as relationships with other human beings and with God.

Secondly, this process of informal reasoning, according to Newman, reflects his view of human authenticity insofar as it (the reasoning) is initiated by a human being rooted in a particular, concrete, personal situation in this world, who then attempts to resolve a specific personal problem requiring a decision. The most appropriate example, as noted, is choosing a religion, but other momentous and trivial decisions also qualify. However, to mirror Newman's authenticating of human life, we must allude to the *Grammar of Assent* and the pursuit of the Christian religion within the framework of this process of knowing. Recognizing the inadequacy of life in this world, the human person reaches out beyond it to some spiritual reality, eventually to some Ultimate Being with Whom one can communicate, trust, and love. This Being for Newman is the Triune God of Christianity. Despite the mystery remaining even for the most faithful person, the certitude of this judgment, based upon the accumulation of probabilities and the activity of the illative sense, enables the person to say, "'I know that I know….'" [45] Obviously, this assent, entails the grace of God from Newman's perspective. However, it remains in his view a *reasonable* process identifiable within an eminently human process of living one's daily life. In other words, this process of learning is a process of living – AND also is a process of human authentication by living in this world, but

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[45] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, 163.

simultaneously transcending this world by directing one's actions toward a union with God. This kind of living provides human happiness in this life as a basis for eternal happiness with God in the next life.

In concluding this effort to align Newman's view of human authenticity and its existential development through informal reflection, I wish to emphasize the *personal* character of reflection in the concrete situation as well as Newman's preference of the factual over the notional in all human knowing and living. Concerning the personal, Newman claims that every one who reasons represents a personal center, and no means of attaining a common measure of minds can negate this fact. Describing the illative sense, in particular, he comments as follows: "'… the sole and final judgment on the validity of an influence in the concrete matter is committed to the *personal* action of the ratiocinative faculty, the perfection of virtue of which I have called the illative sense.'"[46] As far as authentic human living is concerned, obviously, if it is not personal, it is nothing. This point is re-emphasized by Newman's general (and, perhaps to some extent temperamental) preference for the factual over the notional: "Abstract argument is always dangerous," he says, adding, "I prefer to go by the facts."[47] While *notional* assents and inferences have a place in Newman's thought and life, they tend to be subordinated to what he calls *real* assents and inferences. Informal inferences as a means of an authentic human life is a very good example of that posture.

We turn finally to the second question to be addressed in this conclusion, that pertaining to the *changing* and the *permanent* features of authentic human nature as Newman portrays them. Certainly, the emphasis Newman affords facts over notions or abstract ideas points to change: the physical world is constantly changing as is human comprehension of that world. Furthermore, humanization in general, the fulfillment of human potential, the authentification of the human being (all meaning the same in this lexicon) represents a process continual from birth to death. On the other hand, when permanence is considered in this context of Newman's quest for human authenticity, the notion of God, the Being ultimately sought in Newman's views of human authenticity and informal reflection, arises. Newman, however, distinguishes between God as Mystery and God as Manifestation. The first refers to God as Transcendent, that is, the objective, perfect, never-changing Ultimate Reality, a Personal Being Whom we by nature seek. On the other hand, God as Manifestation designates God as Immanent, alive in the world, within human souls changing as human relationships to Him change.[48]

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[46] Anthony Kenny, *What is Faith? Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 101. See also Vargish, 69; Wainwright, 62-64.

[47] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, in Blehl, ed., *The Essential Newman*, 313.

[48] Vargish, 63. There is no suggestion here, of course, that there are two Gods, one Transcendent and the other Immanent. Rather, the same God exists

Perhaps, Newman might subscribe (I am speculating now) to the proposition that the Transcendent God is the only unchanging or permanent Being in this big picture of human authenticity. However, he might also agree that there are permanent or unchanging *principles* of being. For example, there is a God, who is both Transcendent and Immanent. Secondly, only a human person rooted in this world and utilizing this world properly represents a suitable context for the consideration of an authentic human life. A third universal and permanent principle is the need for human struggle in order to know reality and to live in accord with it in becoming a fulfilled and authentic human person. Finally, a permanent principle which Newman clearly certified is one which asserts the need of the human being for God in all things.

While the above is not an exhaustive analysis of changing and permanent features of Newman's quest for human authenticity through informal reasoning, it does suggest that both permanence and change are essential characteristics. Also clear, but requiring far more analysis and explication, is Newman's extraordinary emphases on *subjective* and *objective* realities in achieving human authenticity. The paradox of these intertwining realities in this context suggests problems of relativity and a "common measure" of minds, problems not resolvable apart from the mysterious dimensions of human authenticity and its attainment. Nevertheless, Newman sees no opposition between these emphases upon subjective and objective realities. Just because everyone has a personal, somewhat subjective view of reality does not lead to the conclusion that there are no objective realities. Considering the matter from the viewpoint of truth, Newman alludes to objective truth as "the religious system as existing in itself, external, to this or that particular mind." Subjective truth, on the other hand, "includes what each mind receives in particular and considers to be objective." The latter (subjective truth) is the human perception of the former (objective truth). This means that the relativism suggested by the personal character of the operation of the illative sense is, for Newman, grounded in Christian doctrine. To live this kind of informal reflection is to become an authentic human person – temporarily in union with God in this world and eternally so in the next world.[49]

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independently of the world, and *in* the world. Without the absoluteness of God in Himself, surely Newman would see human beings as rudderless, without direction. If all things change constantly in a radically relative world, there is that one absolute principle (that all things change), but it is a Godless world in which true and false in Newman's sense are irrelevant.

[49] Vargish, 63.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN IDENTITY/NATURE: SHANKARITE AND HEIDEGGERIAN PERSPECTIVES

VENSUS A. GEORGE

INTRODUCTION

The title proposed for the seminar "Human Identity/Nature: Changing and/or Stable Today?" may give one the impression that change and stability are at variance with each other and that the former cannot facilitate the latter with regard to human nature. In Greek philosophy, particularly in the thought of Parmenides and Heraclitus, change and stability are seen as diametrically opposed to each other. If we view change and stability as contradictory and inconsistent, then it is difficult for us to speak anything about human nature because it is in a process of growth and development, which automatically implies the notion of change. Thus the stability found in human nature at any given time cannot be understood if we fail to consider the changes that have taken place prior to that state of stability. Hence, it is not proper for us to speak of change and stability as opposite poles particularly when we consider them in relation to the human nature. As a matter of fact change is an important factor in the attainment of an authentic and stable human selfhood. A human person can move towards the attainment of his/her human identity that is authentic and stable only if he/she opens himself/herself to genuine changes in the context of his/her life situation which, in turn, paves the way for the desired goal of stability. This truth is highlighted in the thoughts of two seminal thinkers, one from the East and the other from the West, namely Shankara[1] and Martin Heidegger[2] respectively.

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[1] Shankara was born at Kaladi, a small village on the west coast of South India. There is no consensus among the historians of Indian thought about the exact dates of his birth and death. The most accepted view is that he lived from 788 to 820 A.D. Shankara's philosophy is *Advaita Vedanta*, which is Non-Dualism. Besides being a philosopher, Shankara is a poet, a servant of people, a saint, a mystic and a reformer of Hinduism to its pristine purity. Cf. Vidhusherhar Bhattacharyya, ed. & trans., *The Agamasaastra of Gaudapaada*, (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1943, p. lxxix, no. 8. Cf. alao S. Rathakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1947), pp. 447-450.

[2] Martin Heidegger was born at the little town of Messkirch, in Southwest Germany in 1889, where he lived most part of his life except the five years he spent at Marburg. He was a seminal thinker and a significant philosopher of the era despite his controversial involvement with the Nazi movement. Though he

The perspectives of these thinkers on human nature presume that the genuine stability of human nature cannot be brought about unless the human person is ready and willing to make the necessary changes in his/her thought-process and actions emerging from it. In this paper we try to understand Shankara's and Heidegger's thoughts regarding human nature, the paths they propose for the attainment of stable human nature and the qualities of the person who has attained an authentic stable nature. In the conclusion we see five presuppositions that underlie the thoughts of Shankara and Heidegger.

SHANKARITE PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN NATURE

In this section we attempt to clarify the Shankarite perspective on human nature, highlighting the reality of human nature, the path Shankara proposes for the attainment of a stable human nature and the qualities of a stable human nature.

Reality of Human Nature

Elaborating on the reality of human nature, Shankara speaks of two states of human nature, viz., the phenomenal state (*aparaa vidhyaa*) and the noumenal state (*paraa vidhyaa*). We will briefly consider the nature, consequences and characteristics of human nature in these two states.

Phenomenal State of Human Nature. In the phenomenal state, the human person is characterized by superimposed knowledge. Superimposition (*adhyaropa*) is the mistaken ascription of one thing for the other. By superimposition one attributes to a thing qualities of an essential nature, which do not belong to it. Shankara defines it as "the apparent presentation (to the consciousness), by way of remembrance, of something previously observed, in some other thing."[3] In the example of the snake being superimposed on the rope, the rope which is presented to the consciousness is in fact taken as a snake through the mistaken attribution of what is known and remembered in some previous perception. Thus, the judgment "this is a snake" is the result of a positive identification between what was experienced from previous experience (snake) and what is

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himself was under scrutiny due to his involvement with Nazism, his philosophy was received with great interest so much so that he was one of the thinkers to whom much attention was paid by researchers and scholars even during his life time. He died in 1976. Cf. Thomas Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, (Chicago: Precedent Publishing Inc., 1981), p. 3.

[3] Shankara, *Brahma-Sutra Bhaasya*, trans. Swami Gambhirananda, 2nd ed., (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), I, i, pp. 11-12 (Hereafter: *BSB*).

perceived right now (rope).[4] According to Shankara, the individual aspect (*vyasti*) and cosmic aspect (*samasti*) of *maayaa*,[5] are the cause of superimposition.[6] There are two stages in the process of superimposition based on these two aspects of the *maayaa*. Here, we briefly consider them.

In the first stage of the process of superimposition, due to the activity of *maayaa* in its individual aspect, the ego-idea is superimposed on the Inner Self (*Aatman*), which is existence and reality. *Aatman* is never an object of sense experience. Yet due to our ignorance we superimpose the idea of the private individuality, i.e., being someone, upon our awareness of our existence. In doing so, we fail to understand the absolute and universal character of *Aatman*, and consider it as the private property that belongs to an individual. This superimposition of the ego-idea on *Aatman* is the most significant act of a human being, which makes the Inner Self being presented in our normal consciousness as 'the object of the ego-idea'. As soon as this first level of superimposition is done, one begins to experience oneself, in terms of 'I', 'my', 'mine', 'separate existence', 'private individual' and many other similar modes. As the result of the first level of superimposition, one loses the universal idea of *Aatman*, being absolute existence and considers oneself as an individual empirical self (*jiiva*).[7] *Jiiva* as a unit of existence is conscious of its causal body, subtle body and gross body. It also becomes aware that it is constituted of five sheaths, viz., body sheath, vital sheath, mental sheath, intelligent sheath and bliss sheath. Besides it also experiences three states of consciousness, viz., the waking consciousness, the dream consciousness and the deep-sleep consciousness.

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[4] Cf. Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedeanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, 2nd ed., (Honolulu: The University Press Hawaii, 1962), p. 34.

[5] Advaitic thinkers consider that *maayaa* as the cause of different modes of thinking, projections of the worldly appearances, conflicting ideas and the source of all contradictions, relativities, dichotomies and polarities encountered in human existence. In explaining the nature of *maayaa,* Advaitins compare it to the fog that covers the sun from our view, but when the sun is in full view the fog vanishes. Similarly when the true knowledge dawns *maayaa* disappears. There is a touch of mystery to the reality of *maayaa* and the human intellect cannot attempt to exhaust its manifold forms, modes and possibilities. Thus, *maayaa* is a principle that cannot be fully explained and at the same time is the source of plurality and diversities in the universe. Cf. Vensus A. George, *The Authentic Human Destiny: The Paths of Shankara and Heidegger*, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998), pp. 26-29

[6] Cf. Shankara, *Self-Knowledge (Aatmabhooda)*, trans. Swami Nihilananda, (New York: Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, 1980), Introduction, p. 58 [Hereafter: *AB*].

[7] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self*-Realization, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001), p. 83. Cf. also Shankara, *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination (Viveeka Chuudaamani)*, trans. Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, (New York. New American Library, 1970), pp. 18-21 [Hereafter: *VC*].

All these veil the true nature of *Aatman* and make one experience oneself as the *jiiva* with its micro-cosmic order of existence.[8]

The experience of individual existence at the first level of superimposition sets in motion the second level of superimposition, particularly due to the activity of *maayaa* in its cosmic aspect. Here, the ego-idea reaches outward, identifying itself with the body, physical and mental attributes and action, without ever being aware of the true nature of the 'I'. Thus, for instance, one says about himself: 'I am ill', 'I am going home' and similar statement fully forgetting the absolute nature of *Aatman*. Then the superimposition still goes external, in that one attempts to superimpose individuality on purely external objects and conditions and own it for oneself. Thus, a person makes statements like 'This house is mine', 'I am a member of the parliament' and similar statements about himself. This process continues endlessly, because in making oneself an individual, one tries to externalize his individuality everywhere and on every reality. In this manner, one's ego is identified with every object in the universe. It, in turn, automatically superimposes a multiple world of objects and entities upon *Brahman*, which is existence and reality. Thus, by attributing individuality and other qualities to oneself, one sees multiplicity everywhere and superimposes on *Brahman*, the world of names and forms (*nama-rupa*), which is constituted of individual *jiivas* like himself and different from himself. One identifies everything in the world with oneself. [9] As a result of the activity of *maaya* in its cosmic aspect there comes about the illusion of plurality of the material world, plurality of gods, plurality of kingdoms of beings, plurality of cosmic order and plurality of cosmic stages of existence, thereby making oneself experience as the *jiiva* with its macrocosmic order of existence.[10] Due to this false superimposition of the unreal on the real, the absolute and changeless *Brahman* appears as the multiplicity of the world of phenomena. As long as one remains in the spell of superimposition one will consider the world of multiplicity and of names and forms as the ultimate and absolute reality.[11]

Due to the veiling of the Inner Self (*Aatman*) and the Universal Self (*Brahman*) by the microcosmic-macrocosmic orders through the activities of individual and cosmic *maayaa* the phenomenal state of human existence is characterized by subject-object distinction. As a result, the knowledge of *jiiva* is mediate and indirect obtained through the senses, the mind, and the intellect. It is knowable only with the help of different means of knowledge (*pramaanas*), such as perception, inference, comparison, supposition and non-perception. Thus, empirical knowledge is a caused knowledge, which comes as the result of experience, study, research and listening to others

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[8] Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 105-115.

[9] Cf. *Ibid*., pp. 83-84. Cf. also *VC*, pp. 18-21.

[10] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 97-105.

[11] Shankara, *Panchaadasi*, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri, (London: Shanthi Sadan, 1956), I, 13 [Hereafter: *PI*]

who know better. Hence empirical knowledge, as caused knowledge, can be attained and developed, and its attainment depends on each individual's effort and facilities available to him/her.[12]

Thus, according to Shankara the false perception of oneself and the world that is characteristic of the phenomenal state of the human nature is due to the twofold superimposition based on the ego-idea. The Inner Self (*Aatman*), which is the absolute principle looks on as if it is a witness (*saakshi*) to all these multiplicity brought about by the individual and cosmic *maayaa*. It is completely unaffected by these false attributes, yet makes them all possible, for without it the world of multiplicity cannot exist. Thus, the world of appearance basically depends on the ego-idea and once the ego-idea is removed from consciousness, the world of appearance also disappears.[13]

Noumenal State of Human Nature. According to Shankara, the noumenal state of human nature does not consist in being caught up in the phenomenal existence brought about by the twofold superimposition based on the ego-idea, but rather in in-depth living, in which, he must experience the Source of the Universe within himself. The task of man is not to search for his ultimate destiny outside, but to move into himself and discover the ultimate in the cave of his heart. It is not new knowledge, but a realization of what one really is. It is a self-realization (*Brahmaanubhava*), in which, one realizes *Brahman*, the Universal Self as one's Indwelling Spirit (*Aatman*).[14] Shankara says that this truth is categorically expressed in the Vedic Aphorism (*mahaavaakya*) "That art Thou" (*tat tvam asi*). This *mahaavaakya* is found in Chaandoogya Upanishad in Saama Veda. It is a universal pronouncement to humankind at the core of each person, i.e., the *Aatman*, is *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality of the universe. In other words, this aphorism explains to each one that his own self, pervades everything as the absolute *Brahman*. The analogy of water can explain the import of this statement from the scripture. Water from the sea evaporates and forms clouds, which in turn comes down over the earth as rains. The rainwater is collected and the formation of a river takes place, which in the course of its flow assumes individual names. However, the water in all these conditions is the same. In the same way, *Aatman* is the all-pervading reality, viz., *Brahman*. This aphorism, thus, pronounces the oneness of the infinite *Brahman* and *Aatman* in the individual. Since it advises the seeker of self-realization to recognize his *Aatman* as identical with *Brahman*, it is called 'the statement of advice' (*upadeesa vaakya*).[15]

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[12] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 118-126.

[13] Cf. *VC*, pp. 18-21.

[14] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, p. 25.

[15] Cf. Shankara, *Aatmabhoodha [Knowledge of the Self]*, trans. A. Parthasarathy, 3rd ed., (Bombay: Vedanta Life Institute, 1960), no. 30, p. 61

Hence, the *mahaavaakya* 'tat tvam asi' is not tautological or superfluous. It is the concrete representation of a movement of thought from the ontological level of particularity to another of universality and on to another of unity. When the latter state of unity is attained the distinctions between the former is negated. One begins with the individual consciousness, passes on to the universal consciousness and finally arrives at the pure consciousness that overcomes the separate reality of both the individual and the universal. It is this state of unity that constitutes the ground of all multiplicity and individuality.[16] We arrive at this unity by stripping away the incompatible and contradictory elements of the terms 'That' and 'Thou', and looking for the common element or basis.[17] In the illustration 'This is that Devadatta', the Devadatta seen now is identified with the Devadatta seen years ago despite all the accidental differences like physical conditions, mental states and places of meeting. What makes one identify the person of Devadatta as the same is the elimination of the differences. In the same way the negation of the apparent contradictions of 'That' and 'Thou' would lead to the fundamental and absolute reality.[18]

In fact in the recognition of the person of Devadatta now, one has learned nothing new about the person of Devadatta, except the accidental qualities, but only recognized Devadatta who one had already known. In the same way the *mahaavaakya* 'That art Thou' does not reveal anything new about *Brahman* or add anything new to its nature. Nevertheless, it is of immense value, since it removes the false notion of difference between the *Aatman* and the *Brahman*. When ignorance based on the ego-idea regarding the difference between 'That' and 'Thou' is removed, they cease to be different, and we are able to experience their identity. In other words, the intrinsic nature of 'That' and 'Thou' is one and the same. The words 'That' and 'Thou' point to the same reality, as the terms 'I' and the 'tenth' indicate one and the same person in the sentence 'I am the tenth'.[19] Thus, the identity statement 'That art Thou' declares that the noumenal state of human nature is a non-dual and unique experience of identity of *Brhaman* and *Aatman*, which is the Absolute and Fundamental Reality behind, both the universe and the individual.

According to Shankara the noumenal state of human nature, which is attained in *Brahmaanubhava*, is an experience of oneness without any subject-object distinctions. As non-dual and subjectless-objectless experience it is immediate and direct. In consists in realizing one's own true

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[Hereafter: *AB*, Parthasarathy]. Cf. also A. Parthasarathy, *Vedaanta Treatise*, 3rd ed., (Bombay: Vedanta Life Institute, 1989), p. 330.

[16] Cf. Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, p. 49.

[17] Cf. *ibid*., p. 50.

[18] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*. pp. 49-50.

[19] Cf. A. Ramamurthi, *Advaitic Mysticism of* Shankara, (West Bengal: The Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1974), p. 39.

nature, which does not involve any media like, the senses, the mind or the intellect. As an experience of oneness that is direct *Brahmaanubhava* is indescribable, just as the reality of *Brahman and Aatman* are indescribable. Finally it is an eternal and uncaused experience. *Brahmaanubhava* is eternal as it is the knowledge of an ontological state of absolute oneness between *Brahman* and *Aatman*. It is not an experience that is caused by the individual who is striving to reach this state of unity. It is not an experience that takes place in time and which has *Brahman/Aatman* as its object. For Shankara, *Brahmaanubhava* does not consist in the obtaining of something which has not been obtained before, for in it there is no difference between the person attaining and the object attained.[20]

Attainment of the Stable Human Nature: The Path

Shankara Advaita advocates a well-defined path in the attainment of stable and authentic human nature or *Brahmaanubhava*, which consists in the aspirant realizing the identity between *Brahman* and *Aatman*. The process of attainment of *Brahmaanubhuva* is called *Brahmaajijnaasa*. It involves all efforts an aspirant makes to move from the phenomenal state of human nature and to arrive at the noumenal state of human nature or *Brahmaanubhava*. Thus, *Brahmaajijnaasa* is the path to *Brahmaanubhava*. When the twofold superimposition of ego-idea caused by *maayaa* in its individual and cosmic aspects is removed by the path of *Brahmaajijnaasa* and knowledge is dawned, the aspirant moves into the noumenal state of human nature. Thus, *Brahmaajijnaasa* is the path the aspirant walks, while *Brahmaanubhava* is the final destination of this path.[21] Shankara speaks of two methods in the process of *Brahmaajijnaasa*, viz., the direct method and the indirect method. Let us briefly consider them in the next sections.

Indirect Method. By indirect methods Shankara means the path of unselfish action (*karmayoga*) and the path of devotion (*bhaktiyoga*). These open in the individual aspirant a willingness to surrender his energy in a life of unselfish service and to give with a loving heart. In the process the aspirant learns to eliminate selfish motives and intentions that stem from animal instincts in man and learns to do everything without any selfish interest. Similarly life devotion prepares the seeker for deeper levels of sweetness and bliss. Thus, the life of unselfish action and loving devotion gradually leads the seeker to still higher stages of spiritual experience.[22] We shall consider these two indirect methods in some detail.

The path of unselfish action is proposed for person of mixed temperaments, viz., persons who are both emotional and rational. These are

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[20] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 60-68.

[21] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 133-137.

[22] Cf. Mahendranath Sircar, *The System of Vedic Thought and Culture*, (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1987), pp. 221-222.

energetic personalities who have an inherent orientation towards activity, work and service. *Karma* path calls for the simultaneous use of the head and the heart. In order to attain the goal of perfect action the seeker of the *karma* path must remove negative activity from his life by letting go his personal likes (*raga*) and dislikes in performing an action. Thus, negative activity is avoided when an aspirant performs an action without personal preferences. Then he must cultivate positive activity. It consists in the *karma yogi* dedicating his activities in love and devotion to the Lord. In doing this he sheds his personality of worldly thoughts and pleasures, gets his mind purified and turns his attention to the contemplation of the supreme self, which is the source of his activity of love and service.

Three activities that can vitiate positive activity are egoism, hope and excitement. Egoism vitiates the past, by focusing on the past activities; hope of enjoyment dissipates a person from acting purposefully in the future; and excitement disturbs the present activity. When the seeker of the *karma* path performs positive activity, resting his thoughts on the Lord, and prevents egoism, hope and excitement from vitiating the energy in the threefold temporal dimensions of life, he becomes a *karma yogi*.[23]

The path of devotion is meant for a person who is more emotional in nature, whose heart dominates his head. Such a person is more emotional, devotional and impulsive, while he is less rational, intellectual and discriminative. One who follows the path of devotion chooses a personal God (*Ishtadeevata*) and pours out his personal love and devotion to the Lord by making use of *mantras*, *bhajans* and chants, which make him single-minded in his attachment to the Lord. This, in turn, frees him from is worldly attachments and leads him to God realization. Such a person achieves a state of steadied consciousness, in which nothing disturbs or annoys him, because God to whom he is devoted becomes central to his life.[24]

Direct Method. The direct method refers to the path of knowledge (*jnaanayoga*). It is meant for a person who is rational and whose head dominates his heart. As a result, such a person is more intellectual and discriminative. His intellect is able to view events impartially. He is able to discriminate between the phenomenal and the noumenal. He has a high propensity for deeper meditation and experience of the transcendental life.[25] *Jnaanayoga* is described as the discrimination between the eternal and the temporal by way of reflection. Thus, the path of knowledge constantly attempts to distinguish the permanent and the impermanent, the noumena

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[23] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Paths to the Divine: Ancient and Indian*, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), pp. 216-219. Cf. also A. Parthasarathy, *Vedanta Treatise*, pp. 178-191.

[24] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Path to the Divine: Ancient and Indian*, pp. 210-216.

[25] Cf. A. Parthasarathy, *The Vedanta Treatise*, p. 178.

and the phenomena, the transcendental and the terrestrial, and the real and the unreal, so that the seeker of knowledge can realize the ultimate knowledge of *Brahman* as identical with *Aatman*. Hence, the direct method of *jnaana* path involves a deep understanding of the illusory nature of the phenomenal world and the fundamental oneness of everything in *Brahman*. Besides, it implies a discriminative consciousness that would enable the aspirant to break through appearances and apprehend the underlying Absolute Reality behind the manifold world of everyday experience.[26] According to Shankara, the path of knowledge implies physical, moral and intellectual preparations. We briefly consider each of them in this section.

Physical preparation aims at helping the aspirant to attain full control over the body. The stability of the body is required its normal functioning. When it comes to preparing oneself for higher intellectual and spiritual training, there is the need to discipline the body sufficiently, so as to make it a fit instrument for the realization of *Brahman*. The system of training that prepares the body for such a higher state of existence is called *Hathayoga*. It is the physical discipline, which an individual undertakes, involving a certain amount of violence, force or oppression of the body. The aim of *Hathayoga* is to purify the tendencies of the body and mind so that the intellect can begin to reason, which would enable the aspirant to start the process of *Brahmaajijnassa*. Many practices, such as forms of self-torture, standing on one leg, holding up arms, inhaling smoke with the head inverted, piercing different parts of the body with sharp instruments and similar practices are included in *Hathayoga*. All these practices increase the vitality of the body, gives good health and preserves great amount of energy within the aspirant because *Hathayoga* opens the aspirant to the life-process of the cosmic breath (*praana*). Though the *Hathayoga* includes many practices, it mainly uses two major means to attain its aims, viz., posture (*aasana*) and breath-control (*praanaayaama*).[27]

Moral preparation has for its goal the purification of the mind, by removing all inclinations to evil, thereby facilitating the intellect to understand the true import of the scriptural statements. Moral preparations include the practice of four disciplines called the instruments of spiritual discipline (*sadhanachatyshtaya*). The first is the discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal (*nitya anitya vastu viveka*). It consists in an intuitive and firm conviction that *Brahman* alone is the absolute ground of all things, that which is really real, and that all other things are phenomenal. The second is renunciation (*vairaagya*), which consists in not seeking the enjoyment of the fruits here and hereafter. The third is the practice of six treasures (*shadsampatti*), which are the six virtues an aspirant of

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[26] Cf. *ibid*., p. 186. Cf. also Mahendranath Sircar, *The System of Vedic Thought and Culture*, pp. 219-220.

[27] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 144-147. Cf. also A. Parthasarathy, *The Vedanta Treatise*, p. 179. Cf. also Mhendranath Sircar, *The system of Vedic Thought and Culture*, pp. 229-230.

Brahmaanubhava should practice. They are calmness (*sama*), self-control (*dama*), self-settledness (*uparati*), forbearance or endurance of suffering (*titiksha*), faith (*shraddhaa*) and complete concentration (*samaadhaana*). The fourth moral condition is the aspirant's hunger for liberation (*mumukshvata*), which consists in possessing an intense desire for the attainment of *Brahmaanubhava*.[28]

Intellectual preparation intends to help the aspirant of *Brahmaanubhava* to grasp the full import of the scriptures with the intellectual study of the scriptural texts. It involves there stages. The first is the stage of hearing (*sravana*). At this state the aspirant of self-realization listens to the import of scriptural statements from a teacher (*guru*). Thus, *sravana* is the initiation of the aspirant to the traditional Vedaantic doctrine transmitted and passed on by the teachers. It involves six tests, viz. commencement and ending, repetition, uniqueness, result, eulogy and reason. Commencement and ending consist in the presentation of the subject matter at the beginning and end of a session of study. Repetition consists in repeated presentation of the subject matter. Uniqueness of the subject matter consists in that it is found only in the scriptural statements. Eulogy consists in praising the subject matter in order to create an interest in the aspirant for the subject matter. Reason consists in demonstrating the subject matter with rational arguments. By using these six tests the aspirant understands the import of the scriptural statements heard from the teacher and read from the scriptures. The second stage of intellectual preparation is stage of reflection (*manaana*). It is a mental activity, which consists in the employment of favorable arguments for the removal of apparent contradictions that might arise during the study of scripture. The method used for at the stage of reflection is the method of negation (*apavaada*), which consists in the elimination of what is not in order to attain the truth about the particular scriptural statement. The third and the final stage of intellectual preparation is the stage of meditation (*nididhyaasana*). It is a mental activity consisting in withdrawing the mind from all other things and concentrating it on *Brahman*. By repeated exercise of meditation one moves to a greater depth of absolute consciousness, which, in turn, removes all ignorance.[29]

Assisted by the physical, moral and intellectual preparations, particularly by focusing more on the Inner Self (*Aatman*) by way of meditation, the aspirant makes the inward journey until he experiences absolute identity with *Brahman*. The end of this inner journey is the attainment of release (*samaadhi*), which consists in the aspirant realizing his absorption in and identity with *Brahman*. It is the true liberation and the ultimate end of the seeker, the state of *Brahmaanubhava*, in which the seeker finds his authentic and stable personhood.[30] According to Shankara the experience of *samaadhi*, being a unitive experience in which there is no

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[28] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 147-159.
[29] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 159-179.
[30] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 179-185.

subject-object duality, is beyond the state of phenomenal existence. Hence, it cannot belong to the walking conscious state, dream-conscious state and deep-sleep-conscious state experienced by the *jiiva*, in which there is the experience of ego-idea or the 'ego-consciousness'. The *sammaadhi*, in which *Brahman-Aatman* identity is experienced, belongs to the fourth state, which Shankara calls the *tuuriya*, in which there is no ego-consciousness or duality. The *tuuriya* state surpasses the limitations of time, space and causality. Besides, this state is free from ignorance (*avidhyaa*) and its products, which vitiates the other three states experienced by the *jiiva*. According to Shankara only in the realm of *tuuriya*, is *Brahmaanubhava* attained.[31]

Qualities of a Stable Human Nature

The seeker who has attained *Brahmaanubhava* in the realm of *tuuriya* possesses an authentic and stable personhood. Shankara calls such a person *Brahmajnaani* or *Jiivanmukta*. Such a person is called *Brahmajnaani*, because he has the knowledge (*jnaana*) of *Brahman*. He is called *Jiivanmukta* because he has attained liberation (*mukti*), while he is still living as a human being in this world. The actions of the *Jiivanmukta* are characterized by oneness. Though he lives in the world of duality none of the pairs of opposites disturb him as he sees all things in terms of the oneness with *Brahman*.[32] Shankara speaks of number of qualities that are attributed to the *Jiivanmukta*. We, now, consider some significant ones.

Firstly, *Jiivanmukta* is fearless; he cannot be afraid of anything. Fear comes from ignorance, and it is found in a person caught up in this phenomenal existence. Since *Jiivanmukta* belongs to the noumenal realm he is beyond fear. Secondly, *Jiivanmukta* transcends scriptures, ethical imperatives and social conventions. Though he is not bound by any of the above, great ethical and social virtues, such as humility, unselfishness, purity, kindness and fellow-feeling adorn his life. Thirdly, *Jiivanmukta* alone knows the true meaning of freedom, as he is the all-embracing self and free from all cares and worries of life. He is never touched by pleasure or pain, good or evil. Fourthly, *Jiivanmukta* is without any desire, sorrow and grief. These are experienced by persons who have not attained something in their life. Since *Jiivanmukta* has attained absolute existence, he is beyond all these. Fifthly, *Jiivanmukta* is a man of universal love. In him there is no trace of selfishness and he is totally other-centred. The interest, attention and identification involved in the love of *Jiivanmukta* is for all and yet to everyone in particular. Though he is impartial and objective in his attitude towards others, he still loves others deeply and personally. He is involved with the life of people and works for their

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[31] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Authentic Human Destiny: The Paths of Shankara and Heidegger*, pp. 303-304.

[32] Cf. Vensus A. George, *Self-Realization*, pp. 185-189.

genuine emancipation, but he is not entangled with any situation or people. Sixthly, resting secure in the truth that 'all is *Brahman*' the *Jiivanmukta* experiences total fulfillment in his life. There is nothing that remains to be satisfied for a realized man. He is absolutely full (*paripuurna*) and lacks nothing. He manifests this fulfillment in two characteristics, viz., cheerfulness and dynamism. Cheerfulness is the outward expression of his inner fulfillment and bliss experienced by his oneness with *Brahman*. Dynamism emerges from this inner fulfillment and makes the *Jiivanmukta* work for the removal of evil and miseries people experience in the world. This dynamism expresses itself in the physical, mental and intellectual levels of *Jiivanmukta*, as he attempts to reach out to the mission of giving *Brahman*-experience to all. Finally, *Jiivanmukta* lives in this bodily state as long as there lasts accumulated effects of his past actions that have begun to bear fruit (*praarabdha karma*). As a possessor of body, *Jiivanmukta* experiences that which is characteristic of material forms, such as hunger, thirst, illness and old age. However, these never overwhelm him, for he knows their passing nature and his nature as the absolute *Brahman*.[33]

All the above mentioned qualities of *Jiivanmukta* are only approximations. Just as *Brahman* and *Brahmaanubhava* are incomprehensible and indescribable, the nature and characteristics of *Jiivanmukta* are not describable. All we can say about the *Jiivanmukta* and his behavior is only from a phenomenal point of view. All we have done in trying to describe the nature and qualities of the *Jiivanmukta* is to negate qualities like fear, desire, duality, differences, dependence, selfishness and similar attributes that are characteristic of those who live under the sway of ignorance. In other words, we have only said what the *Jiivanmukta* is not rather than what he is. He, like *Brahman*, is indescribable. Therefore, the so-called characteristics mentioned are only one possible way of taking about the *Jiivanmukta*, i.e., from the phenomenal point of view. From the absolute (*paramaartha*) point of view, *Jiivanmukta* is *Brahman* and is of the nature of the unknowable and indescribable *Brahman*.[34]

HEIDEGGERIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN NATURE

In this section we elaborate on the Heideggerian perspective on human nature. Here we clarify the reality of human nature, the path Shankara proposes for the attainment of the stable human nature and the qualities of the stable human nature.

Reality of Human Nature

In the early phase of his thought (Heidegger I), Heidegger visualizes

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[33] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 188-195.

[34] Cf. Mahendranath Sircar, *The System of Vedic Thought and Culture*, p. 287.

the reality of human nature – *Dasein* in two aspects, viz., *Dasein* as characterized by the state of caring; and *Dasein* as characterized by the experience of Being (*das Sein*). In this section, we make an attempt to spell out the reality of human nature in these twofold aspects.

Human Nature in the State of Care. Dasein's being as care in which Dasein is centred on itself manifests the human person in his/her ultimate finality. It does so in two diametrically opposed images. On the one hand everything, including *Dasein* and its being, is understood in relation to the self and the world. In this image *Dasein* is seen as a self-sufficient being around which everything revolves. On the other hand, Dasein is seen as a finite existence characterized by existential guilt, existential limitations and existential death. In this section, we elaborate Dasein's being as "care" in these twofold aspects.[35]

Dasein: The Self-Sufficient Existence. Dasein is a unique type of being, just like any other entity in the world. Yet, it transcends all other entities because it has a pre-conceptual understanding of Being and only in relation to Dasein is everything understood. That is why Heidegger refers to it as 'existence' and 'transcendence'. Of all entities, only for Dasein is its own existence an issue. In this way it stands out above all other entities. Besides, existential Dasein is always one's own because it is characterized by 'my-ownness' (*gemeinischkeit*). This 'my-ownness' of Dasein on the one hand, gives uniqueness and on the other hand, makes for a free and self-sufficient being which needs to make his own choices and decision, and be responsible for them. Thus, Dasein has to depend on itself for his personal concerns. Because Dasein is its own and unique, it is the only type of being that can be authentic or inauthentic in its choices and living. Since Dasein is its own possibilities, it can choose or lose itself, own its possibilities or reject them, build up or forget its own being. Thus, Dasein is what it makes of itself; his/her life and choices depend totally upon it.[36]

Dasein also has priority over all other entities in the sense that it is the existential horizon in relation to which everything else is studied and understood. Dasein, with his pre-conceptual understanding of Being, is the only being that raises the question of the meaning of Being. Thus, the meaning and truth of Being can be understood only in the light of Dasein. Besides, truth and meaning of entities depend on Dasein. One cannot speak of truth of entities apart from Dasein, as the discoverdness of entities is possible only for the discovering Dasein. Thus Dasein is the meaning-giver and the foundation of every truth. Therefore, not only is ontology the study of Being, but also any science, for that matter, is possible only because there

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[35] Cf. Vensus A. George, *The Experience of Being as the Goal of Human Existence: The Heideggerian Approach*, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), p. 130.

[36] Cf. *ibid*., p. 131.

is a Dasein. If it were not for Dasein, no meaningful study of reality is possible.[37]

This indispensability of Dasein for any meaningful study of reality consists in the fact that Dasein is capable of understanding. Understanding discloses to Dasein what it is capable of, viz., its possibilities and that of the entities. This disclosure is not merely theoretical, but existential and practical. Dasein's understanding involves not mere knowledge of possibilities, but also the project on the basis of which these possibilities can be actualized. Therefore, understanding its possibilities Dasein makes assertions. Besides, Dasein can communicate the interpretation of the projective understanding in discourse. In this manner Dasein becomes the basis for any meaningful study of reality.[38]

Dasein, as projective understanding, is always 'in-the-world'. The term 'in-the-world' is not to be taken in the spatial sense, but in the existential sense of relatedness to the world. Dasein is part of the environmental and social worlds. The former consists of Dasein's being-along-side the entities in its concerned dealings and preoccupations, while the latter refers to Dasein's relationship of 'being-with'. These relationships of being-along-side entities and being-with others constitute Dasein's world. It is nothing other than the complex matrix of his relationship within this environmental world and the social world, and the totality of their meaningfulness. Thus, the meaning of world, both in its environmental and social aspects, is ultimately related to Dasein, which is the ultimate 'for the sake of which' and towards which everything moves.[39]

Not only in the noetic and relational dimensions, but also in the authentic and historical aspects Dasein is presented as self-sufficient. The fallen Dasein is called back to his authentic self by the call of conscience. The subject who calls is the fallen and anxious Dasein in its 'not-at-homeness'; it calls the self to authentic possibility. When the fallen Dasein listens to its own call by wanting-to-have-a-conscience in resoluteness, in the given 'situation' it moves towards authenticity. The anticipation of death as the ultimate possibility facilitates this process. Thus, the anticipation of Dasein's own death in resoluteness, i.e., anticipatory resoluteness, is that by which Dasein attains authenticity. So Dasein needs none other than itself for authenticity. Neither the environmental nor the social world has any influence on Dasein's selfhood. In other words, Dasein's authentic existence is attained neither by 'being-along-side' entities, nor by his 'being-with' other Daseins. It is achieved rather by Dasein's 'being-oneself' in anticipatory resoluteness, i.e., in the anticipation of death as the final possibility in resolute reflection. Anticipation of death, when seen as Dasein's 'being-towards-his-end', not only leads Dasein to its authentic

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[37] Cf. *ibid.*
[38] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 132.
[39] Cf. *ibid.*

state, but also reveals to Dasein completeness and wholeness. Dasein, thus, understands its totality not in relation to anything else but the self.[40]

The wholeness of Dasein, and all that is said about Dasein, is due to its temporal nature. We can have a grasp of Dasein as a human existing reality only in relation to the three ecstasies of temporality, viz., the 'what-has-been' (past), the 'not-yet' (future), and the 'what-is' (present). This makes Heidegger clarify every previous notion regarding Dasein in the light of temporality in the later part of *Being and Time*. When the temporality is concretized and seen in relation to the stretch of life between the birth and death of a reality, then we have the history of that reality. The study of such a history or a number of such histories in relatedness is "historiology." Thus, the temporal-historical nature of Dasein or that of any entity in the world can be understood only in relation to Dasein. No science of historiology is possible if there is no historical Dasein who is the existential source of any scientific study of historical events. Thus, both temporality and historicality can be understood only in relation to the temporal-historical Dasein.[41]

Our consideration of Dasein, so far as existence, as the existential horizon of every other reality, as projective understanding, and as the basis of its own wholeness, authenticity, temporality and historicality clearly points to Dasein's self-sufficiency in the state of 'caring.'

Dasein: The Finite Existence. Many sections in *Being and Time* depict Dasein as inauthentic, swayed by moods, anxious, estranged and alienated. These sections present Dasein as an existence that is finite, helpless and dependent. In the 'state-of-being' (*befinlichkeit*), Dasein experiences itself as being thrown or being delivered over in a situation in which it is controlled by various moods, such as anxiety, fear or joy. This thrownness is not only a handing over of Dasein to its own moods, but also thrownness among entities. This involvement with entities implies Dasein's submissiveness to and helplessness before the entities among which it is thrown. Here, we see Dasein's being as limited by moods in which it finds itself and by the entities among which it is placed.[42]

The thrown factical Dasein is characterized by existential guilt (*Schuld*). It is an existential lack in Dasein's being. It consists in the twofold existential limitations (*Nichtigkeiten*). The first is related to Dasein's thrownness. The thrown Dasein, as it finds himself in his thrown existence, is not able to choose its own ground or the 'state-of-being'. It means that the condition, time and all such details of Dasein's birth and early growth are determined for by his thrownness. Neither is Dasein able to get back behind his own thrownness and know the 'how' and 'why' of his thrownness. It continues in one's life, as one is thrown in various situations without ever desiring them. This existential limitation makes Dasein groundless because

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[40] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 133.

[41] Cf. *ibid*.

[42] Cf. *ibid*., p. 134.

it is not an explanation of its own thrown existence. The second existential limitation consists in the limitation that constitutes Dasein's choices. In the given existential situation Dasein is not free to choose all his possibilities. In choosing one possibility he has to give up all others. This unavoidable preclusion of all other alternatives except the one chosen constitutes the second existential limitation. Both of these existential limitations keep Dasein's existence groundless and dependent in relation to the past ecstasies of Dasein. Just as existential guilt and existential limitations keep Dasein's past in abeyance, so also Dasein's 'being-towards-death' keeps his future in abeyance. Because death is an existential of Dasein that is present with him from the moment of his birth and the fact that it is Dasein's own-most possibility of the impossibility of his being along with death's indefiniteness as to its when make his future groundless. In this manner death makes Dasein finite, by bringing in his existence the fundamental limitation relating to his future. Troubled by anxiety regarding the past and the future Dasein avoids facing the past and the future and focuses only on the present, thereby living a inauthentic and fallen existence. Thus, a fleeing of Dasein, from the past and the future, points to a Dasein who is anxious and helpless.[43]

In the state of fallen existence Dasein gets lost in the present involvement, so much so that it is cut off from his past and the future. This results in a breakdown in the temporal character of Dasein. Since Dasein is focused fully on the present, it loses its unique existence and gets lost in the 'they-self' which gives a publicness in which choices are determined by others. In this state, life is characterized by everyday mediocrity. Dasein, now, believes that it is the true self, while being far away from the truth about the self. This thinking is characterized by ambiguity, speech by idle talk and the motive for action turns out to be curiosity. It is the state of alienation and estrangement in which Dasein runs away from the anxiety that results from the awareness of existential guilt and existential death. Thus the fallen state of Dasein points to a Dasein who is finite, helpless, dependent and anxious, whose existence is marked by a tragic sense.[44]

Thus, in the 'state of care,' Dasein perceives the self in different moods. Sometime he thinks that he is the ultimate source in relation to whom meaning and truth of Being and beings are understood. At other times one feels that he is a dependent, a finite and helpless Dasein. This confusion about one's nature also binds him regarding destiny and how to work towards it. Thus, Dasein continues to be caught up in the care of everyday existence.

Human Nature in the State of the Experience of Being. In the later phase of his thought (Heidegger II), Heidegger visualizes human nature – Dasein as related to Being (*das Sein*). He says: "[M]an and Being [are] in

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[43] Cf. *ibid*., pp . 134-135.
[44] Cf. *ibid*., p.135.

their essential togetherness."[45] This essential togetherness between Dasein and Being is understood by Heidegger in relation to the principle of identity: 'A is A'. Referring to the Permenidian sense of identity, Heidegger says that every being has an identity or unity with itself that is brought about by Being. Thus, the principle of identity primarily speaks of the Being of beings, which holds beings in their unity and identity.[46] The Permenidian fragment stating the principle of identity reads as follows: "*To gar auto noein estin to kei einai*", which is rendered into English as "thinking and Being (*das Sein*) are the same."[47] Heidegger understands the Greek term '*einai*' in the original sense of '*physis*', viz., emerging abiding power, which refers to Being as finite presence (*Anwesenheit*). The term '*noein*' means "receptive coming to stand."[48] Heidegger concludes that '*to auto*' (the same) understood in relation to '*einai*' (Being) and '*noein*' (thinking / man)[49] is not only that of equality (*Gleichgueltigkeit*) or of indifference (*Einerleiheit*), but rather is a belonging-together (*Zusammengehorigkeit*).[50] Thus, speaking of identity as belonging-together Heidegger says: "We must acknowledge that fact in the earliest period of thinking, long before thinking had arrived at a principle of identity, identity itself speaks out in a pronouncement (the fragment of Parmenides) which rules that : thinking (man) and Being belong-together in the same and by virtue of same."[51]

'Belonging-together' can be understood in two different ways based on the emphasis we give to each of the two words present in the compound. If we see in this compound 'belonging' as determined by 'together,' it would mean to be placed as a part of a unity, a manifold or a system. This is what metaphysical thinking refers to as '*connectio*', i.e., a necessary connection or a causal relation of one with another. Such a way of looking is onto-theo-logical, in that it is connected with the beingness of beings and the highest being as the cause of all other beings. 'Belonging-together' can also be seen as 'together' being determined by 'belonging'. In this sense, 'belonging-together' is not understood as the unit of togetherness of the related into a manifold or system, but rather as the related belonging to each other in the same. In other words, there exists an appropriating relationship

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[45] Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 38 [Hereafter: *IAD*]

[46] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 23-26.

[47] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, (London: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 136 [Hereafter: *IM*]

[48] Cf. *ibid*., p. 138.

[49] Heidegger identifies thinking and man, and considers thinking as 'that-which-is' man. This does not mean that he denies the emotional and other aspects of man. Heidegger does not see man as a rational animal; but rather views him in relation to the totality of his existence. Thus, he characterizes all that is in the totality of man's existence as thinking. Cf. *ibid*., p. 30

[50] Cf. *ibid*., p. 138.

[51] *Ibid*., p. 27.

between the related whereby they let each other enter into their realms by their belonging together.[52]

Understood in the former sense of 'belonging-together', for Being and man it amounts only to a causal relationship. However, considered in the later sense, it means that Being and man belong together in the realm of event of appropriation (*Ereignis*). It would mean that both Being and man hold each other in the belonging-together. Man, though an entity in the totality of beings, is distinctive in that he, as a thinker of Being, is open to Being and stands, as it were, face-to-face with Being. Thus, man is oriented towards Being. In this orientation and openness towards Being man listens and responds to Being.[53] Heidegger writes on man's belonging as follows: "Man is essentially this relationship of responding to Being and he is only this. This 'only' does not mean a limitation, but rather an excess. A belonging to Being prevails within man, a belonging which listens to Being because it is appropriated … to Being."[54]

'Belonging-together' is not only man's belonging to Being, but also Being's belonging to man. The presencing of Being to man is not one of mere causality or an occasional event. Being makes present and abides in man by making a claim on him. Thus, Being draws (*angeht*) man to it. Such an occurrence of being as Presence (*Anwesenheit*) can come-to-pass only when Being appropriates man and finds in him a clearing place for its presencing.[55] On this point Heidegger remarks: "Being itself … belongs to us; for only with us can Being be present as Being, i.e., become present."[56] Therefore, "Man and Being are appropriated to each other. They belong to each other."[57] This appropriation involves a mutual gifting of man to Being, Being to man and an entry into the realms of each other. It, in turn, brings about in man and Being a genuine and deeper belonging to each other.[58] The mutual belonging-together is a dedicating (*Zuegnen*) and an appropriating (*Vereignen*) of man and Being to each other. Belonging-together, for Heidegger, is a more primordial type of relationship and is the basis of all the other types of relationships metaphysics speaks about between man and being, like the causal relation.[59] No metaphysical thinking can help us to experience this belonging-together of Being and man, which can be experienced only when one enters the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*).[60]

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[52] Cf. *ibid*., p. 30.
[53] Cf. *ibid*., p. 31.
[54] *Ibid*.
[55] Cf. *ibid*.
[56] *Ibid*., p. 33.
[57] *Ibid*., pp. 31-32.
[58] Cf. *ibid*., p. 33.
[59] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 31-32.
[60] Cf. *ibid*., p. 36.

Attainment of the Stable Human Nature: The Path

According to Heidegger, Dasein attains stable and authentic human existence when, having opened himself to the voice of Being, he begins to focus more on Being (*das Sein*) rather than on himself. So, Dasein must turn away from his self-centered existence characterized by care and anxiety and turn to an existence that is centred on Being. Thus, the attainment of the stable and authentic Dasein involves a single and a continuous process, which includes twofold movements, viz., the movement from self-centered existence and the movement toward Being-centered existence. The clarification of these twofold movements can enable us to understand Dasein's authenticity.[61] It is our task here.

Movement from Self-Centered Existence. In the state of self-centered existence, Dasein has an inconsistent image of himself. On the one hand, it experiences the self as a self-sufficient being and on the other hand, encounters oneself as an anxious, a helpless, a dependent and finite being. Seen in both of these aspects, Dasein stands completely alone. As a self-sufficient being Dasein stands alone because he is not in need of any other reality to know the truth about himself, the meaning of his life and even his authentic existence. As a finite and dependent being Dasein stands alone because there is no one to help the anxious Dasein. It is clearly illustrated in the fact that the guilt, existential limitations and existential death must be faced by Dasein alone, and no one can take his place. The so-called relationship of Dasein to Being, entities and other Daseins do not help in any way to get Dasein out of his lonely existence. Dasein's relationship, to entities and other Daseins, is more of a work-relationship rather than a genuine one to one personal relationship. These relationships do not add anything to the selfhood of Dasein. The much-talked about relationship of Dasein to Being, viz., his pre-conceptual understanding of Being, seems to be only a theoretical relationship of unity between Being and Dasein. This is also clear from the fact that at the end of *Being and Time*, we know more about Dasein who questions rather than what is questioned, viz., Being and its meaning. In other words, *Being and Time* does not succeed in establishing the real relationship between Dasein and Being. All these amply substantiate that the Dasein in the state of self-centered existence is totally alone and completely cut off from every other entity and fully closed up within itself.[62]

Dasein's perception – that he (she/it) is self-sufficient in his knowing, in his relationship with other realities, in his whole-authentic-historical-existence and depends on nothing else in any of these aspects – does not seem to be true, because a Dasein that is finite, left alone, anxious and

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[61] Cf. Vensus A. George, *From Being-in-the-World to Being-toward-Being*, (Nagpur: SAC Publications, 1996), p. 155.

[62] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

dependent cannot be self-sufficient. Though one cannot deny Dasein's uniqueness and his ability to understand, interpret and express in discourse, yet to say that he is self-sufficient and precludes any dependence on anything, would be an over-statement. Besides, a Dasein who is characterized by guilt, existential limitations and death as essential aspects of his nature cannot be the ultimate explanation of himself both in relation to his past and the future. Thus, a Dasein who is groundless regarding his past and his future and runs away from accepting the fundamental groundlessness of his existence and the anxiety that arises from it cannot be a self-sufficient being. From what we have said, it is clear that Dasein as self-centred existence cannot be a self-sufficient person. So he is a being who is in need of help from outside himself.[63]

Now, since Dasein is a dependent being, strictly speaking he is incapable of bringing about his own personhood. Because Dasein basically stands alone and reduced to his own resources that are limited, he cannot be the reason for his own authenticity. The call of conscience, which is the call of the anxious Dasein in his 'not-at-homeness' cannot pull Dasein out of the mire of inauthenticity. The call of Dasein to himself to be his authentic self is comparable to a man who, while sinking in the water, is trying to lift himself out of the water, by holding the hair of his head. It could also be compared to a blind man leading another blind man. The resolute response of Dasein to his own call in the given existential 'Situation' and the anticipation of death facilitating this resolute return to his own Being, adds a heroic and tragic sense to Dasein's existence. We do not want to deny the possibility of Dasein moving towards authenticity in this manner. However, the authenticity towards which Dasein moves is not a genuine one because he tries to be his authentic self, which is basically groundless and limited. Thus, we could say that the so-called authenticity that seems to take place in the state of self-centred existence is incomplete, as this state is nothing more than Dasein's reflective acceptance of his own tragic existence. What is achieved in Dasein's reflection on his finite existence is not genuine authenticity, but an understanding of his wholeness as a temporal-historical being.[64]

From what we have said, it follows that Dasein in his self-centered, lonely and self-enclosed existence cannot attain his genuine authentic selfhood. As a person who is cut off from genuine relationship with other realities, Dasein lives only for the sake of himself and his structural existence. His involvement with other entities is conditioned by his own interest to maintain himself. Therefore, in order to attain genuine authenticity Dasein must move from the self-centred existence. This 'movement from' we are referring to is neither a throwing out Dasein's past, nor a total break with the past. Rather it consists in a change in perspective. It involves that Dasein stops viewing everything, from the perspective of the

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[63] Cf. *ibid*., p. 156.
[64] Cf. *ibid*., pp.156-157.

enclosed, self-assertive and lonely self. It is a breaking of the shell within which Dasein has enclosed himself. It is a letting-go of the self and an opening of oneself to realities other than the self in a genuine and real way. Once Dasein comes out of this 'walled existence' of self-centred living, genuine movement towards authenticity happens. In the process Dasein moves from self-centred existence to Being-centred existence.[65]

Movement toward Being-Centered Existence

The movement towards being-centred existence is characterized by Dasein's openness to Being. He no longer views his life and destiny from the perspective of the enclosed, self-assertive and lonely self. Dasein lets go of his self conditioned by care and opens himself to Being in a real way by giving himself to essential thinking. As an essential thinker, Dasein responds to the call of Being by recollection of the call and thanks Being for the gift of the call. In the process Dasein is released towards things is opened towards the mystery of Being. Release towards things is an attitude of saying 'yes' and 'no' to the same thing at the same time. It is an attitude of accepting something as a need in Dasein's existence and at the same time not being mastered by it. In this state Dasein is involved with things, but not entangled with them. Thus, as a thinker of Being, Dasein is able to see himself and everything in the mystery dimension of Being.[66]

This twofold release makes Dasein a dweller in the neighborhood of Being. As a dweller in the neighborhood of Being, Dasein dwells in the fourfold manner (*Geviert*) in which Being shines forth. Dasein finds himself in the fourfold as the mortal, who is not able to get back behind his nature as the mortal. Yet, he recognizes his mission to guard the light of Being in this fourfold manner, basing his life on Being. He does this task by saving the earth as the earth, receiving the sky as the sky, waiting on divinities as divinities and initiating his own nature as mortal. Thus, dwelling in this manner, in the fourfold, Dasein builds things in their essential nature. In doing so he spares, tends and preserves Being in beings, and protects the presencing of Being.[67]

Such a Dasein becomes the seer (*Seher*) of the truth of Being. Dasein attains this status as the seer by shepherding Being in his own being and in entities. The truth of Being consists of the essential relationship of belonging-together of Being and Dasein, the relation of difference between Being and beings, and the manifestation of Being in the spatio-temporal history of Being. As a seer Dasein is a co-partner and a co-player in this essential relationship with Being. Only in the context of belonging together of Being and Dasein, the truth of entities and that of Being's manifestation in the spatio-temporal history are unfolded. Dasein sees the truth of Being

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[65]Cf. *ibid*., p. 157.

[66] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 71-87.

[67] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 88-105.

by his openness to the un-concealing process (*aletheia*) of being and dwelling in Language, the house of Being. When Being un-conceals itself, Dasein sees into the openness of Being. By this seeing into Being, Dasein lets Being look at Dasein. In this mutual look of Being and Dasein, there occurs un-concealing process in which Dasein's seeing the truth of Being takes place. Similarly language, as the house of Being protects and preserves Being in its truth. Dasein is called to become a friend of this house of Being (*hausfreund*) and dwell in language, thereby become the co-speaker with language that speaks of Being. Thus, Dasein by seeing into the un-concealing process of Being and dwelling in language, the house of Being, comes into face to face contact with Being and its truth, and shepherds the truth of Being he has experienced. In doing so Dasein continues to be the seer of the truth of Being.[68]

Dasein attains his stable and authentic personhood when he moves from self-centred existence to Being-centred existence. It is a single process with an inherent twofold movement. This is not to be understood in a spatio-temporal sense, even though space and time may be involved in the process. It consists fundamentally in a shift in perspective and attitude of Dasein towards his life and destiny. In self-centred existence Dasein's life, destiny and authenticity are understood as the task of Dasein alone, whereas in the Being-centered existence, the same is seen in the light of the appropriating belonging-together of Being and Dasein. In the former state Dasein is totally closed up in himself, while in the latter Dasein opens himself genuinely to Being, entities and himself. This threefold openness involves a shift in Dasein's perspective. To the extent that Dasein brings about this shift he moves towards Being-centered existence from self-centred existence, and in the process attains its stable and authentic personhood.[69]

According to Heidegger, Dasein's movement towards Being as the thinker of Being, as a dweller in the neighborhood of Being and as the seer of the truth of Being takes place in the realm of *Ereignis*, which is rendered in English as the 'event of appropriation'. The term '*Ereignis*' gives the sense of being far removed from everyday events, yet it is something so close to us that we cannot see it, i.e., it is something to which we belong. There is a sense of mystery in Heidegger's consideration of the reality of *Ereignis*. He describes it as "the most inconspicuous of the inconspicuous phenomenon, the simplest of the simplicities, the nearest of the near, and the farthest of the far, in which we mortals spend our life."[70] Being is different from *Ereignis* and only in this realm does Being manifest itself. Dasein's experience of Being also takes place in this realm. "The event of appropriation is that realm, vibrating within itself, through which man and

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[68] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 106-124.

[69] Cf. *ibid*., p. 160.

[70] Cf. Marin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P.D. Hertz, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 129 [Hereafter: *WL*].

Being reach each other in their nature."[71] In it Dasein achieves his complete self-realization in Being and Being appropriates Dasein. The realm of *Ereignis*, therefore, is not available to representative-calculative thinking and individual everyday experiences of man. It is rather given to Dasein as the essential thinker of Being, dweller in the neighborhood of Being and the seer of the truth of Being, who is a shepherd of Being in the experience of the belonging-together with Being.[72]

QUALITIES OF STABLE HUMAN NATURE

According to Heidegger, the Dasein who has attained authentic, stable and total personhood no longer is caught up in the state of self-centred existence. Though, he has not broken his ties of the past and is living fully 'in-the-world', there has come about significant changes in the way he looks at himself, the entities and Being. Hence there has come about marked changes in his perception of himself, in relationship to entities of the world and in relationship to Being. Let us briefly consider these three topics in the process and then unfold the qualities of the stable and authentic Dasein.

Dasein's Perception of Himself

In the state of Being-centred existence, there comes about significant changes in Dasein's perception of himself. With his new found relationship to Being and entities a new vision of himself has dawned on Dasein. In this changed vision, there is no consistency regarding his nature. Dasein still remains the most powerful of all beings. He is the only being who can understand Being and enter into a relationship of belonging-together with it. He still is the meaning-giver of entities, the discloser of the truth of reality and enjoys priority over other beings. Though Dasein has all these qualities, he now knows that he is not a self-sufficient being, as all he has is the gift of Being and his destiny depends on Being. In fact, his openness to Being has raised Dasein to the state of *Ereignis*, thereby making him the standard-bearer of Being.[73]

Dasein is still the same finite and limited being, characterized by existential guilt, existential limitations and existential death. Yet, Dasein is not worried about these aspects of his nature, but accepts these unsettling dimensions of his nature with calmness and serenity because Dasein is securely grounded in Being. As a result, all anxieties associated with the inconsistencies of his nature fall apart and Dasein attains a sense of balance and integration regarding his existence. His past is linked to the present, and

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[71] Cf. *IAD*, p. 37.

[72] Cf. Vensus A. George, *The Experience of Being as the Goal of Human Existence: A Heideggerian Approach*, pp. 34-40.

[73] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 191-192.

the future flows from his present. Thus, Dasein living in the present is able to look back on his past with gratitude as the gift of Being and move from the present with the sense of hope to the future as the manifestation of Being. Guided by the presence of Being at every step, Dasein accepts his life without fear and moves on with a sense of mission. Without getting lost in the uncertainties and success that come from his nature and activities, he waits on Being as an attentive attendant to experience within himself Being's continuous giving and to guard it as a shepherd. With this sense of mission and purpose, and being committed to this cause, Dasein dwells in a state of peace, tranquility and contentment.[74]

In this new vision of himself, Dasein has a realistic understanding of himself. He is aware of his own insufficiency to bring about genuine authenticity to his existence. Dasein begins to depend more on Being rather than on himself; it is Dasein's openness to Being that makes this state of existence. Dasein is also aware that he cannot take the first step towards Being-centred existence, unless he is called, summoned and claimed by Being. He knows that it is not the anxious Dasein in his 'not-at-homeness' who calls him to be authentic, but it is Being that initiates this movement by its revealing, concealing mode of giving. Dasein is only called to respond correspondingly, in order to experience Being in the depth of his heart.[75]

Dasein's Relationship to Entities. Dasein's changed perception of himself brings about significant changes in the way he perceives entities and relates to them. As an essential thinker, Dasein attains release (*Gelassenheit*). In this state of release he gives up non-willing and waits on Being. This leads Dasein to twofold movement: openness to the mystery of Being and a release towards things. The latter movement implies that Dasein cultivates right attitude in his dealing with things. It consists in giving things the value they have and accepting their importance in his life, while not allowing things to dominate his life. He is no more caught up with entities in concerned preoccupation as in the state of self-centered existence, but he respects and values things in the right way. Such an attitude of relating to things fills Dasein with respect and reverence for things. He does not look at things from the perspective of science and technology, as something to be used and exploited, but rather as a place in which Being is revealed and which he attempts to preserve.[76]

By his dwelling in the fourfold manner (*Geviert*), Dasein shepherds and preserves Being in things. Thus, Dasein's task in the state of Being-experience becomes the preservation of Being as it is manifested in the fourfold manner. Dasein, by saving the earth, receiving the sky, waiting on divinities and accepting his own nature as a mortal by living as a mortal, preserves Being in its physical, divine and human facets. In this manner,

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[74] Cf. *ibid*., p. 192.
[75] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 192-193.
[76] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 195-196.

Dasein allows things to grow in their essential nature and to manifest Being in which they are grounded in their own way. This relationship of Dasein to entities is much deeper and more personal than Dasein's relationship of concerned preoccupation with entities that characterizes the state of care.[77]

Dasein's Relationship to Being. In the state of Being-experience, Dasein encounters Being in a relationship of belonging-together. It involves Dasein and Being entering into each other's realms. It is an interactive relationship in which Being reveals itself to Dasein and conceals itself. The withdrawing or concealing dimension of Being makes Dasein seek Being, respond to Being and preserve Being. In all the three stages of Dasein's journey towards Being-experience, as the thinker of Being, as the dweller of Being and the seer of the truth of Being, there is the giving of Being in Dasein, the lighting-up-place of Being, and Dasein's responding to Being by shepherding and preserving this gift of Being. This mutual giving and receiving on the part of Being and Dasein clearly points to the nature of the relationship that exists between Being and Dasein. It is a one to one relationship. It is different from the vague pre-conceptual understanding of Being that marks Dasein's being as care. Now the relationship between Dasein and Being is an appropriating relationship of identity and belonging-together, which takes Dasein and Being to each other's realms.[78]

Though Dasein and Being belong together, Being is far away from Dasein. Being always remains a mystery to Dasein, as he can never get hold of the whole of Being. Being reveals itself to Dasein in different attunements, such as joy, dread and wonderment, reverence and awe. Because of this mode of revealing of Being, Dasein cannot have total experience of Being, but only experiences it as revealing and concealing, giving and withdrawing, presencing and absencing, all according to the attunements produced in Dasein by different modes of the manifestation of Being. This manner of Being's giving makes Dasein continue his seeking of Being. Even in the state of Being-centered living Dasein must continue to be the lighting-up-place of Being and shepherd the revelation of Being in himself and in entities. Thus, there is a continuous and interactive relationship between Being and Dasein.[79]

Thus, the life of Dasein, as totally authentic, is completely transformed. There is a sense of purpose, dedication and mission in his life. He lives not for himself, but for Being: to see its manifestation, guard it in himself and in entities. His life is lived from the mystery perspective of experiencing Being, shepherding Being and communicating Being's self-giving.

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[77] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 196.

[78] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

[79] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

CONCLUSION

As we consider the thought of these two great thinkers, Shankara and Heidegger, regarding the human nature, we find that there are five fundamental presuppositions that underlie their perceptions of the human nature and its authenticity, viz., an intellectual approach, two levels of human existence, personal journey to authenticity, secondary role for the body and living authentically as goal of human existence. We consider each of these themes briefly.

Both Shankara and Heidegger propose an intellectual approach in clarifying the ultimate state of human existence, viz., *Brahman*-experience and Being-experience. Though Shankara speaks of an indirect method, which includes the path of unselfish action and the path of devotion, and the physical and moral preparations as part of *Brahmaajijnaasa*, he consider them as preparatory and secondary. In the final analysis that which removes ignorance, opens the aspirant to discriminative knowledge and paves the way for the attainment of *Brahmaanubhava* is the intellectual preparation, with its three stages of the hearing, reflection and meditation. Heidegger says that Being-experience is attained in three stages: essential thinking of Being, dwelling in the neighborhood of Being and seeing the truth of Being. Both of these thinkers speak of an intellectual vision of *Brahman* and Being as the goal. Both speak of these three stages as ascending stages in which the seeker and the Dasein move from a lower level of experience to a higher level of experience. Thus, the paths of Shankara and Heidegger fundamentally involve an intellectual experience of *Brahman* / Being, both in the process and at the end.

Both Shankara and Heidegger speak of two levels of human nature. Shankara distinguishes from phenomenal state of human nature and noumenal state of human nature. The former is characterized by subject-object duality and is limited to empirical experience, whereas the latter is characterized by unity-experience, i.e., the experience of everything in one absolute *Brahman*. Hence, the noumenal state of human nature is experienced only in the *tuuriya* state, which is beyond all forms of 'ego-consciousness'. Heidegger speaks of a Dasein-centred state of human nature, which is characterized by self-centred living, care and anxiety; and a Being-centred state of human nature, which is experienced only in the realm of *Ereignis*. Thus, Shankara's *Brahman*-experience and Heidegger's Being-experience are experiences that belong to a level that is not available in languages belonging to the phenomenal level. Hence strictly speaking both of these experiences are incommunicable. To experience the *Brahman*-experience and Being-experience one must enter the *tuuriya* state and the realm of *Ereignis* respectively.

The attainment of authentic and stable human nature in *Brahmaanubhava* and Being-experience is a personal journey, and the seeker and the Dasein must walk alone. In the *Brahman*-experience of Shankara, at all the three levels of intellectual preparation, it is the aspirant

who must pursue the path. The whole process is a personal effort. The *guru* is an unattached master who only shows the way. Even Heidegger's Being-experience is a personal experience of Being by Dasein. As an essential thinker, a dweller in the neighborhood of Being and a seer of the truth of Being, Dasein experiences Being all alone in himself and Being's manifestation in entities. Hardly any role is played by the other Daseins or by an inter-subjective community of Daseins in one's movement towards Being-experience. As a matter of fact interventions of other Daseins are seen as distractions in the whole process. Thus, for both Shankara and Heidegger movement towards authentic personhood is a personal journey made all alone by the seeker and the Dasein.

Both Shankara and Heidegger give less importance to the bodily nature of man. For Shankara, body belongs to the phenomenal state and the bodily condition reflects the fruits of one's *karma* from past life. Body ceases to be when all past *karma* is exhausted. Shankara proposed physical and moral preparations with the aim of mastering the aspirant's body and its inclinations, which are considered to prevent aspirant's moving towards *Brahman*-experience. Even in the liberated state, *Jiivanmukta* though having a body due to the effects of *karma*, lives a life with no significant relationship to that body. Like Shankara, Heidegger also gives very less importance to the body. In Heidegger's early thought, he characterizes Dasein as a being-in-the-world, but not even once is the bodily nature of Dasein explicitly discussed. Likewise, in the later Heidegger, man's essential thinking, dwelling and seeing is not seen in relationship to his bodily aspect either. Thus, even the Being-experience is not seen as experiencing Being as a bodily being. Since man in his bodily nature is ignored, the inter-subjective and ethical dimensions are only vaguely treated in Heidegger's philosophy. Hence, both Shankara and Heidegger give only a secondary significance to the bodily nature of man.

The thoughts of Shankara and Heidegger attempt to show the worthlessness of living a life centered on the phenomenal existence and its values. They both point to the eternal value of *Brahman*-centered and Being-centred living. The thoughts of these thinkers do not want human nature to be fragmented – the process by which humans lose their uniqueness and significance. Their paths are ways through which man can move from superficiality to seriousness, from indecision to decision, from aimlessness to purposefulness, and from mediocrity to deeper and fuller commitment. In addition, they both want humans to experience the inner dimension of reality without being a merely superficial passer-by in life.

One may wonder aboutt the similarity of purpose and the presuppositions that underlie the philosophies of these two thinkers, even though they lived many centuries apart and in traditions that are very different from each other. The similarities would seem to be that they were addressing in and through their philosophies the human situation that in some way is beyond time and culture, but which has deteriorated and lost sight of its goal. Though addressing different cultures and different times in

history, the philosophies of Shankara and Heidegger announced to the peoples of their times that though the human is in the world, he is not of the world, i.e., that though in the world, man has a destiny beyond the world. Thus, there is the need for man to transcend his present existence in order to find the genuine life.

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CHAPTER IV

METAPHYSICS AND HUMAN NATURE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HANS JONAS

OZANAN VICENTE CARRARA

Through his two main books – *The Phenomenon of Life* and *The Principle of Responsibility* – Hans Jonas has entered the contemporary discussion on the metaphysics of nature and also on a new comprehension of human nature. He is guided in his philosophical reflection by the threat to human existence presented by the ecological problems we are facing today. These problems are especially due to the technosciences, which have affected even our human nature as technology has become an intrinsic part of it. Life's continuity is under threat. In *The Phenomenon of Life,* Jonas searches for the fundamentals of a biological philosophy, questioning the traditional representations of nature and making an effort to reconcile the idea of an evolutionary Nature with human finitude. In that book, everything in Nature is explained from the final end that is the human being. Jonas sees the subjectivity already present in the most elementary forms of life which already point to the human being as the culmination of the whole evolutionary process. From the fundamentals of an ontology found in the first book, we can situate Jonas' ethics as it is proposed in *The Principle of Responsibility* where he searches for the metaphysical foundation of responsibility in such a way that humanity may be preserved in its essence. I intend to briefly expose this metaphysical foudation on which he builds his ethics, trying to replace an ethics of conviction with an ethics of responsibility. In this context, I will also show the conception of human nature that pressuposes his philosophical work.

SOME INITIAL CLARIFICATIONS OF JONAS' PHILOSOPHY

It is in *The Phenomenon of Life* that Jonas proposes a transition from a philosophy of organism to a philosophy of the human being. Individuality appears in that book as the "specific mode of existence of living beings", that is, of the metabolic existence. What characterizes living organisms is the constant exchange of matter with the exterior world. Being affirms itself as a response to the possibility of non-being that threatens it all the time. In this response, which means an openness to Being, the human being creates itself, affirms itself in an identity from an openness to the other – the outside world – from which it differentiates itself and in relation to which it makes itself available – open. In this consists the metabolic process.

At the same time that living being gains an identity, differentiating itself from the middle which constitutes it, an essential duality also comes out, opposing being to inert matter. While the living being tries to affirm itself in its own perpetuation, the matter offers itself as an object at the subject's disposal as a means for it to realize its own end. This way, Jonas shows that finality – and end is an essential ontological characteristic of human beings, a dimension ignored by the current technical age that prescinds from ends. Jonas also characterizes metabolism by the fundamental polarities of being and non-being, self and the world, freedom and necessity which allow other functions to develop themselves.

Jonas also wants to distance himself from the Cartesian dualism which he blames for separating the world into two substances (*res cogitans* and *res extensa*), giving free space to modern science to develop itself. This way, value was expurgated from the physic-natural world and situated only in human subjectivity. Jonas wants to overcome this dualism between spirit and matter, raising his voice against the Idealism and the Materialism, as well.

As to the question of identity of living beings, Jonas sees it from three negative aspects as Pinsart shows: first of all, the organism's identity is not a physical one as there is a certain freedom and independence in relation to matter in which it perpetuates itself. Its identity does not come from a substantial composition nor from the sum of all its material compositions accumulated along time. Second, the organism's identity does not consist in the acquisition of a soul which is responsible for the bodie's activity, but the organism's activity comes from itself and finds in itself its own origin, which means that it transforms itself according to its own ends to continue to exist. Third, the organism's identity is not the form's persistence, but there is in itself an internal teleology which makes its identity come from itself. This internal teleology is not given by an intentional subject.[1]

Another central aspect of Jonas' ontology is that life cannot be comprehended until the body as corporality gains a central place in it. He says in *The Phenomenon of Life* that "life means material life and thus a living body, in sum, organic being. In the body, we find the knot of being, that dualism breaks but does not untie"[2] For Jonas, some parts of traditional metaphysics, by seeing human beings only from the two dimensions of body and soul, reduced the body to soul's tomb, depriving it of a spiritual dimension which was then concentrated in the soul (Jonas identifies it with the orphic attitude). Gnosticism also, according to Jonas, extended the idea of soul's tomb to the whole physical universe, the result of which was that the contemporary materialism conceived a world totally deprived of

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[1] Gilbert e Pinsart Hottois and Marie-Geneviève (Coords.), *Nature et Responsabilité* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), p. 70-71.

[2] Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Vida.* Fundamentos para uma biologia filosófica (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2004), p. 34 (author's translation).

spirituality. To solve this kind of dualism, Jonas proposes to see body as coincidence of interiority and exteriority, defining body from an auto-transcendence. He then proposes an integral monism as a way of overcoming dualism. As a consequence, the human being is neither pure matter nor pure spirit, but a psychophysical entity that reaches the maximum of ontological completeness. In it, the human being finds itself in its complete state. Nothing then can be experienced without the body and in it nature can be known as the only concrete real datum of the experience. From that point of departure, Jonas can search the organic matter for the elementary forms of what characterizes the human being and which distinguish it from other living beings, that is, freedom and finality.

This new monism that Jonas proposes sees a duality in the organic body which is the real condition of each living being. Such a duality is not reduced to the polarity between life and death, but it is the coincidence of interiority and exteriority that defines the body's auto-transcendence. Actually Jonas has in mind to put into question the nihilism so that he can overcome the dualism from which it comes. His ontology departs from the duality manifested in being which brings within it non-being. Thus, duality is seen in the own organic body and consists in the truth that "death is coextensive with life". The organism's duality is the way through which Jonas wants to overcome all forms of nihilism. To reach that goal, he bases his ontology on an organic metabolism. From now on, the question of Being passes by the body.

The Cartesian dualistic ontology, says Jonas, lost an essential aspect of being by reducing it to the *res extensa*. From that moment on, modern science has as its only object of analysis the pure matter which is explained in a mechanical way. That nature is then deprived of value and it is characterized only by contingence, characteristic that Jonas sees only in inert matter. However, the organic cannot be explained only on the basis of physical laws. Here the body is that which better represents the living being's duality.

Another important point to comprehend Jonas' thought is that, despite the fact that he rejects anthropomorphism in science, he accepts it in ontology so that he can invert the classical order of science that departs from the simple to explain the complex, departing now from the achieved and completed form of human being to then get to the most elementary forms of life. Anthropomorphism gains a place in his ontology because human body is the highest degree of ontological completeness. There is finality already in the body and this fact is a metaphysical one that dispenses any proof.

By putting metabolism in the centre of Being and not the human being, Jonas sees a very close link between human nature and organic nature. We share with organic nature the same struggle to maintain ourselves between Being and nothingness.

To this point, we have tried to show how Jonas builds his ontology departing from the phenomenon of life to propose later on an ethics in his

major ethical work *The Principle of Responsibility.* His ethics is founded in his ontology and depends on an ontology that supports it. Opposing Kant who separates being from value, Jonas wants to show that Being is not axiologically neutral. There are values already in nature.

THE PROBLEM OF SUBJECTIVITY AND HUMAN NATURE

As we could show above, subjectivity is already present in the organic life although in an incomplete way. The human being is, however, the end of the evolutionary process of being.

If Cartesian materialism separated the world into two distinct substances, value was expurgated from the physic-natural world and it was all concentrated in the subjectivity. To overcome that dualism, Jonas' ego is not thought as the ego of the Husserlian pure consciousness nor as the Heideggerian *Dasein.* It is a corporal ego, an organic body that feels pain. It is not an acosmic ego as it seems to be found in some forms of Existentialism.

The human being for Jonas is end-oriented, that means it is a teleological being, as it is also in Aristotle. For Jonas, Darwinism did not diminish human dignity by approximating human evolution to that of animals, but evolutionism obliged us to think of a genetical relation between matter and spirit. Thus, conscience and extension exist together and depend on one another. There is no spirit without body.

From this point of departure, Jonas wants to demonstrate that there are traces of subjectivity even in the most elementary levels of organic life. He wants then to demonstrate individuality in the organic being and its development up to the most developed form of life that we find in human beings. By the principle of continuity, the human being's subjectivity shows itself also in organic life. In the introduction of *The Phenomenon of Life,* he says: "even in its most primitive forms the organic already prefigures the spiritual and even in its most elevated dimensions the spirit remains part of the organic".[3] The ancients accepted the first part of this statement and the moderns the second.

The physical substance, for Jonas, has to be thought of as endowed with a primordial potentiality. That does not mean a return to Aristotle, but rather Jonas needs finality – a teleology to explain the evolutionary vault. Differently from Aristotle, Jonas seeks finality in the origin and in the development of the multiplicity of life. Aristotle does not see a genetic relation between the several levels of being. Thus, subjectivity must be thought as "fulfillment, as telos, as accomplishment of a movement oriented

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[3] Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Vida.* Fundamentos para uma biologia filosófica (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2004), Introduction.

to that point".[4] By the principle of continuity, we are taught by the most elevated with respect to the inferior. Nature, says Jonas, is one so that Being in its uniqueness presents, since the most inferior level of being, a form that already reflects subjectivity. If human subjectivity is end-oriented, it must have emerged from something that also is end-oriented. It is important to clarify that it is not a mental end that we already find in matter, but an infinite gradation of this subjectivity's expression, that is, a tendency and a finality.

Jonas makes a difference between *psiquê* and *ipseity* (selfhood). The former finds its expression in any form of impulse and the latter is the sphere of proper individuality, being its first level a subjectivity still without subject, then the second level a subjectivity not yet aware of its own elements (*ipseity*) and, in the last level, the subjectivity of a conscious subject.[5] This way, in the matter formed since the big bang, there must have been present the possibility of a subjectivity, something still hidden that waited for the moment to manifest itself.

Jonas then applies Aristotle's finalist principle to his understanding of Being as a coming to be. But what is the purpose of Jonas in rehabilitating a finalism? Actually, Jonas has in mind to search for a foundation for his ethics of responsibility in which the human being should not be touched in its essence and one of the reasons he gives for that is that humanity was already present, in a rudimentary way, in the most elementary forms of life since the beginning of the evolution of Nature. Here he intends to put the good that is humanity as the foundation of his ethics. Thus, finalism is intrinsic to the evolutionary development of Being.

Jonas is guided by Leibniz' question: "Why is there something rather than nothing?" Leibniz' question justifies the need of an ontology, and Jonas intends to base his ethics in an ontology, reintegrating it to metaphysics. From that, he can show the world's existence as a value preferable to its non-existence. Being is then more valuable than non-being. The demanding for Being we saw in Leibniz is a metaphysical one, but in Jonas it is of an ethical nature which means that there is a moral right of what is possible to come into being simply because it is possible.

As in Plato, there is an objective Good for Jonas and human beings reply to its appeal by becoming responsible not only for other human beings but mainly for a future humanity that includes also the whole biosphere and nature as well. However, Good for Jonas is not an idea out of the world, but it is "transcendent in the own immanence of the world" as evolution attests by making the human being appear as its last end.

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[4] Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Responsabilidade. Ensaio de uma ética para a civilização tecnológica* (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto: Editora PUC-Rio, 2006), p. 69.

[5] Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: in search of an ethics for the technological age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 73.

Jonas talks about the idea of the human being as an imperative in such a way that its idea demands also its existence (we can see here the presence of Saint Anselm's ontological argument). He is thinking of continuity of life in the face of threats posed to it by the ecological problems we are facing today. "That human being exists!" is a categorical imperative in the Kantian sense here. It gets the following formulation in Jonas: "act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life".[6] Thus, this ontological idea of humanity is the object of this moral command and it is unconditional. It is humanity's idea that must be preserved. Thus, human being is the absolute value!

Here we get to our point about human nature. For Jonas, existence depends on responsibility. Responsibility is obligatory as a fact of experience. From its essence we can deduce the obligatoriness of existence. Essence here is not a concept but it is the existence of a thing. Then the goodness of something is, in itself, a fulfilled existence speaks about its own value.

Then, what is the human being? Jonas saw freedom and finality in nature. So freedom is also an essential component that defines human beings as only in them is freedom complete. Nonetheless, he sees freedom already present in organic life. Thus freedom is not only the human being's prerogative. Human essence here is better seen as a possibility of being chosen among many other possibilities. Essence is not something that necessarialy gives form to beings. Essence is possibility. Human being's essence does not consist in what he is but in what he may be. It has no supra-temporal nature nor reduces it to historical content. The human being discovers its essence in its encounters with Being. He constructs himself from the experience of those encounters. Actually, what he is going to become is decided by and in these encounters when his freedom takes a historical form and fulfils itself. Although freedom manifests itself in history, its nature is a transhistorical one. Jonas talks about a human *eidos,* the essence of which is neither fixed nor rigid but something that, by its dignity, must be unconditionally preserved.[7] He finds in ontology a teaching about what is true in humans and about what has to be.

Responsibility is then what characterizes humans. Man is the only being that can assume responsibilities because he is free. If Jonas admits freedom already present in metabolism, it means that freedom is not only a spirit's potentiality, but it is also a manner of existing common to all organisms. Talking about different degrees of freedom in the different forms of being, he also can speak about a higher degree of individuality in each

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[6] Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Responsabilidade.* Ensaio de uma ética para a civilização tecnológica (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto: Editora PUC-Rio, 2006), p. 47.

[7] Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality: a search for good after Auschwitz.* Ed. Lawrence Vogel (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996), pp. 99-112.

new degree of freedom according to the distance the human being takes with regard to the world. Human beings transcend nature by distancing themselves from it.

Jonas' responsibility is not based in the subject's autonomy in a Kantian way, but it is relational as it is the object that claims responsibility from us.[8] We are then responsible before and in the face of another. Responsibility is not a choice made only by our rational conscience. There is also an emotional element included in it. The intellectual appeal needs to be welcomed by our feeling so that we can talk about a feeling of responsibility. Ethics comports an objective principle (reason) and a subjective principle (emotion) as well. The ethical imperative of responsibility must find a sensibility that receives it. That feeling in Jonas must be suscitated in us by the object itself. So, the object becomes a moral object by provoking our will. It is the feeling of responsibility that binds a subject to an object which then is able to direction our action in favour of itself, predisposing us to accede to its claiming.[9] Jonas'ethics of responsibility presupposes then a feeling of responsibility which – as in Levinas' ethics – cannot have reciprocity as its condition. Our responsibility towards the future generations demands from us a gratuitous action in their favour.

Responsibility has as its goal the protection of what is about to perish, of what is threatened by non-being. It means care for being which is in danger of being eliminated. Human beings and nature are things in danger of being ruined and eliminated. This fact itself is enough to put forth the problem of value, to impose being over non-being.

I could not finish before mentioning another of Jonas' texts where he develops a positive approach to the notion of identity. He does it from the notion of image that he takes from the Jewish-Christian culture. In that text, the ontological difference is understood by Jonas as "capacity of making images". When we make images, we apprehend the object through its *eidos.* The propriety of resemblance is present in image, as in the case of the human being's image, as made in the image of God. As Jonas himself says, "the external intention of the maker becomes intrinsic intentionality in image". However, the characteristic of resemblance is not a complete one. The image cannot get confused with the object of which it is only an image. Then, resemblance stays on the level of superficiality without touching the matter in which it incarnates itself. There is no cause behind images. The image is given all at once; it is not able to be perfected nor inscribed in temporality. That takes us to see an ontological incompleteness in the image, which means that it selects some particular aspects that are representative of

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[8] Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: in search of an ethics for the technological age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 87.

[9] Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Responsabilidade.* Ensaio de uma ética para a civilização tecnológica (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto Editora PUC-Rio, 2006), p. 157.

objects. The image gathers the symbolic essential in such a way that we can apprehend from the human-image the *eidos.* In regard to it, culpability and sin come out of a non-respect towards the image of man.[10]

CONCLUSION

As has been shown, the human being is defined by Jonas as responsibility. An object's responsibility is what in itself demands being recognized as something of value. There is, however, a being who has an absolute value and that being is the human being. We can see here how responsibility's essence and human being's essence coincide with each other. We have showed also that essence in Jonas means possibility, linking very closely freedom and responsibility. It is the imperative of responsibility and the feeling intrinsic to it that could save humanity from being destroyed. There will not be responsibility if there are no human beings left, that is, responsibility claims the concretization of the physical presence of human beings as the only entity capable of responsibility.

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[10] Hans Jonas, "Homo Pictor and the Differentia of Man*,*" in *Social Research*, 29 (1962), pp. 201-220.

CHAPTER V

REALISTS AND CONSTRUCTIONISTS ON HUMAN NATURE

DARIUS DOBRANSKI

Trip One – To the "Body Worlds" Factory

Several years ago, a small town in Western Poland near the Polish-German border, whose residents had been plagued by unemployment for years, became a site of social confrontation. Local residents were confronted by the plans of Gunther von Hagens, a German physician and artist, who hoped to set up a small factory in their town. The local population split into two warring camps: one for and the other against the factory. Interestingly, the dispute had nothing to do with remuneration schemes, working conditions, environmental issues or the German nationality of the factory's owner. The bone of contention was the planned production profile of Gunter von Hagens' business. What von Hagens wanted to "manufacture" in the small Polish town were human corpses, specially preserved for scientific and artistic purposes using his unique technique called plastination. The plan was that the factory would comprise two main lines of business based on the same technology. Firstly, it would buy human corpses from local residents. Secondly, it would turn the corpses into a wide range of products in a special process in which the bodies would be fixated, resin impregnated, artistically posed and hardened.

To wind up our little trip, without going into aspects of the technology (if you are interested in these, go to von Hagens' website where – should you wish to – you can also sign over your body to the German anatomist), let me just say that in addition to financial profits, the initiator of the factory idea wanted to disseminate knowledge of human anatomy and to launch a completely new branch of art which explores the mysteries of the inner depths of humanity – in a very strict sense of the expression.

Trip Two – To a Maternity Clinic

Born in 1978, Louise Brown, is the first child in the history of humanity that was conceived outside her mother's womb. In technical terms, one could say that Louise is a product of a sophisticated technology called *in vitro fertilization*. There is no doubt that the scientific procedure was a medical breakthrough – not only in terms of technology itself, but also because of certain symbolic qualities. After all, human conception – one of nature's greatest secrets – unfolded under the harsh glare of laboratory lights.

What we call "the technology of human reproduction" (incorporating, for example, in vitro fertilization) is an application of (previously theoretical) scientific knowledge about hormones regulating women's menstrual cycles; physiological mechanisms underlying fertilization; different phases of embryonic development; and reproduction of animals, etc. As with every kind of knowledge, it is a knowledge that not only makes it possible to explore the laws of nature, but also provides a tool to control them.

As the philosopher of medicine Kurt Bayertz points out[1], the history of knowledge about human reproduction is as old as human history. For example, a description of "surrogate motherhood" can be traced back to the Bible.[2] The knowledge of reproduction has always been characterized by two major aspects: the one against reproduction and the one pro-birth (or, more specifically, pro-life and pro-choice). Having said this, as Bayertz argues, medicine has only recently developed techniques allowing the determination of certain features of a future child (eye colour, gender, etc.). Technological interventions of science in human reproduction are, therefore, accompanied by procedures preventing unexpected or unwanted cases ("negative eugenics") and, on the other hand, the, as yet, potential capacity to create specific required qualities (i.e. "positive eugenics").

Trip Three – To the Hospital – (Kidney Transplant)

The medical term of transplantation comes from the Latin word *transplantare* which means "to uproot" or "to displace". In medical terms, transplantation refers very broadly to the moving of cells, tissues and organs. The branch of science dealing with transplants is called transplantology, a section of clinical medicine. Cells or organs can be transplanted from one part of the body to another within the same individual (autotransplantation). In this case, the donor and the recipient is the very same person. Transplantation can also involve two individuals, whereby the donor and the recipient are two different persons. Furthermore, transplantation is possible between individuals of two different species, e.g. from animals (donors) to humans (recipients). This type is called xenotransplantation. Transplantations can be performed *ex morto*, i.e. from a dead individual to a living one, or *ex vivo*, i.e. between two living individuals[3].

Contemporary medicine in developed countries has now embarked on the path of progressive development of the use of human corpses. Practically the entire human body can now be utilized for medical purposes. The French biologist, Jean Bernard, has put forward the following

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[1] Kurt Bayertz, *GenEthics, Technological Intervention in Human Reproduction as a Philosophical Problem* (Cambridge, 1994).

[2] Bible, Book of Genesis, 30: 1-6; 16: 1-4.

[3] Maria Nowacka, *Etyka a transplantacje [Ethics and Transplantation]* (Warsaw, 2003), p. 9.

classification of components and products of the human body which can be used for transplants:

a) the entire body (in drug testing); b) whole organs including limb transplants; c) blood; d) eyes; e) elements of the procreation process: sperm and ova; f) human tissue cells and their derivatives; g) components naturally removed from the human body: urine, hair, nails.[4]

QUESTIONS: CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

As commonly known, Immanuel Kant regarded trips of all kinds as a means, not as an end in itself. Following in his footsteps, let us progress slightly towards the final goal of our discussion and ask the question what philosophical anthropology (M. Scheler), supplemented with insights from the area of philosophy of science (I. Hacking), would say when visiting von Hagens' "Body Worlds", donating a kidney or discussing "in vitro" fertilization.

Herbert Schnädelbach concludes his study "Philosophy in Germany" with a chapter entitled "Man" in which he outlines major trends in German philosophical anthropology. He goes on to present arguments justifying the claim that the philosophical study of humans is necessary because of overwhelming dominance of exact sciences.[5]

Without going into details of this problem, it needs to be pointed out that the sense of undertaking philosophical studies of humanity, in Schnädelbach's view, stems from excessive in-depth empirical knowledge of humans and from the absence of proper communication between different scientific disciplines. The great paradox of our human predicament, Schnädelbach argues, is that we have investigated many things and know a lot about ourselves, however, we in fact understand very little of this vast body of knowledge. Consequently, Schnädelbach claims, philosophical anthropology should be recognized as a domain of hermeneutics which takes the question "what is man?" and turns it into "who are we?" Only this approach, Schnädelbach stresses, can make the empirical knowledge of humans more comprehensible and, as a result, complement empirical sciences with an element of self-knowledge.

Some of the methods that should be employed in anthropology's interpretative tasks include: clarification of notions and concepts, along with criticism of suppositions of the existing knowledge about humans, as well as methodical scepticism both towards any "final" statements of knowledge about the everyday life world and, essentially, any type of scientific and philosophical knowledge. In the domain of ancient philosophy, the pioneer of the reflexive approach to knowledge about humans was Socrates. Its

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[5] Herbert Schnadelbach, *Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933* (Cambridge, 1984).

precursor in modern philosophy was Descartes. Their followers in the contemporary philosophy of man include Max Scheler, for whom the study of man represented the "history of man's self-consciousness"; Helmut Plessner, who saw it as "a theory of man, with his eccentric position in the world" and, last but not least, Odo Marquardt, who viewed anthropology as "a theory of man with a philosophical purpose, based on his essential dubitability".

The assumption adopted for the purpose of this study is that philosophical anthropology seeks to realize these hermeneutical tasks, i.e. expose the meaning and sense of facts which say that some relations between practical science and the world of life can be dangerous for humankind. It seems that philosophical anthropology could say the same after taking the trips described above**.**

"HUMAN NATURE" IN PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Historians of philosophy generally trace the beginnings of philosophical anthropology to the rise of the Sophist Movement and Socrates.[6] For the modern philosophy of man, of particular significance are Kant's studies, especially his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.

Sophists also made a number of significant contributions to the development of anthropology. Some of them are:

- a) practical (political) inclination of the Sophists' activities;
- b) use of induction as a method for justifying views;
- c) use of rhetoric and eristics to develop the public virtues of the *Paideia* ideal.

Socrates, on the other hand, opened up a whole new area, which he referred to as "human matters." The latter came before philosophy. In the Socratic system, human nature is explored by reference to the category of "soul" (psyche). The general motto of Socratic philosophy can be summed up with the aphorism inscribed in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: "Gnothi Seauton" ("know yourself"), once used by Socrates and understood today not only as a philosophical maxim but also (since Kant) as a duty "to know yourself."[7] Humankind, Kant asserts, is the only living species endowed

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[6] Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy* (Albany, 1987), vol. 1., p. 199.

[7] *Ibid*, p.203, Reale writes: "The Socratic doctrine can be summarized in these converging proposition: "know your self" and "take care of your self". To know "your self" does not mean to know your own name, nor own body, but rather to examine interiorly and to know your own soul, just as to care for yourself does not mean to care for your body, but for your soul. To teach men to know and to care for their souls is the supreme task that Socrates considered himself to have been given by God."

with a privilege to realize a set of obligations including the duty of achieving self-knowledge. In his discussion of anthropology, Kant explores both human physiology and the "pragmatic" aspect of human nature. What Kant regards as pragmatic aspects of human nature is normative in character. It refers to all deliberations on the ideal of humanity which, to Kant, was accommodated within a system of rational free behaviours of a human being, the subject of free will, and the natural law.[8]

The Sophists' and Socrates' discussion of the problems of humanity and self-knowledge, followed by Kant's subsequent insights, later became a starting point for other auto-interpretations, a synthetic account of which was proposed by Max Scheler.[9] Let us restate the main assumptions.

In the subjective order which is not always consistent with the chronological sequence the first type of auto-interpretation in the history of human philosophy was anthropology of religion. In this framework, humans (as God's created beings) search for their own "self", their humanity, in the transcendental dimension. In this self-image human nature is seen as an imperfect imitation of divine perfection. Religious anthropology, in its historiosophic aspects, is of a two-fold nature. On the one hand, it emphasizes the insignificance and futility of humans' worldly endeavours and strivings. On the other hand, at least in some respects it gives hope for the achievement of reconciliation with God, i.e. the state of true happiness.

Another stage in the history of human auto-interpretation is the Greek discovery of the mind which, to Greek philosophers, signified not only the very essence of human nature, but also the "cosmic principle" and the "order of being." Ancient philosophers, both in their theoretical work and practical political activities, strove to define the essence of reason. Reason, intellect, rationality – these fundamental principles governed the order of all spheres of philosophical reflection during Antiquity. For example, in ancient ethics the principles were evident in Socrates' ethical intellectualism;[10] in ontology and epistemology – Platonic rational ideas are apprehended by reason (*Nous*);[11] in practical philosophy – the role ascribed by Aristotle is assigned to common sense (*Phronesis*).[12]

The third auto-presentation mentioned by Scheler is the anthropology of "*homo faber*" which evolved from the naturalists and then through positivist and pragmatic concepts of human being. These only point to differences in the level of development between humans and animals. The approaches are based on the assumption that all living beings share identical drives, while human intelligence essentially comes down to the sublimation

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[8] I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (Cambridge, 2006).

[9] Max Scheler, "*On the Idea of Man*", in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* ," vol. 9, no. 3, October (1978).

[10] Cf. Plato, *Crito*.

[11] Cf. Plato, *Republic*.

[12] Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*.

of natural mental capabilities which also occur in animals. In terms of body organs, morphology and physiology, humans do not possess anything that is specific to them and unique, anything that the highest vertebrates would not have in a less developed form.

Scheler argues that this attitude to the knowledge of humans has prevailed over other frameworks and is the dominant approach in contemporary times. Its origins can be traced back to the philosophical traditions of Democritus and Epicurus. It was then expanded through Bacon, Hobbes, Hume, Mill, Comte, Spencer and, finally, Darwin.

The fourth type proposed by Scheler is an anthropology of the philosophy of life, which was close to Scheler's own views. In this anthropological framework *homo sapiens* is viewed as an evolutionary "blind alley," its main icon being Apollo. Philosophy of life regards human spirituality, reason and intellect as symptoms indicating human corruption and decadence (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson).

The fifth, and the final, manifestation of the history of anthropology mentioned by Scheler is the anthropology of postulated atheism which has its source in the belief that any assumption of God's existence is utterly irreconcilable with the idea of free and responsible human existence. Two major representatives of this anthropology of postulated atheism are Hartmann and Kerler.

Moreover, the list of types of philosophy of man presented by Scheler could be extended. For example, there are anthropology systems based on such categories as structure (Levi Strauss), discourse (Foucault), emancipation (Habermas, the Feminists), play (Huizing's *homo ludens*) etc. However in view of our main objective the types discussed above provide sufficient historical context.

From the perspective of contemporary philosophy and the accomplishments of science, anthropology after Scheler may be regarded as historical witness to the ongoing search made by philosophers. Today we are more concerned with the question whether human nature can be ascribed any inherent value. If the answer to the question is positive, the next step is determining how the normative importance of human nature might be justified.

Kurt Bayertz,[13] a proponent of the weaker version of constructivism in human philosophy, derives the normative status of human corporality from the "close connection with the human person." In his discussion presented in *GenEthics* about the relationship between biotechnology, genetics and human freedom, Bayertz speaks in favour of "weak paternalism of the law" which is supposed to safeguard human liberty and dignity, for example from human body trade. Reflecting upon situations similar to the three trips described above, Bayertz formulates several basic arguments referring to representations of human nature (also human

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[13] Kurt Bayertz, "Human Nature: How Normative Might It Be?" in *Journal of Medicine and Ph*ilosophy (2003), vol. 28. no. 2, pp. 143-145.

body).[14] The first argument is rooted in a religious interpretation in which human nature (and therefore the human body) is viewed as God's creation. All the attributive values and the immanent value of human nature (body) are immediate derivatives of a transcendental reality. The religious argument also comprises the notion of "sanctity of human nature (body)." What Bayertz notes, however, is the fact that in today's pluralist and "post-metaphysical" Europe the religious formula is limited in scope and is only suitable for use in the private (not public) domain.

The second argument proposed by Bayertz is the *realist* argument – based on the assertion of facts rather than rational argumentation. To a realist, human nature is a given fact which, rather than requiring any justification, is simply discovered – for example by means of a phenomenological description engaging axiological consciousness (Scheler). The realist justification is often accompanied by the intuitive approach which is a part of pre-theoretical knowledge. Discursive knowledge, despite not being reflected upon, is used in everyday life to regulate people's actions because it is provided with the social sanction of exclusion. Another type of justification is rooted in the framework of the ancient metaphysics of "wholeness." Values, standards, goals, behaviours etc. are justified metaphysically, if the human being is put in the wider context of Cosmos. Questions related to humans as beings, human nature (corporality) and laws governing them are answered by knowledge of the Cosmos.

The Platonic dialogue "Timaeus" is a good example of this interpretation. The Cosmos represents the concept of a finished, organized and self-sufficient world in which every process has its *a priori* goal and every single thing has its *a priori* place. The world, the Cosmos, is a living organism whose individual parts form hierarchical functional wholes. The Cosmos is defined with such organization in which facts cannot be separated from values without a loss of sense. Every part is a functional whole, and the whole defines the functions of parts. Consequently, both a part (human nature) and the whole (Cosmos) represent values. The model, favoured by Platonic philosophers, assumes that humans – like other living beings – have their *a priori* defined place in the Cosmos, from where they realize their life goals. The final argument for the inherent value of human nature mentioned by Bayertz is the functional argument which only allows such interventions affecting the human nature (e.g. the human body) which do not violate the integrity of an individual as a person.

THE HUMAN BODY AS A PROBLEM OF NOT ONLY PHILOSOPHERS

Three basic schools of reflection on the human body have emerged in the tradition of European culture. The first has its origins in Plato's philosophical system. The human body, in Plato's view, only occasionally

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[14] *Ibid.*

participates (*metaxis*) in the reality of ideas. It is involved neither in rational thinking nor in the process of rational creation of humanity in humans. To Plato, "man is the soul which utilizes the body." According to Plato, one of the means to cope with the corporeal ballast is asceticism, i.e. life characterized by rejection of excessive indulgence in pleasures of the flesh. Plato's views on the body are fully expounded in his dialogues *Phaedo*, *Crito,* and *Book VII* of the *Republic*[15].

The second approach is rooted in the tenets of Aristotelian philosophy which see the soul as the form of a living thing. Each thing, in Aristotle's philosophical system, consists of passive matter and active form which makes it what it is. Knowledge, in the strict sense, should deal with the formal aspect. Only then does it acquire a general dimension. Matter and form constitute a whole. Living things have their own principle of motion which also represents their principle of development.

The third approach is the mechanistic tradition followed, among others, by Descartes. Descartes perceives an individual as something different than a living being. It represents a mechanistic whole composed of separate elements, so-called *res extensa* ("extended thing" or "extended substance") and *res cogitans* ("thinking thing" or "thinking substance"). The element combining the two components, Descartes claims, resides in the pineal gland. The nature of the body, *res extensa*, in the Cartesian paradigm, reflects the nature of the mechanism whose parts are connected by means of functional relationships. The human body performs a number of processes (e.g. physiological activities) which, in order to function properly, do not require any reference to the soul. In such cases, the body operates reactively. As Pierre Hadot points out, Descartes believes that the only sufficiently lucid and distinctive ideas making it possible to describe material (corporeal) objects are based on the categories of motion, number/quantity and shape. Rules governing these categories are founded on geometry and mechanics. Thus, the entire knowledge of the human body must be consistent with these rules[16].

To wind up the discussion, it seems worthwhile to emphasize, for the idea is not immediately obvious to all historians of philosophy, that – as Hadot asserts – the Cartesian framework can be accommodated within the mechanistic image of the world previously found in the Christian idea of God the Creator who occupies a position that is radically external to the actual works of his creation. What is more, the biblical formula stating that "He arranged all things with measure, number, and weight", Hadot claims, has served as a guidance to many philosophers (Descartes, Bacon or Pascal)

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[15] Plato, *Phaedo:* "Is it (death) not the separation of soul and body? And to be dead is the completion of this; when the soul exists in herself, and is released from the body and the body is released from the soul, what is this but death?"

[16] Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 126.

telling them how to embark on the study of nature in order to be in compliance with the dictates of their religion at the same time.[17]

Another equally pertinent context in which problems related to the human body are currently discussed is the law or, more specifically, legal regulations regarding the ways and extent of medical intervention into the human body and problems associated with transplantology. There has been a tendency for the liberalization of statutory, administrative and sanitary regulations governing the harvesting of human organs for transplants.[18] A number of European countries have introduced the system of "presumed consent" for organ donation into their codes of medical practice.[19] As for other legal provisions regulating human corporeality, a number of international legislative frameworks have been established to define legally acceptable approaches to the human body and organs. Typically, they are regulations governing relations between the patient, medical practitioner and family members on one side and the emerging international market in human organs, tissues and cells. Europe, for example, adopted the European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (1997)[20] which strictly defines the rights of patients, obligations of medical practitioners and preconditions for organ donation. Another important initiative created with UNESCO is the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005) which seeks to assist local legislators in the development of laws concerning the development of medical Technologies. For the first time in the history of science the Declaration formulates a detailed set of universal principles and values which, if adopted and respected by states, can ensure the safety and protection of patients against abuse, but on the other hand, however, restrict the scope of research.[21]

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[18] Maria Nowacka, *Etyka a transplantacje* [*Ethics and Transplantation*] (Warsaw, 2003), p. 39.

[19] Under the "presumed consent" principle, unless a person explicitly opposes organ donation in their lifetime, organs can be harvested for transplant after the person's death even if family members of the deceased person do not consent to organ donation.

[20] The European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine states, among others, that patients have the right: to be provided with reliable information about their health, to decide on undertaking treatment, to maintain their integrity as a person and respect their privacy. Any interventions modifying the patient's genome may only be undertaken for preventive, diagnostics or therapeutic purposes. Any other genome modifications are banned by law. Furthermore, the Convention prohibits organ harvesting for any purposes other than medical management. Cf. website of Council of Europe, Treaty Office.

[21] The Declaration mentions the following general rules limiting the scope of biotechnological sciences: a) human dignity and human rights; b) benefits and harm, c) autonomy and responsibility; d) consent; e) vulnerability and

CONSTRUCTIONISM IN SCIENCE ACCORDING TO HACKING[22]

Before proceeding to the core part of our discussion, let us delineate in greater detail its subject matter. In reconstructing the position on human nature held by an experimental realist and a realist, the focus will be directed on issues related to the human body.

It is clear, as our three trips have shown, that the current progressive technologization of the human body, and its radical naturalization, present just about everyone (not just philosophers exploring the human condition) with new challenges. It is especially the normative content of representations – constructed about the human body – usually referring to the sphere of spirituality, sacrum and taboo – that is losing its obviousness today.[23] This, in fact, applies both to philosophical speculations and legal solutions (e.g. the problem of trade in human organs).[24] Therefore, the problem of normative status of human nature (and the status of the human body) and its justification require a deeper insight,

It is assumed that Max Scheler's philosophy of man exemplifies a realist approach to human nature, centred on the task of discovering essential forms of human nature. In contrast, social constructionist views and laboratory praxis are represented by the philosopher of sciences and ethicist Ian Hacking. Scheler's and Hacking's views have been selected as a topic of interpretation because in addition to clearly illustrating their respective philosophical positions they share interest in social conditions influencing cognition and knowledge.[25]

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integrity; f) confidentiality; g) equality and justice; h) nondiscrimination; i) cultural diversity; j) solidarity and cooperation; k) social responsibility and health; l) benefit sharing; m) protecting future generations; n) protection of the environment**.**

[22] I. Hacking's views are recounted on the basis of the following works: I. Hacking, *Representing and Intervening. Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natura Science* (Cambridge, 1983); I. Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*(Harvard, 1999); I. Hacking, "Our-Neo Cartesian Bodies in Parts," in *Critical Inquire*, 34, Autumn (2007); Finn Collin, *Bunge and Hacking on Constructivism*, in *Philosophy of the Social Science*, vol. 31, No.3, September (2001); *Making Up People,* in *Reconstructing Individualism*, P. Heller, M. Sosna and D. Wellbery, eds. (Stanford, 1986); I. Hacking, "The Looping Effects of Human Kinds," in D. Sperber, D. Premack, and A.J. Premack, eds., *Causal Cognition. A Multidisciplinary Debate* (Oxford, 1995).

[23] Kurt Bayertz, "Human Nature: How Normative Might It Be?" in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, (2003), vol. 28, no. 2 pp. 131-150.

[24] Margaret Jane Radin, "Market – Inalienability," in *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 100 June (1987), no. 8.

[25] Literature dealing with the subject matter variously classifies Hacking's views. M. Sikora in his work *Problem reprezentacji poznawczej w nowożytnej i współczesnej refleksji filozoficznej* [*The Problem of Cognitive Representation in Modern and Contemporary Philosophical Reflection*] (Poznań, 2007), argues

The general tenets of I. Hacking's philosophy of science are discussed in the light of the philosopher's polemic with constructivists (disregarding ongoing disputes on whether his interpretation of constructivism is to be seen as correct and whether Hacking's views can – or cannot – be regarded as constructivist) including constructivism in the social sciences which, Hacking claims, comprise psychology, psychiatry, and clinical medicine.[26] Constructivism is a research framework initiated by sociologists of knowledge that addresses the phenomenon of scientific knowledge. Social constructivists maintain that scientific knowledge is predominantly created/constructed (the extent of the phenomenon being a debatable issue) by scientific circles (e.g. styles of thinking, knowledge paradigms) and only to a lesser extent determined by the properties of reality. Relations between knowledge and reality, according to constructivists, are typically accounted for by means of interaction categories (e.g. situation, actor, group, pragmatic goal). Because of their position on knowledge and research practice social constructivists are often defined as anti-realists. The majority of social constructivists are engaged in empirical studies focusing on the history of science arguing against those philosophers of science who correlate the success of scientific knowledge with the presence of theories, methodologies and rationality in scientific practice. Opponents of constructivists, i.e. so-called scientific realists, believe that together with their views they have introduced relativism and irrationalism into the philosophy of science. A number of varieties of the constructivist approach can be pinpointed in the history of science. Despite differences, they share a common tenet of what they name intrinsic reflexivity of knowledge (Hacking calls reflexivity the "looping effect" consisting of self-reflection of studied subject. Ethnomethodology, one of the more radical versions of constructivism in social sciences, considers reflexivity to be an intrinsic mechanism accompanying insight into social reality. If reflexivity is recognized as an indispensable element of social studies – constructivists claim – it weakens the cognitive power of the epistemological division into object and object of cognition in this group of

that Hacking represents "realism about entity", while rejecting "realism about theory". For the former type of realism, the criterion which allows acknowledgement of existence of any object is the repeatable possibility of manipulating that object, i.e. using it as a tool for interfering with the world. D.B. Resnik, on the other hand, defines Hacking's research position as "experimental realism" which does not require proponents to claim that a theory is true (likewise, the explanatory power of theories is of no significance). The strongest criterion of experimental realism (existence of an object) is the fact that the object is manipulable and manipulations result in specific pragmatic consequences. D.B. Resnik, "Hacking`s Experimental Realism," in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1994.

[26] I. Hacking, "Making Up People," in *Reconstructing Individualism,* P. Heller, M. Sosna and D. Wellbery, eds. (Stanford, 1986).

sciences, rendering it impossible to describe facts from a neutral perspective (i.e. "the view from nowhere").[27]

The constructionist approach is usually associated with sociologism in epistemology, a theoretical position which has its origins in Durkheim's work *The Elementary Form of Religious Life*[28] in which Durkheim proposes the following claims:

a) the epistemological primacy of social reality;

b) the source of cognitive categories is religion, which, in turn, is a social fact;

c) the social structure is a determinant of cognitive structures (categories of time and space are a function of the method of their measurement, the method being social in origin).

Durkheim then formulates two statements: 1) conceptual tools employed by the human mind have their source in society and 2) classification systems are also social in nature, in the sense that they reflect the societies in which they emerge.

Hacking's philosophical position on the status of knowledge (e.g. status of scientific theories, philosophical concepts, philosophical systems, etc.) as well as knowledge of humans can be characterized as follows. The status of knowledge is always historical. Since the seventeenth century, the knowledge formulated by natural sciences has determined the picture of reality we use today. Our views, on what is and what is not natural, change along with changes in natural sciences. By contrast, the main aim of social sciences is emancipatory. Hacking answers the question why natural sciences have achieved such a great success in contemporary times stating that the answer lies in research practice adopted by these sciences, which is essentially free from the normative dimension and moral values, encompassing experimentation, manipulation and intervention in the object. Hence the research practice of natural sciences is less about representing reality and more about creating it.[29]

The starting point for Hacking's philosophy is his acceptance of Dewey's standpoint that the apparent dichotomy between thinking and action is false. Exploring something, for example human nature, involves both thinking and action. Furthermore, each cognitive situation is inevitably accommodated within the context of the existing body of knowledge. It is not possible to adopt a completely neutral and isolated "view from nowhere" for the cognition process.[30]

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[27] H. Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (New York, 1967).

[28] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York, 1995).

[29] I. Hacking, *Representing and Intervening. Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge, 1983).

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

What we refer to as reality, Hacking asserts, is just a by-product of anthropological facts about human beings. Each philosophical approach, including the realist framework, should be studied as part of anthropology.[31] Humans, in Hacking's view, are beings who are specially designed by nature to "represent" reality. Humans are not *homo faber* but rather *homo depictor*.

For Hacking, anything that constitutes a representation is, at the same time, public in scope. This, however, should not be taken to mean that simple everyday statements are representations. Only knowledge that aspires to depict our world, for example scientific theories or philosophical systems, can lay claim to being a representation.

The history of humankind is, at the same time, the history of conflicts of representation. It is not representations (philosophical systems) that are attributes of reality but rather reality is an attribute of representations.

Asked about criteria that can be adopted to differentiate between superior and inferior representations, Hacking – after Kuhn – asserts that no such objective criteria exist. Representations are selected under the influence of social pressure and social demands. Hacking concludes that all those things that can be used to intervene in the world should be regarded as real. Reality, Hacking argues, should be considered synonymous with intervention[32].

In the first chapter of his book *The Social Construction of What?*, Hacking makes an attempt at clarifying what it means when a constructivist says that something (be it an object, idea, scientific theory, etc.), referred to as a specific "X", is a social construction. He comes up with the following statements:

a) X does not exist by natural means, or b) X exists but only in a context (for example a social one), not by the nature of things; or c) specific X is bad.

A philosophical position competitive to constructivism is essentialism. For example, in circles associated with the feminist movement the concept of gender has the status of a social construct. Feminists believe that the term "gender" is not a descriptive linguistic category, a conclusion articulating existing natural biological differences between men and women. Gender is rather a cultural niche imposed on a neutral biological foundation. Feminists add that the history of this cultural niche has always been imbued with ideology, interests and violence. In Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, a canonical text for the feminist movement, there is a sentence which echoes the constructivist manifesto: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

woman."[33] In this case, it is not that the word "gender" is indexical, but rather the gender itself is, by nature, contingent.

Another example of a construct-term is the English notion of "the self." The history of contemporary philosophy, Hacking asserts, abounds in descriptions of "the self." All of them, and particularly constructivist accounts, refer to Kant, to whom both the moral dimension and the structure of material reality are constructed socially. Existentialist philosophers (Camus, early Sartre, Heidegger) view humans as beings who are deprived of an "absolute centre" and who, in a way, create themselves with acts of free will, in situations of conflict with others. However, the "constructed self" must accept the agonistic responsibility for itself, the way it has created itself. The emphasis on the influence exerted by the society and community on the construction of "the self" has led some of the critical philosophers, particularly theorists of modernity (Charles Taylor), to trace and identify conditions, destructive in nature, which reify and atomize the individual.

A yet another concept discussed by Hacking in his account of the constructivist approach presented in opposition to the essentialist system, is the notion of race. An essentialist will claim that there exists such an "object", an essence, or a substance, and assert that race is a part of that substance.

There are at least two types of things, Hacking argues, which can be socially constructed: objects and ideas. Objects include people (children); states (childhood), practices (abuse of children), experiences (love), unobservable objects (genes). Ideas comprise scientific theories, notions, concepts, attitudes, inclinations, beliefs. To state that ideas are social constructs is to say the obvious, for ideas are products of human activity, the furniture of the human mind. As for the problem of ideas, however, constructivists take a nominalist stance, which means that, in opposition to essentialists, they consider terms used to describe reality to be inextricably linked with the described reality. Description of reality always involves an extracognitive objective, e.g. an individual interest. Specific "objects", such as money, do not exist outside the institutions in which they function. One could say that their ontology is determined by a network of social institutions.

Many constructivist representatives of the philosophy of science, for example Bruno Latur, propose that the category of construct should be extended beyond the field of social sciences, for example into the realm of natural sciences. Hacking is not as radical in his views. He proposes the category of "interactive kinds" to differentiate between the reality of the matter and social reality. Quarks, just like any other constructs used in exact sciences, are not aware of classifications introduced by scientists. They are unaffected by methods employed to account for them and they do not

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[33] I. Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 7.

modify their behaviour to satisfy scientists' expectations. Consequently, the way the reality of the matter is described, is not interactive.

THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN NATURE IN THE LABORATORY

Contemporary natural sciences, as indicated above, are dominated by laboratory experiments; the majority of researchers are experimentalists. Experiments, Hacking argues, are not means to falsify or verify a theory. They are an independent source of knowledge. Consequently, the philosophy of science should abandon analyzing theories, models, visual representations or science – and focus more on the analysis of the progression of actual research practice, i.e. laboratory practice, based primarily on intervening into an object. Intervening is an action understood in technical and operating terms. A related category is that of experiment, defined by Hacking as creation, production, purification and stabilization of a phenomenon. [34] Experimentalists create phenomena thanks to their ingenuity. It often happens that their actions are spurred on by an accident, by unexpected circumstances which they only rationalize *post factum*. Objects (phenomena) emerging in the laboratory setting are real in the sense that they can serve as means to induce other phenomena and construct testing equipment. Discussing the problem of realism of phenomena identified in the laboratory setting, Hacking applies the criterion of manipulation, stating that "by the time that we can use the electron to manipulate other parts of nature in a systematic way, the electron has ceased to be something hypothetical, something inferred. It has ceased to be theoretical and has become experimental." Of special significance here are the causal properties of electrons which are used in constructing new devices and instruments employed for the purpose of "intervening in the world."[35] The actual research practice, Hacking argues, is all about what can be achieved with the object of study. Observation is a complicated chain of actions and interactions taking place between the object, apparatus and researcher. A microscopic preparation is cut, stained and irradiated. Whenever an unstable element is revealed, however, it is referred to as an artefact or it is called "unreal."[36] This is, in a nutshell, the cornerstone of laboratory practice.

Hacking and the Scientific Creation of "Human Kinds" – Natural and Social Sciences

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[34] I. Hacking, *Representing and Intervening, Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 230.

[35] I. Hacking, *"Experimentaton and Scientific Realism,"* P. Zeidler, *Nowy eksperymentalizm – teoretycyzm-reprezentacja [New exprimentalism – Theoreticism – Representation]* (Poznań, 1994), p. 102.

[36] P. Zeidler, *Nowy eksperymentalizm – teoretycyzm – reprezentacja [New exprimentalism – Theoreticism – Representation]* (Poznań, 1994), p. 16.

Myth, then Philosophy, and today, Science all describe cognitive knowledge using (and creating at the same time) glossaries of general concepts. The presence of notions like "natural," "human kinds" or "human nature" in scientific nomenclature can be explained by the inherently human need for generalization and the pursuit of truth. Hacking believes that the content of glossaries is inextricably linked with the history of development of modern science.[37] The evolution of science does not solely mean the accomplishment of cognitive goals (the truth) but also – particularly today – the realization of group interests: political, economic and social. A common scientific practice, he adds, is the classification of objects, phenomena, people, etc. In the latter case, people were classified as rational vs. irrational, normal vs. deviant, beautiful vs. ugly, ill vs. healthy and so on. The history of studies into scientific classifications shows that classification seemingly seeks only to explore the object under investigation. What Hacking claims is that classifications created by social sciences, aim at an escalation of institutional control over human behaviour. Classifications are manifestations of the desire of institutions (science included) to consolidate existing power relations on the one hand and to preserve the status quo on the other hand. The reason for collecting data about prostitutes and compiling prostitution-related statistics in nineteenth century France was not to gain insights into the phenomenon of prostitution but simply to be able to control it. Similar practical aims, although more connected with cognition, were at play when sociology emerged in France. Durkheim never denied that the basic question his Ph.D thesis on the *Division of Labour in Society* sought to answer was that of the possibility of survival of social institutions if modernity destroyed all forms of traditional solidarity (i.e. destroyed society). Therefore, according to Hacking, the activity of social sciences in a sense comes down to *creating* groups of people that never existed before."[38]

Looking back on the history of science, positivism as a theoretical proposal of research methodology was something more than a phase in the development of natural sciences, for it also served as a reference standard for the scientific conduct of studies in social practice (psychology, sociology, psychiatry, clinical medicine). Some of the tenets of positivist social sciences included "science free from values", "investigation of facts, not values", "use of research method," "measuring, counting, observation" and the above-mentioned classification of phenomena under study. Social sciences (especially those which in the methodological dispute between

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[37] L. A. Hirschfeld, *Race in the Making. Cognition, Culture, and the Child Construction of Human Kinds* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 19-20.

[38] I. Hacking, "The Looping Effects of Human Kinds," in *Causal Cognition. A Multidisciplinary Debate,* D. Sperber, D. Premack and A.J. Premack, eds. (Oxford, 1995), p. 381.

naturalism (explanation) and anti-naturalism (understanding), supported the former stance) endeavoured to incorporate the methodology of natural sciences, efficiently creating replicas of concepts already known in natural sciences as well as replicas of categories and of what Hacking terms "human kinds," The notions of species, gender, "natural kind," etc. are linked to biological discoveries (*Homo sapiens*, for example, is the biological term for humans). Contemporary social sciences operate with the category of "human kinds." Some of the examples mentioned by Hacking are: "child abuser," "multiple personalities," "prostitutes," "homosexuals," "bulimics," "homeless," "alcoholics," "juvenile delinquents," etc. "Human kinds," Hacking stresses, are historical, which means that they did not arise until consolidation of the position of science. They coexist along with the culture of experts. In order to be able to describe them – or enter into a polemic with them – it is necessary to possess genealogical knowledge of the context and sources of their emergence. For example, before the nineteenth century the human kind of "homosexuals" was nonexistent, both in Europe and in China. The classification was created after the development of a structured body of scientific knowledge about genders, and its dissemination.[39] Contextualization of object as a precondition for describing the object distinguishes "human kinds" from "natural kinds."

Another difference between "natural kinds" and "human kinds" is the postulate of knowledge that is free from any values. Even though it makes perfect sense in natural sciences (for example, electrons do not care about how researchers examine their movement), it has no point in social sciences (medicine included). A person referred to as "child abuser" or "homosexual" is not only described and classified – above all, the person is stigmatized. Knowing that does not require any philosophical knowledge of perlocutionary force of language. It is perfectly sufficient to draw on everyday experience to be aware that calling a person something can be rewarding, punishing or labelling. For positrons it is of no relevance whether they are called positrons or something else. For a child, however, being called autistic is extremely important. Today, when science has various means of disseminating their nomenclatures, and scientific language is employed to account for practical everyday situations (criminology, immigration policies, social policies, fashion, sport and the like), the pool of "human kinds" is growing.

Adopted by the domains of administration and bureaucracy, classifications stigmatize people's behaviours, potentially affecting not only the individual's self-esteem but also other people's assessments and events. Classifications used by bureaucratic institutions affect people's choices and the way they think about themselves when planning their future.

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[39] I. Hacking, "The Looping Effects of Human Kinds," in *Causal Cognition. A Multidisciplinary Debate,* D. Sperber, D. Premack, and A.J. Premack, eds. (Oxford, 1995), p. 381.

Hacking calls the effect, accompanying the development of human kinds, the "looping effect". It applies both to individual and institutional behaviours. Knowledge generated by social sciences in collusion with natural sciences consolidates in the course of time, becoming a constituent of social reality. The "looping effect" is found even in the relatively neutral domain of natural census and the activity of government agencies. For example, US citizens know that the "human kind" of "Hispanic" is an ethnic kind used by government agencies for the purpose of population classifications. However, Hacking emphasizes that people's responses to other people's behaviours, and their mutual understanding is something other than reactions to classifications/objects. This well-known fact, Hacking goes on to add**,** represents the core difference between natural sciences and human sciences.[40]

Scheler, the Realist, and Human Nature

Max Scheler is rightly regarded as an originator of the modern philosophical study of man. Regardless of the stage of philosophical development, Scheler was committed to a philosophy focused on human beings. Scheler's realist attitude to the "nature of man" will be reconstructed below on the basis of the philosopher's elaborate article *The Human Place in the Cosmos.*[41] However, before embarking on a wider discussion, a number of qualifications need to be made.

Firstly, a focal point in Scheler's philosophical framework is the concept of "the act" interconnected with the notion of "the person." As Alfred Schutz points out,[42] the person and the act are inseparable. The person is not just an empty place, or an arena designed for the realization of acts. The person is alive and exists in the fulfilment of intentional acts. The attribute differentiating acts from, for example, functions is that the former are intentionally focused on the object (such as values), while the latter are devoid of any intentionality. There are a number of *a priori* acts according to Scheler, including a) acts of feeling, b) acts of preferring, c) act of love, d) acts of hate, e) acts of rejection, etc.

Secondly, Scheler's concept of man (and human nature) categorically rejects all approaches formulated in philosophy or science which reduce the human essence to a single determining factor, such as existing economic conditions (as proposed by Marx who claimed that the human being is a function of ownership structure and means of production).

Thirdly, Scheler's views on the human body are dominated by the distinction between the "live body" (*Leib*) and the "object body" (*Körper*), an external object of reflection. In the former case, the body is nothing more than a psychophysical fact which can be variously accounted for depending

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 380.
[41] Max Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos* (Northwesten, 2009).
[42] Alfred Schutz, *Max Scheler's Philosophy*, p. 137.

on one's assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, either externally or internally. In the internal approach, the body is given as a combination between what is corporeal and what is considered spiritual. The "object body", however, is not given in the natural presumption of the entity. It can be given in artificial settings, for example to a medical practitioner or a researcher who does not analyze it to determine any "internal experiences" but must rather put them aside and treat it as an object – the subject matter of reflection.

The human body, and the body's drives, are elements bonding humans with the animal world. To Scheler, animal drives are simple undifferentiated impulses. Humans, on the other hand, possess drives that are differentiated and conflict-based. Scheler distinguishes three main drives (*Triebe*): the sexual drive; the drive for power; and the drive for life.

Fourthly, Scheler recognizes the human condition in the world (universe) as absolutely exceptional, unique and incomparable with the status of any other beings. Human nature, in Scheler's view, is defined by acts of a special type, whose faculties and possibilities are not founded on corporeality, but rooted in the spirit (*Geist*).

Fifthly, Scheler's critique was aimed at the anthropological dualism of Descartes. Scheler views the human being as an organic living whole – justifying his views with the phenomenon of life energy (which nourishes the physical development of the organism), ageing processes, death and the phenomenon of movement (example, heartbeat). In humans, both mental and physiological processes are targeted at a goal which is the living "whole." Life unites the functions and structures of physiology and psychology of living organisms.[43]

Scheler endowed humankind with a special place in the universe, arguing that of all forms of life only humans are persons. A person is neither a thing, nor a substance, nor an object. The essence of a person consists in that persons only live in the execution of acts, while acts are sources of values which should be people's guide posts in life. The performance of acts is ascribed to the person – and functions are assigned to the body. Acts are executed, whereas functions happen by themselves. Functions are measurable – acts are not. The body can become an object – however assuming that the person lives in the execution of acts it can never be an object. The basic quality of the person's existence is integrity. The person, unlike the body, the phenomenon of consciousness, is an absolute reality. The person, Scheler proposes, has intimate (solitary acts) and social zones (acts which in order to be realized require the existence of another person, e.g. the act of love). Confronted with the question of the source of normativeness, Scheler does not resort to the transcendental sphere of the autonomous mind (Kant) – but in *ordo amoris*, i.e. "order of love."

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[43] An example given by Scheler to illustrate the symmetry of both functions is the fact that the dog's stomach secretes digestive juices not only when the dog sees meat but also when we tell the dog about meat.

Both in his *Formalism*[44] and in his later works Scheler pointed out that the concept of the person is assigned to a specific level of development of human existence. This view, however, gives rise to a number of questions: when exactly does a human being become a person, if there are several levels of "being a person"? Is a fertilized embryo, a zygote, a person? Furthermore, if someone does not perform acts constituting the existence of a person, when does the personal form of life die? The questions are fundamentally important especially in the context of the emergence of new controversial technologies, for example *in vitro* fertilization or abortion.[45] Without delving further into this topic, it is only worthwhile to note that Scheler distinguishes three stages of human evolution which are closely related to the types of acts discussed below. They are: the stage of full mental capacity: maturity manifested as the ability of differentiating between one's own and other people's emotional acts; and instrumental control over one's body.

Let us briefly discuss Scheler's basic spiritual acts which, as the philosopher believes, are key in determining the humans' unique situation in the family of beings, and – at the same time – demonstrate their connections with that family.

The act of ideation, a specifically spiritual act, transgresses the limitations of sensory cognitive faculties, making it possible to gain an insight into essential components constituting the *a priori* structure of reality. Only humans, Scheler argues, are endowed with the unique type of extra-empirical knowledge which results from acts of ideation and refers to the limitless generality of all possible things of the same nature. Acts of this type require questioning the reality of nature of the real world. The act has its source in the spirit. This constitutes the groundwork for all types of disinterested reflection, both in science and philosophy.

The second act, called the act of negation, offers the possibility to call into question the reality of the surrounding world. The act of negation triggers the development of a specific attitude towards reality, that of a spectator and actor. Such attitudes are a basis for action both in science and philosophy, and in religion. By saying "No" to life, through rebellion and refusal, the spirit opens life to the possibility of sense and meaning. Drives, which are rooted in the body, are unable to restrain themselves with such a "No." Only the spirit is capable of achieving this task.

The third act, that of spiritual openness to the world, exists in the design of actions. In structural terms, the main feature distinguishing animal behaviour from human actions is the fact that humans possess the capacity

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[44] M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (Evanston, 1973).

[45] The practical issue of the "beginning of a person" in the context of abortion is discussed by J. Crosby in "*The Personhood of the Human Embryo,*" *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 18 (1993).

to design and plan their deeds, set themselves objectives, select ways for achieving their aims, anticipate the outcome or modify their strategy in the course of pursuing their tasks.

The fourth act is that of spiritual objectification of primary resistance to drives, leading to self-awareness. Scheler believes that even if animals were given elements of intelligence, they would still lack self-awareness. Humans are their bodies but, at the same time, they have control over their bodies. This unique situation marked by ambivalence towards their own bodies gives humans the possibility to instrumentalize them. Just by way of digression, let us add that the human ambivalent attitude towards the body is referred to by Plessner as "eccentric positionality." Human nature, Plessner proposes, is constituted in the humans' eccentric approach to their own corporeal limits, for it is only human beings that simultaneously "*are* bodies and *have* bodies."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The term "human nature" is meant to incorporate all the things that humans are "by nature", i.e. independently of any social influences or individual will. Similarly to any life form, human beings are given a specific biological constitution which determines a host of functions of their bodily organization. This means nothing else than that human "nature" is shared by each and every individual belonging to the human species. Moreover, the term "human nature" implies that "nature" is not created by us humans, but rather it has been given to us. Also, it should be inferred that "nature" is an inherent foundation underpinning human existence and is indivisible into separate components. If it were to be assumed that that there exists something like "human nature" (not only in the sphere of talking about it), then "nature" would constitute the very boundary of each individual's capabilities. In their everyday life, people use an intuitive definition of human nature as a representation of everything that constitutes a human being. Humans, in fact, seem very adept at differentiating between what is natural and what is not. For example, in contemporary times everyone would agree that donating a kidney to an ill person is something by all means desirable and natural. However, donating a human kidney to a cat suffering from a kidney disease creates a certain problem not only to our human intuition in general, but – above all – to our moral intuition.

The term "human nature" can, essentially speaking, occur in two interrelated uses, descriptive and normative. In the former case, "human nature" is to be understood as a set of intrinsic attributes of a human being (e.g. upright posture, language faculty). In the latter, normative, case, "human nature" refers, either explicitly or implicitly, to a normative concept (an ideal, a model, a standard). The main philosophical frameworks referring to the representation of humans presented above assume a normative dimension resulting in a series of specific rights and obligations towards "human nature" which safeguard it against instrumentalization.

Referring specifically to one of our trips described above, family planning, maternity and paternity – these elements have always been a part and parcel of human existence. Reproduction used to involve a substantial element of risk. It is only today that we can legitimately claim that humans possess the technology required to control the birth of human beings. Control means that the former sense of uncertainty and risk can now be turned into certainty. Answering, in general terms, the question asked in the title of this article, it can be stated that different philosophical systems seem to share the belief that the most obvious thing potentially bringing about humanity's destruction is arrogant conceit resulting from the sense of absolute control over reality. We do not yet know whether auto-evolution is possible and, therefore, the current situation seems quite comfortable. However, we should avoid the temptation to become too comfortable, too snug and too secure. We should bear in mind that, after all, our absolute competence lies in the compensation of our own incompetence.

PART II

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

HUMAN NATURE/IDENTITY: THE UBUNTU WORLDVIEW AND BEYOND

CHRISTINE WANJIRU GICHURE

This paper is about the understanding of human nature and identity in the African context called Ubuntu. First, I will explain the meaning of the Ubuntu worldview. Following this I present the notion of Nature, and Human Nature, as can be culled from the mythologies of origin of the Bantu people of Eastern Africa. Kenya has been particularly chosen because the philosopher should begin her reflections with her own life experience. My experience is Kenyan. I then attempt to identify commonalities and divergences between the African, Ubuntu understanding of human nature and those of classic and contemporary realism in Philosophical Anthropology in the belief that "a 'philosophy of man' is something altogether distinct from an expression of merely personal standpoint or value system".[1] Hence Seneca's saying: "The truth is no one's property."[2] I conclude by highlighting the need for common ground regarding the essentials of human nature for any possible moral discourse within the whole idea of the common good, human dignity, and the respect of human rights.

For the framework of the paper I follow two Ganda sayings. The first one says: No culture is so poor that it cannot teach anything positive to other cultures. Put in KiGanda: *Omuggo oguli ewa mulirwano, tegutta musota guli mu nju yo*,[3] literally translated as: "A stick in your neighbor's house can never kill a snake in your house." The second saying encourages openness: "no culture is so perfect that it cannot learn from other cultures" – "*Ama gezi muliro, bwe guzikira ewuwo ogunona ewa munno*, literally translated as: "Wisdom is like fire, when it is extinguished in your home, you get it from the neighbor"[4]

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[1] Eric Voegelin, *The In-Between of Human Life: Conversations with Eric Voegelin*. Edited and with introduction by R. Eric O'Connor (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1980), p. 100.

[2] Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: A History of the Idea of Nature* (Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 172.

[3] KiGanda is a language of the Bantu cluster of languages in Uganda.

[4] Cf. J.M. Kanyandago, *Law and Public Morality in Africa: Legal, Philosophical and Cultural Issues*.

THE CLAIM OF UBUNTU AS REPRESENTATIVE OF AFRICAN CULTURES

Africa is the second largest continent on earth.[5] It is estimated that the United States, China, India, New Zealand, together with Europe from the Atlantic to Moscow, and much of South America, could all fit within the African coastline.[6] Geologically it is considered to be the Earth's oldest and most enduring land mass of which ninety-seven percent has been in place and stable for 300 to 550 million years; some parts for as much as 3.6 million years.[7]

Genetic, paleontological, and linguistic evidence indicate that the first 'anatomically humans' evolved in Africa, and from Africa migrated to other continents. The out of Africa migrations of the first anatomically humans are known to have occurred several times, some as late as 100,000 years ago. In the opinion of Templeton, the result was the global replacement and genetic extinction of non-modern human populations by anatomically modern humans.[8] According to him, the genetic reading is that post *'homo erectus'* migrations, there arises deeper human lineages all over the world.[9] This leads one to conclude that genetically every human being alive today carries the mtDNA of just one African woman "our common mother."[10] A further implication is that the DNA of that woman must have steadily become dominant as some material lineages disappeared with each succeeding generation. To a large extent, and for a philosopher, this appears to be merely a supposition, but, for lack of better evidence of the origin of man, it translates to a common origin of all human beings as African.

Owing perhaps to her ancient geographical history, the continent has always displayed a fascinating and inspiring interplay between man and man and between man and nature. Yet, despite being supposedly the place of the origin of life, and a continent richly endowed with minerals, wildlife and vegetation, people and animals have always moved around within and outside the continent. More intriguing still is the fact that while the out of Africa populations are said to have increased from about just hundreds to over 200 million in about 100,000 years, by about 1500 AD the whole continent is estimated to have had no more than 47 million people. The myriad of possible reasons to explain those movements, migrations and

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[5] John Reader, *Africa. A Biography of a Continent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), p. 4.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Reader, pp. 9-10.

[8] Alan R. Templeton, "Out of Africa Again and Again," *Nature,* 416 (2002) pp. 45-51; Cf. also Reader, p. 94

[9] Templeton, p.45.

[10] A.C. Wilson, et al 1987, "Mitochondrial Clans and the Age of our Common Mother". Cf. *Reader* (1998), p. 95.

displacements fall outside the scope of this paper. However, one can surmise that among them could be what Voltaire is cited, to have once said: that, two basic factors have always beset the human condition, whether in Africa, or anywhere else. These are, firstly, the harms to the human condition that arise out of the acts of nature, such as earthquakes, floods, fires, drought, among others. Secondly, there are the much more pernicious harms that human beings cause to other human beings.[11] This has been absolutely true of Africa if one considers the forced migrations of African people as slaves, on one hand, as well as the willful migrations and emigrations owing to other factors, including the search for greener pastures owing to climatic extremes.

The mention of these movements and migrations may seem unusual in a philosophy paper, but they have much relevance for the topic this paper, which purports to discuss the understanding of human nature and identity, from an African perspective. Part of the inspiration for it has been precisely those movements. Another source of the inspiration has been what Pope Paul VI, said on the subject:

> Recent ethnic history of the peoples of Africa, though lacking in written documents, is seen to be very complex, yet rich in spiritual, social and individual experience, much worthy of further analysis research. Many customs and rites, once considered to be strange, are seen today, in the light of ethnological science, as integral parts of various social systems, worthy of study and commanding respect.[12]

A third source of inspiration for the content of this paper has been the position, first adduced and defended by the late Henry Odera Oruka, that, any philosophical study of any topic in Africa needs to be approached under one or other of the various philosophical approaches.[13] One such approach is hermeneutical, whereby the scholar attempts to cull out the philosophical meaning from African wisdom, often hidden in myths, religions, sayings, songs, and poetry. The ever disturbing question however, is where to start. Africa, we have seen, is an enormous continent with varying races and cultures. Can one then really write something and claim it to be representative of the whole continent? If one was to do so without the danger of extrapolation, the answer is obviously in the negative. Nonetheless, recent studies by scholars of modern Africa show that despite there being many 'Africas', as regards culture and

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[11] Cf. Sisela Bok, *In the Great Conversation* (Washington: Aspen Publications, 2006), p. 60.

[12] Pope Paul VI. Message to Africa, for the Promotion of the Religious, Civil and Social Good of the Continent.

[13] Cf. G.M. Presbey, "The Wisdom of African Sages," In *New Political Science,* Volume 21, November 1 (1999), pp. 89-102.

human physical features, it is still possible to trace some fundamental commonalities among the African people; at least among the African people of the last two millennia. In recent years, these commonalities have occupied an ongoing debate particularly among political scientists, philosophers and theologians. Many are in agreement that some common traits of culture do exist among most African people. That commonality today goes by the name of Ubuntu, a Bantu word whose importance I shall explain.

Just as scientists have used genetics to confirm the fossil evidence of an African origin of *homo sapiens,* similarly linguists have shown that the most ancient surviving languages are rooted in Africa and, on the basis of shared words and linguistic structure, they conclude that the world's several languages are grouped into twenty or so linguistic families. Further research indicates that of these there are four groups, all African, which bear little relationship with all the rest. These groups are the *Niger-Congo* group or Bantu languages, the *Nilo-Saharan* group (spoken mostly by pastoralists groups like the Maasai), *Afro-Asiatic* languages, used particularly in Ethiopia & North Africa, and the *Khoisan* spoken mostly by the San (or Bushmen) of South Africa.[14] A most fascinating thing is that all four groups are represented in Eastern Africa. Of all the four, however, the most widely spread is the Niger-Congo group or **Bantu**. The term Bantu was coined by a German philologist of the name Wilhelm Breek in the 19th century.[15] In itself, it has no ethnic or cultural connotation. It is simply, and exclusively, a linguistic label of African languages and dialects among which the word-stem **ntu,** meaning "*something*," and is always used for persons, is common. The term *ubuntu* derives from the sub-Bantu group of languages spoken in *Southern Africa* called Nguni. It includes such languages as the Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Phuti, and the Ndebele among others, and which have phonological variants in the wider Niger-Congo group.

The importance of the Bantu for our topic is the concept of "**ntu**" which runs through phonological traits of what are otherwise very diverse people culturally. This paper, nevertheless, concentrates on the East African people with examples taken mainly from Kenya, which is better known to the author. The interesting thing regarding the Bantu phonological similarities is the concept of **ntu** as used in these cluster of languages. **Ntu** refers to a particular kind of "something" and that something is presented as having various dimensions: the "human," is at once the existent man or woman, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, at another level, human in the sense of humanness understood as something deeper in a person which makes him or her relate in a certain way with all other people. An examination of the words used by various people from East and Central Africa to say, for instance, 'human', 'humanness' and 'humane', show

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[14] Cf. *Reader*, pp. 109-110.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 182.

them all to bear *ntu.* For the Kikuyu of Kenya the word *'mundu'*, mundu means human being, while *umundu'* means the humanness in human being. Similarly, the Meru, also of Kenya say *'muntu'* and *'imuntu'* respectively, to render the human and humanness. The Sukuma of Tanzania say *'bumuntu',* while the Tsonga, also of Tanzania and Malawi say*, 'vumuntu'.* The Haya, of Bukoba region near Lake Victoria, say *'umuntu'* for human being, and further inland in Central Africa, they say *bomoto* in KiBobangi and *'gimuntu'* in kiKongo (Congo).[16]

This sketchy analysis of language in three African regions, seems sufficient to confirm that, despite having awesome diversity among themselves, many African cultures display a phonological likeness that can only be explained as emerging from a common root in the past. The analysis of those similarities reveals them to be the cornerstone of African thought and moral life, which political scientists, philosophers and theologians believe to have significant importance in African research. Such is the case with the concept of Ubuntu. An analysis of the term shows it to consist of 'two words in one': a prefix *ubu-* and the stem *ntu-*, evoking a dialectical relationship of being and becoming. Without attempting any metaphysical combination of the two concepts, we have an example from Haya language (Tanzania). To say of a person that he has desirable *pneumatic* human qualities, they say: *Umuntu aina Ubu-ntu.* Thus, *Ubu-* and *ntu- are* seen to be a dynamic interplay between the verb 'to-be', and the noun depicting the entity that has that quality. That entity is always 'human'.[17] Having settled the question of **ntu** among the Bantu, and in the wider sense, among African cultures, we shall now look at the understanding of nature and of human nature, and identify them in the *Ubuntu* cultures.

THE CONCEPT OF NATURE

Bantu languages generally do not have a word that can translate directly, or exactly, to the English term "nature". Neither is there evidence of African traditions having ever searched for a single term for it in the manner, for instance, that we find Thales, the Pythagoreans, and other early philosophers seeking the *arché* of all things, nor in the manner that led Heraclitus to make the aphorism (*phusi krustheai philei*) 'Nature loves to hide'. But, on the other hand, the history of philosophy shows this to have been something very unique of the Greeks that gave them a preeminent position in classical philosophical quest. For the Bantu speakers, just like

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[16] Cf. David A. McDonald, "Ubuntu Bashing: the Marketisation of 'African Values" (South Africa). *Review of African Political Economy*, 37:124, 139-152 online version (Accessed November 8, 2010).

[17] Cf. R.J. Khoza, *Let Africa Lead: African Transformational Leadership for 21ˢᵗ Century Business* (Johannesburg: Venzutu, 2006), p. 6 no. 36.

for many other peoples of the world, 'Nature', was simply anything, known, or believed to be there, and containing within it hidden mysteries. Thus, African people respected it with the common sense similar to Plato's, who Hadot describes as one who "refuses to discuss things that transcend human beings, because they are inaccessible to their investigative powers, and, on the other hand, have no importance for them, since the only things that must interest them is the conduct of moral or political life".[18]

For an African notion of 'human nature and identity,' therefore, the place to look is in their usage in other forms such as religious beliefs and myths of creation, proverbs and sayings, songs and dance, as well as from traditional customs regarding the treatment of the environment. This is no mean task, especially when one considers that despite the linguistic commonalities previously mentioned, African does not operate on a monolithic cultural or religious pattern. The starting point is to pick out certain myths and try to separate the incidental from the believable. In the process, one has to bear in mind that, every philosophical reflection, including that of the most highly reputed philosophers, is never dogmatically final regarding the truth of anything. A typical characteristic of philosophy is that it should not be dogmatic. If this is so of all philosophical truths, it is much more so of the concept of 'nature' and of its origin.

The human mind, all the way from Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel and all the way to our day, has never had the power to tell us that it has captured the whole truth. The implication thereby is that, philosophical conclusions are no more than sophisticated myths, for, as Voegellin rightly explains: "Only a little inner reflection is required, however, to surmise that man is not sufficient unto himself, but is conscious of participating in an order extending both in time and space.[19]

Myth is born of this spirit. It arises from the effort of the mind in quest for an explanation. It emerges as "a technique of imputing a ground to an object of experience, the search for the origin, a quest for some explanation of why nature and natural things behave the way they do. They are in short, the operation of an imaginative consciousness which spontaneously conceives the world and man in the form of persons and events having symbolic meaning".[20] Like in ancient Greece as recounted by Homer and Hesiod, myths, short stories and songs are constant in African traditions and education, and in a similar manner to how ancient Greek philosophy borrowed certain concepts from the Homeric epic stories, a lot of the philosophy in Africa has to start by borrowing from African myths. This is clear if we remember, with the German philosopher, Robert Spaemann, that

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[18] Hadot, p. 92.

[19] Voegelin, *In-Between-of Human Life,* p.100.

[20] George F. McLean, *Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times* (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2010), p. 86.

many commonly used philosophical concepts such as *Eudaimonia* are of mythological origin.[21]

We take it then that, African myths of origin are simply unsophisticated philosophy, or ways to explain nature's mystery, the mystery of existence and non-existence, of the being and becoming of things. Most African traditions viewed 'nature' with sacred awe. That awe and the ensuing respect for nature, sprung both from its incomprehensibility as well as from the knowledge that it was the absolute key to the solution of most problems of the human condition and its needs. The sun and rain, especially necessary for life and growth, food for man and beast, and the warmth that is crucial for people health, were somehow known to be the doings of nature. 'Nature' is also known to be capable of unleashing much harm, punitive to the human condition; hence, drought, floods, earthquakes, wild fires, disease do not just happen, they have a meaning.

Most African communities believed that such occurrences manifest some displeasure on the part of God. The relation between man and nature was therefore important, and it was manifested in different ways. For example, 'nature' was generally not disturbed unless there was sufficient reason to do so: for instance, tilling land for agricultural purposes, use of minerals and tress for weaponry, clothing, and shelter. Beyond that, interference in nature was seen to be irreverent, a sign of disrespect or impiety, capable of awakening its wrath. The distinguishing factor between 'need' and 'abuse' was the question of 'necessity', or the manner in which such acts would impinge on people's daily lives. To this general rule there was however, one unspoken exception: that of 'medicine' and 'art' which in some cases were not distinguishable, because the medicine-man had to use certain artistic paraphernalia. Such paraphernalia were variously interpreted as desire to imitate the beautiful or aesthetics, or as medium to communicate with the occult, and medicine itself as dispensation of the healing power contained in nature.

The African traditional practice of medicine is one clear indication of how "a few human beings have the courage to want to tap, manipulate and use it (nature), such as the medicine-men, witches, priests and rainmakers, some for the good and others for the ill of their communities.[22] In the minds of these daring Africans, one can see and make alive the description of the cause of magic given by Hadot: "belief that natural phenomena are brought about by invisible powers, gods or demons, and it is therefore possible to modify natural phenomena by forcing the god or demon to do what one wants to accomplish."[23]

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[21] R. Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence* (Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 9.

[22] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 16.

[23] Hadot, p. 107.

The art consisted mostly of sculptures, face masks, headdress, painting of the human body, and dance movements imitating animals. The imitation of animal forms in head gear and clothing and skins, the use of animal sounds for certain ceremonies, totems, etc. were generally meant as expressions of the admiration of the aesthetic aspects of nature. However, at other times they meant just the opposite: that is to say, they were used as a facility to communicate with the occult or to create fear.

Much of what Hadot, in *The Veil of Isis,* observes regarding other ancient cultures to some extent holds true in Africa. For example, he says: "the choices available for the investigation of nature were guided by the way relations between men and nature was represented; that is to say, between nature and human activity. That choice was oriented by the way the image of the 'secrets of nature' was perceived..." For example, "if man feels nature to be an enemy, hostile and jealous, which resists him by hiding its secrets, there will then be opposition between nature and human art, based on human reason and will.

"Man will seek, through technology, to affirm his power, domination, and rights over nature."[24] This observation has much significance for Africa's attitude to nature. It also evokes the great difference between the African general attitude to nature as contrasted to that of the Western cultures. Whereas Western thinkers are more proactive, more promethean in their determination to wrest out Nature's 'secrets', in order to dominate and exploit her, Africa is slower to do so on account of her traditional reverence for it. Consequently, in this era of globalization, this fact is only too evident in the zeal with which non-African investors, especially Western, exploit man and land.

The traditional African approach to nature was more in line with Hadot's explanation that "scientific knowledge, for the sake of knowing only was not of much interest since it could not really alter people lived experience. His example is "the Copernican Revolution that the earth revolves round the sun, although this knowledge transformed the theoretical discourse of scientists and philosophers, it did not, in fact alter anything in the line of lived experience". In like mindedness, for the African worldview, the respect for nature is hinged onto a pragmatic sense. In this era of globalization, this orpheic, or sacral attitude towards nature has not helped Africa advance technologically. We have seen the results. Africa's modesty's towards nature, her awe and respect for it, has meant lagging behind in economic development. While people from different cultures, foreigners in a sense, create immense wealth from African natural resources, we in Africa are often left to wonder how it is that they are able to do it, almost as soon as they land in the continent. This is not to say that African people were not curious or desirous of discovering what lies beneath the appearances, the 'secrets of nature'. Studies of African Traditional Religious (ATRs) have documented abundant myths of origin

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[24] Hadot, p. 92.

from different African cultures. If we accept myth to come from the effort to explain those aspects of daily experience that perplex us, and from which a story is construed and told about the origin of something, then Africa is replete with such efforts.

In the traditions where myths are told, there is usually no uniform credibility. Some, for instance those which try to explain deep mysteries like the origin of man, have a higher range of acceptance. Others are told simply for the sake of their moral lesson. An example of the latter would be stories such as those which are told regarding some animals' behavior: why the hyena's hind legs are short or the reason for its perpetual nocturnal laughter; the peculiar eyes of the chameleon which can make a 180^0 scan of its surroundings, and its hesitant walk; the apparently cunning of the hare, and the mishap that led to the cracked tortoise shell. These are less credible and are told to transmit some lesson.

As we have seen, not all myths have the same category of importance. Those of the origin of the world and of man (humans) are imputed greater credibility than others. There are, according to ATR scholars, some African societies whose myths of origin assume the existence of the world to have always been there from the beginning, but they came from. Assuming the world's (universe, nature) existence, they immediately start on the origin of man (humans) in it.[25] Others place the origin of the heavens, that is to say, everything that is not the earth or the world, (in Kiswahili *mbingu* or mbinguni[26]), as preceding that of the earth. In all of them however, things (Nature), are definitely understood to have been created by some transcendent power, a force that is different from what it created. The order of the appearance of things of nature is hardly ever referred to.[27] Mbiti's claims that in his research he has actually been able to trace in the myths of some societies, an ontological hierarchy in the creation, in which some things are in a higher mode of being than others, or exist in a descending order: God/ spirits/ humans/ animals and plants/ phenomena and objects without biological life". Thus, "the existence force ('life' for lack of a better word) that resides in a stone is known to be ontologically lower than that of a plant, and plants than animals, and animals than humans."[28] This claim seems to be congruent with George Mclean's explanation of the role of myths. He says: "myths constitute a rational, though not critical inquiry. It is not critical because they do not state things by their proper names… Nevertheless, their thought content is rational and coordinated."[29]

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[25] Mbiti, pp. 39-41.
[26] Lingua Franca spoken in East Africa and by some societies in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo.
[27] Mbiti, p. 40.
[28] Mbiti, p.16.
[29] McLean, p. 87.

Mbiti's observation that the myths of origin in some African societies speak of a hierarchical order among the existents becomes the first step in the search for the place of, and the nature of *humans* within the broader scope of Nature. His finding is that "in the broadest sense of the word, 'nature' is not an empty impersonal object or phenomenon: it is filled with religious significance... The 'natural objects and phenomena… manifest him and they His being and presence…" The invisible world presses hard upon the visible: one speaks to the other, and Africans "see" that invisible universe when they look at, hear or feel the visible and tangible world",[30] even though in different degrees, and through different manifestations. This pervading presence of creator/creature underlies most African traditional respect for nature. Consequently, ATR scholars have found that a high status is given to the sun and moon. Among the Galla people of Ethiopia for example, the sun is said to be God's eye and the same for the Balese of the Congo who call it God's right eye and the moon his left eye. The same thought pattern can be found in Zambia where the sun is considered to be symbolic of God's eternity.[31] Rain is another natural gift greatly valued in Africa. So valued is it that some African societies use the same cognate for both God and rain. In all societies, nevertheless, rain is always received as a sign of God's Providence and care for humanity.[32]

This respect and sometimes relation of objects with the creating power have not, generally, been equivalent to pantheism. Of this ATR scholars say that pantheism and panentheism are "not appropriate terms to use as a description of African appreciation of the evidence of God's action in nature, because there is at the same time, an ontological hierarchy in which some things are understood to be in a higher mode of being than others".[33]

Definitely, in Eastern Africa, and by extension, among most Bantu ethnic groups, nature is never identified with God or with natural things such as trees, birds, other animals, soil, etc. What is true of these societies is that some objects are recognized as having greater closeness or of being favorites with the divine being. Among the Kikuyu of Kenya, for instance, some mountains and hills, certain trees, or certain places are also considered more sacred than others. One can mention *Mũkũrũeini wa Gathanga,* a grove in a place called Mũrang'a in Central Kenya, where Kikuyu mythology relates that God fashioned the first man, Gĩkũyũ and his wife, Mũmbi. Significantly, the term Mũmbi, means 'creator'; thus Mũmbi is assumed to be the mother of all human beings except her husband, Gĩkũyũ. The couple, continues the myth, offered sacrifice to God under a sacred tree called *Mũgumo*, member of the *ficus* species,

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[30] Mbiti, pp. 56-57.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 52.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

which, to this day, is revered as a traditional tree even though the myth is no longer sustained.[34]

Similarly, Mt. Kenya, whose caps are perpetually covered with snow, was revered by the Kikuyu as God's throne from where He rules the universe. The surrounding mountains were subsequently called his foot stools. Those are Nyandarũa (Aberdare ranges) to the west of Mt Kenya, Kĩambirũirũ (Mt. Ol Doinyo Sabuk) to the East, and Kĩanjahĩ (Ng'ong Hills) to the South, thereby dominating the whole known country.[35] The interpretation here is that God is master of the whole of nature. Likewise, Ngai, Enkai, Mũrungu, all of them names of the divinity mean more or less the same thing, the giver or distributor of life and goods. Among those goods is of course the good of the knowledge of hidden things. These hidden things are the prerogative of some special people such as the seers and the sages. Ordinary people share a measure of that wisdom through experience acquired after years of participation in the councils of elders or Kĩama to which entry is absolutely restricted. The members, Athuri get this practical wisdom in a manner much like the description of *phronesis* in Aristotle.

A variant set of myths among the Kisii Nyanza of Western Kenya, and the Kikuyu, of Central Kenya, both Bantu, but of very different cultural practices, tell of their origins in Misri (Egypt), from where they came down to central and Eastern Africa along the River Nile. The Kikuyu version of the myth explains how they settled around the skirts of Mt. Kenya, while the Kisii and other related groups continued westwards towards the shores of Lake Victoria. However, in these tales, no further light is shed as to how man first appeared in Misri.

Politically, some myths tell of a time when women headed the family institution and society with man subject to her. In a manner reminiscent of the Hobbesian Social Contract, men rebelled and made a pact to overthrow women's leadership at their weakest moment: pregnancy. All these stories are indicative of the quest for meaning and explanation. That these myths exist confirms that the natural intellectual curiosity which is part of the human condition is perfectly compatible with an attitude of awe and respect for nature. Awe and respect do not mean annihilation or obliteration of the human spirit.

Socially and economically, the awe and respect for the natural is not only deeply felt but also abided with in practical terms. Any mysterious harm that people have to suffer, coming either from nature or from other people is ultimately taken to have a meaning. Hence, it is not unusual to find, when tragedy occurs, that among Swahili speakers, just

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[34] The mĩgumo tree grows to gigantic dimensions, projecting its roots over a large territory around it, but it starts off as a parasite on other trees. It is possible that the mystery of its origin may have had something to do with it being considered a sacred tree or some sort of altar.

[35] It is worthy of note that the Bible does speak of a mountain as God's throne and the earth as his foot stool.

one word is sufficient to express sympathy. That word is *'pole',* which can be interpreted as: 'sorry that this happened', to which, in normal circumstances, the response is: *'Shauri ya Mungu'*,[36] freely interpreted as, 'it's God's doing', or 'God knows why'. In like manner, indigence or a general lack of means is viewed as *'Hakuna matata',* loosely translatable to: *'don't worry, be happy'*, as in Louis Armstrong's song. These two phrases sum up the African people pneumatically, or their *Ubuntu*. Despite shortages and suffering, there is a deep belief in the fact that one should keep a positive sense of life while trying to overcome the situation. African happiness is thus, not totally immersed in possessions or their accumulation. Most *Ubuntu* scholars are consistent that basically the African worldview lies in this: in the recognition and attitude to life that places much more value in non-material goods and particularly on the humanity of every person. For example, Shepherd Shonhiwa says: "African life emphasizes humanity and relationships over material wealth,"[37] and Mbigi states, "The hallmark of Afrocentric philosophy is about being a good community member. It is also about living and enjoying life rather than the acquisition of the material creature comforts. Hence, he emphasizes that, "the supernatural impacts on the general attitudes of African people to life." [38] Unfortunately, this deeply African worldview is quickly changing with globalization.

This same African attitude to life has at times been the source of much scorn for the African people, with the convoluted and misconstrued idea by Westerners, that it is indicative of insensibility, indifference or just simplemindedness. What such people fail to grasp is the real transcendent nature of the spirit which drives Africans' whole approach to daily life and experience.

'NTU' AS BASIS OF HUMAN NATURE AND IDENTITY: DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS

We now enter into a brief analysis of the 'human' (n-tu) as understood among the Bantu. At the level of action and interpersonal relations, one is not a person until they have *Ubuntu*. This implies various dimensions of the understanding of human being. At the initial level, 'ntu' is the essence of human, of that which is common to many as contrasted to **n-tu** as an entity or individual: *'mtu', 'mundu', 'omuntu', 'umuntu'* etc. irrespective of gender. **Ntu** at this dimension explains why we can affirm of many that they are of a common stock, and not necessarily as African, European,

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[36] Literally," it is God's doing." Real meaning: if God has willed it, who are we to question it?

[37] S. Shonhiwa, *The Effective Cross-Cultural Manager: A Guide for Business Leaders in Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), p. 6.

[38] Lovemore Mbigi and Jenny Maree, *Ubuntu: The Spirit of African Transformation Management* (Randburg: Knowres, 2005), p. 93.

American or Asian, but simply as people; human beings. The Kiswahili morphology expresses this through the classifications of nouns whereby of the 8 classes to which all nouns belong, the **M-**class in (singular) and **Wa** in plural is reserved mostly for human beings. In the singular format the prefix of a noun belonging to this class is either M, e.g. Mtu (s) or W e.g. Watu

From the general approach of human to human, what stands out is the fact that the most important thing to be considered with regard to *'ntu'* is that one is a human being. In traditional African cultures therefore, all people are welcome; welcome simply because they are *'watu'*. The majority of African philosophers now agree that a significant element of *Ubuntu* cultures is that it lends itself to a *communal* and traditional lifestyle in which every person is their neighbor's keeper. It also means that the humanity of one is caught up, or inextricably bound up with, in that of others, that as humans people belong together in a bundle of life. In Mbigi's description, "I cannot separate my humanity from the humanity of those around me." [39] Thus *Ubuntu* wisdom and philosophy distinguishes between an individual existence of the self and the simultaneous existence of other persons,[40] yet affirms that one only becomes fully human to the extent that he or she is included in *relationships* with others.[41]

This is the key underlying African hospitality for example. Every visitor is important and must be shown due hospitality. Traditional African cultures did not, as general rule, conceive of such amenities as inns, motels, restaurants, hotels. A traveler knew that wherever dusk caught him, he could always go in to lodge in the nearest home and that he would be well received; an exception to this rule was known witches. Behind that hospitality was the belief that every human being is valuable in him or herself individually. The value of human life in every other human being was expressed through generosity and magnanimity to the stranger. Hence, hospitality formed an important aspect of the education of young people. A Kiswahili poem poignantly depicts this teaching:

Mgeni siku ya kwanza, mkaribishe mgeni, mpe mchele na panza, mtilie kifuani Mgeni siku ya pili, mpe ziwa na samli, mahaba yakizidia, mzidie mgeni.

This is just one of the eight stanzas which make up the poem. Among other things the poem says: On the first day with your guest 'First

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[39] L. Mbigi, *The Spirit of African Leadership* (Randburg: Knowres, 2005), p. 69.

[40] Fred Luthans, René Van Wyk and Fred O. Walumbwa, "Recognition and Development of Hope for South African Organizational Leaders," in *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (2004), p. 515.

[41] Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: An Ethic for the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Cluster Publications, 2001), p. 24.

day, welcome the guest, feed him with flying fish, embrace him, and introduce him to your family . On the second and third day you continue to entertain, but on the fourth day you give the guest a hoe to work on the land. On the fifth you remind him of his family. You hint it is time to go. If by the tenth day he does not show signs of leaving you show him the door. Political scientists deduce that this must have been the prelude to colonial rule. Believing that the guests were only passing by, they entertained them, collaborated and were eventually displaced as owners.

Another characteristic element of traditional African *Ubuntu* is the sense of family. The moral and religious value attached seen to the family are sacrosanct, evidenced among other things, by continuing bonds with ancestors, and the need to the propagate human life. The perpetuation of family is held to be a duty in many African societies. For the same reasons, a small family is still not understood in Africa; life is valued over material comforts. *Ubuntu* is also shown in the raising of children including those of the extended family when need arises. A big family is seen to be just a sign of what a person's inside is: a person's heart, his generosity, his largesse with the community. Community life in African tradition was just family life writ large. In this sense, participation in the life of the community, whether in the circle of one's kinsfolk or in public life, was considered an important duty and the right of all.

This leads us to another level of n-tu, the level of action and interpersonal relations. For one's n-tu to be whole, one must first be 'humanized' because the received nature, received *'ntu'* is *inadequate, un-whole,* in need of completion. At the moral and social level the acts that complete that nature form a higher level of *'ntu'*. That is to say, whereas all human beings have *'ntu'* as received nature, they may not have it in the second dimension. Each human being at this level is different. One is human in proportion to how he or she relates to other humans; we are truly human only in community with other persons. This was the context in which Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Prize for peace, made the now famous explanation of *Ubuntu* as a concept that defies expression in any one word. His said: "when we want to give high praise to someone we say, *'Yu, u nobuntu';* "Hey, he or she has *Ubuntu*."[42] That is to say, he has what it means to be human; he has the human qualities of magnanimity, hospitability, generosity, friendliness, caring, affection and compassion.

HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE *UBUNTU* WORLDVIEW COMPARED TO NON-*UBUNTU* VIEWS

By emphasizing the communal over individuals, the *Ubuntu* worldview, some scholars have sharply criticized it as falling short of

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[42] Desmond M. Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (London: Rider, 1999), pp. 34-35.

providing a holistic view of the nature of man. At the heart of that criticism has been the question of individual freedom and moral responsibility. It is argued that if personal integrity lies in ones location in a community, if personal freedom lies in the concrete capabilities, privileges, and immunities which derive from communal life, then the various capacities which we call 'personal' take a second or even become passive ?[43] Other factors usually mentioned are gender issues, property ownership and governance, considerations of human dignity, and human rights. In all these aspects, doubt is cast over *Ubuntu* as an African identity, with arguments that the concept is simply utopian, a romanticized ideal of African societies, by scholars who are simply trying to give a more substantial status to the communitarian ethos in modern Africa. The critics look at Ubuntu as no more than a straw puppet, a mythologized African world view whose place in modern Africa is questioned.[44]

Appropriate responses to these challenges have been given by, among others, Kwame Gyekye, Segun Gbadegesin, Chukwudum Okoko and Nono Makhudu.[45] Without necessarily delving into those debates, a task that would require a different study, it is worthwhile to consider Pratt's argument in relation to the real meaning of the *communal* character of African culture. His argument, which is adopted in this paper, is that by *Ubuntu* is not meant that the good of the individual person is subordinated to that of the group, as it would be in Socialist society. *Ubuntu* does not mean that the individual pursue the common good at the expense of his own basic good. Rather it means that in pursuing the good of the community, as one embedded in that community, he also pursues his or her own good.[46]

There is then a marked distinction between *Ubuntu* communalism and Socialist theory. This distinction lies within the very conception of man and his relation to nature and to the divine. For Marx, human reality is not to be understood by references to spirit or God; neither, as Lotz observes,

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[43] E.D. Prinsloo, "The African View of Participatory Business Management," *Journal of Business Ethics*. Vol. 25, No. 4 (Jun., 2000), pp. 275-286; http://science.jrank.org/pages/7766/Humanity, African-Thought.html.

[44] Cf. E.D. Prinsloo, "On a Communitarian Ethos, Equality and Human Right"in D. Prinsloo, *Journal of Business Ethics,* Vol. 25, No. 4 (Jun., 2000) pp. 275-286.

[45] Segun Gbadegesin, *African Philosophy: Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991); Chukwudum Okolo, "The African Person: A Cultural Definition," in P.H. Coetzee and MES van den Berg, eds., *An Introduction to African Philosophy* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1995); K. Gyekye, "Person and Community in African Thought," in K. Wiredu and K. Gyekye, eds., *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992).

[46] A. Pratt, *Ethics and Accountability in African Public Service*, edited by Sadig Rasheed and Dele Olowa, African Association for Public Administration and Management (Nairobi: ICIPE Science Press, 1993).

"does it relate itself to an eternal or to a substantial truth. As Marx points out in his Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, "For man, the root is man himself... for man the supreme being is man."[47] Consequently, philosophy comes to an end as soon as soon as man realizes himself for it no longer expresses and possesses a higher and more substantial form of truth which is separated from one's reality. In other words, the nature of human kind in its development comes to an end through the development of culture. Through culture, which is the process of history, man returns to himself and realizes what he is. As Lotz points out:

> In his attempt to invoke human reality as the main issue of philosophy and thereby to reestablish anthropological thinking within the development of 19th century, (Marx) tried to reject every idea that is based in an ontological description of human reality. Instead, in line with the Critical Theory of the nineteenth Century, he advanced the thesis that man was made by social relations and the social environment.[48]

Unlike Marxism, the underpinning rationality to *Ubuntu* is theistic. No doubt, many of the qualities that *Ubuntu* emphasizes, such as warmth of character stressed through empathy with other people, understanding, communication, interaction, participation, sharing, reciprocating, harmony, and a shared world view and co-operation, already exist as an ideal in none African cultures as well. In that sense, *Ubuntu* is not a novelty because these qualities or values are not, properly speaking, exclusive to *Ubuntu.* In this respect, Nono Makhudu, a strong supporter of *Ubuntu,* recognises that Japan, for example, has its family system or 'Ningen Kankei' which stresses similar qualities and values.[49] That notwithstanding, there is a uniqueness, proper to *Ubuntu*, and which is conspicuously lacking in much of contemporary Western thought and behaviour. For example, Thaddeus Metz observes that the idea that interpersonal relationships of some kinds have *basic* moral status is rarely found in Anglo-American or Continental normative theory. [50] In Contemporary Western cultures, however, the emphasis is not on being one's brother's keeper, but on individualism of the type highlighted by Charles Taylor's book: The *Ethics of Authenticity*. Individualism and relativism of values have become one of three main malaises of Western society. By contrast, African thought still

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[47] Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel s Philosophy of Right, (1992:251)," in Christian Lotz, "From Nature to Culture?" *Human Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2006), p. 45.

[48] Lotz, p. 45, "Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology."

[49] Cf. N. Makhudu, "Cultivating a Climate of Cooperation through Ubuntu," in E.D. Prinsloo, p. 277.

[50] Thaddeus Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory," in *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2007), p. 333.

emphasizes the social dimension of being human. This is perhaps what most significantly separates *Ubuntu* from modern Western thought. At both the personal and social levels, African thought reflects considerations and maxims that view the individual as socially embedded.

The other major separation of African thought from modern Western philosophy is given by Wiredu. He sees this as the Western, more so the so called 'Critical Philosophy,' which emphasizes the concepts of mind and body as in a polarized material-spiritual opposition. African tradition present beliefs in a quasi-physical conception of man, whereby mind and body are the reality of the person, a reality so strong that community with the family, such as the ancestors, is considered possible even in the afterlife. Thus, the spirits of the ancestors are believed to live on, and they are expected not to be indifferent to one's distress; they can intervene in one's life in a good or malicious manner.[51]

> It is, therefore, important to not only venerate the ancestors, but to, eventually, oneself become an ancestor worthy of veneration. For this, the person agrees to respect the community's rules; they undergo initiation to establish formal ties with both the current community members and those that have passed on, and they ensure harmony by adhering to the *Ubuntu* principles in the course of life.[52]

African thought, nonetheless, is not ultimately that unique, if one considers the entire history of philosophy, particularly *traditional* Western normative theory such as Aristotle's ethics. The main difference lies in the fact that the virtues that Aristotelian ethics emphasizes are perfections that start with the self. It is the good self that reaches out towards others, rather than the opposite. The excellent person is related to his friend in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another himself.[53] This includes another factor, that is: in order to relate to another as to oneself, one must love oneself. To grasp the meaning of this maxim of Aristotle's, one should realize the reasoning behind *love of self* being prior to the love of neighbor. By self-love, Aristotle does not mean love in the sense of satisfying one's own passions, but in that of having the respect due for the cultivation of the noetic self – that is the divineness, the cultivation of that part of our being that transcends. That part of self is our mind and soul. Without this understanding as the basis of love, acting for the community lacks firm grounding. Hence, as Voegelin points out,

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[51] This fact makes it easy for African people to believe in the Christian teaching regarding the intercession of the saints.

[52] Cf. Ubuntu philosophy as an African philosophy for peace. www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=20361

[53] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), 1170b6-7.

"Aristotle makes an explicit distinction between a higher lower-order and higher-order goods; such that the higher goods are the driving force for the search for the higher lower goods, such as love of things and love of neighbor."[54] For him, "the person labors for his friends and for his native country, and will die for them if he must; he will sacrifice money, honors and contested goods in general, in achieving what is fine for himself.[55]

In a sense, the *Ubuntu* worldview falls close to this pattern of Aristotle's ethics in that it, too, is super-material. If material goods were the only goods, then one person's good would continually conflict with the good of others. If, however, non-material goods exist, then it is possible to reconcile the ethics that originates in the interpersonal relationships at the point of departure, an ethics of individual virtue that project outwards. To establish that link more properly, one needs to look beyond *Ubuntu*, for a further understanding of human nature and identity that would respond to the ideal of *Ubuntu* world view if were to be fully explored. This is where the second Ganda saying applies "*Wisdom is like fire, when it is extinguished in your home, you get it from the neighbor*". My search is therefore a combination of ancient and contemporary thought, more in the spirit of *Ubuntu* rather than in its topical reality. The idea here is that "a philosophy of man is something more than just the expression of what is believed to be or not to be human by a specific culture according to its values system."[56]

To begin with, the *Ubuntu* worldview is strange when viewd from contemporary Anglo-American philosophy where, as Lots points out, until recently, Philosophical Anthropology was denied any legitimate place within the province of philosophy and relegated to the realm of ideology. Contemporary scholars of 'Action,' such as Theodor Adorno went as far as to claim that philosophical anthropology constitutes the attempt to escape social mediation of human reality simply because it deals with what man is, rather than on what he becomes through society.[57] Unfortunately, some African philosophers have fallen precisely into this whirlwind. Taking this cue, we find D. Masolo, for example lamenting that it is no longer clear what a human being is, that philosophers can no longer concur that reason, in its instrumental sense, is what distinguishes humans from other entities in the world.[58] He however concedes that "at least it is

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[55] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1169a18-35.

[56] E. Voegelin, *Anamnesis* (Notre Dame Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), p. 59.

[57] Christian Lotz, "From Nature to Culture? Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology" *Human Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2006), p. 43.

[58] Cf. D. Masolo, http://science.jrank.org/pages7766/Humanity-AFrican-Thought.html.

plausible to claim that the freedom of having and expressing one's opinion is still characteristically human."[59]

This non concurrence amongst philosophers, regarding who is a human being, what is the human condition, is new and not, in my opinion, as widespread as Masolo and others would want us to believe. Certainly, in the *Ubuntu* worldview, this dichotomy does not exist. A human being is a human on account of many things, many of which would not happen if reason was not the distinguishing feature of being human. I dedicate the next section therefore to those things which we experience in our human nature, characteristics which specifically belong to the human condition.

Human Nature as a Given Condition or Reality

In *The Veil of Isis: A History of the Idea of Nature,* Pierre Hadot describes nature variously as: 'constitution',[60] 'origin of the heavens and all that is contained in them',[61] as 'a process in the sense of appearance',[62] as 'form' and as 'essence' all of which can be traced to Greek philosophers, particularly Aristotle. For purposes of this section, it is worthy of note that Aristotle's definition of 'essence', is that of "a principle of inner motion inside each thing, which is also a principle of growth', an internal dynamism in any given thing by which it acts in a particular way."[63] This essence, and the capacities pertaining to it, comes from outside, constituting a given thing as such and such a thing, it's 'nature'. This is a *first dimension* of the understanding of nature; nature as reality, a reality that encompasses everything that exists, including human beings. This is nature as given. For each reality there is a way of being according to the kind of essence received. This is the given (*datum*) in human nature. This dimension of nature as given is known even though it is not yet philosophically expressed as such in the African myths of origin.

Here too, nature is *the principle of operation for that particular type of thing or being that enables them to act* spontaneously in accordance with their nature or the manner that is proper to them. Birds fly, dogs bark, etc. In this sense the given in human beings includes all the common somatic aspects of like animals such as mammals. In the case of human, there is an additional operative power, the psyche, whose characteristics are consciousness and creativity. This aspect of human nature is nowhere explicitly mentioned in traditional African wisdom. It is assumed. This assumption is clear in certain proverbs and on the basis of the sagacity involved which can only be possible on account of the mind

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[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Hadot, p. 18.
[61] Hadot, 19.
[62] Hadot, 8.
[63] Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*.

as a superior power absent in the animal world. African cultures recognize this capacity to be among the gifts, a received power. It is the 'n-tu,' the distinctive elements that underpins the *ubuntu*, allowing all humans to possess a common nature, a common trait, the human condition that must always be recognized and respected in all human beings.

Without entering into the psychosomatic reality of the human condition, many African beliefs appear to indicate a quasi-physical conception not only of the mind, but also of the afterlife'.[64] The body and spirit are known to be two distinct powers working together, but which at times can be in opposition. Among the Bantu people of Eastern Africa and others places in the region, the 'spirit', the non-physical presence, is often referred to as 'heart' or *moyo,* in Kiswahili. *Moyo* is the heart and verve that moves us, the spirit (will and affections). Different from *moyo* is *akili* (thought or reason) which is always at work. At times, though *moyo* should be allowed to come before *akili*. Consequently, the proverbs seek to provide *kihooto* (Kikuyu for cogent reason) for action; proverbs can be of different types. The sapiential ones aim to identify good character by praising virtue and ridiculing stupid or selfish behavior. Since proverbs use an indirect route to convey the message, they prepare the emotional disposition of the learners to hear and understand the teaching. By way of example, one can point to the Banyarwanda of Rwanda, the Barundi of Burundi, and the Bashi of the Congo. These people underline the ethic of the 'heart' because, the 'heart' is the human person's 'little king' which means guide. Thus, a person who incurs guilt is because he has a dirty 'heart'. For a Bahema (Central Africa) a person with "two hearts" is one who lacks generosity or who is basically niggardly.[65] *Ubuntu* culture will favor the latter in certain circumstances. This explains why time, important as it is for efficiency may not always be a priority among African people if there are reasons to defer something in order to attend to someone. The only way this kind of expression can come about is if heart and mind are understood to be distinct realities that can work together.

At another level, each person is distinct on account of their body. The body creates distinction between people so that each one has their particular way of being, their nature. The place and importance of the body in the reflection of human nature too has not received much attention in Western Philosophy. Yet, it is our constant experience. As members of the animal nature, the human being has a body and needs the body. A human being manifests himself or herself above all through or by means of a specific, physical and particular type of body. The first experience we have of being human is through the body. In the world, the body is an

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[64] Cf. Wiredu Kwasi, "Humanity in African Thought," D. Masolo, http://science.jrank.org/pages7766/Humanity Africa n-Thought.html.

[65] Bujo Benezet, *Foundations of an African Ethic* (New York: Herder and Herder, 2001), p.120.

essential feature of being human. It is because of the body that one occupies or lives within a specific habitat, occupying space and time. This experiential fact has a variety of significances: insofar as the human being is situated in space, in the world, he exists as part of that physical, material world or the *cosmos*. But, as we shall see below, on account of how his action, action understood in the sense of free activity accordance to freedom, man is part of nature in a manner different from other beings: in nature and apart from nature. The body matters too, but much less than the spirit. The hospitality given to the guests takes care of his or her wellbeing as a priority. Only the person with a 'bad heart or bad spirit' overlooks the material welfare of the neighbor, thereby lacking *Ubuntu.*

It is, nevertheless understood that, body contributes to making human nature not only distinct from that of non-humans, but also creates a difference between human beings themselves in terms of physical features, bodily shape, pigmentation or race, gender, and physical strength. Even where two people look alike, they still have the distinguishing unique features, of which the best example are finger prints, which no human has equal to that of another. One other example is the particular specialization of the body that enables human beings to undertake 'human' activities. The human being is the only animal capable of ideation and technology, that is to say, to bring to reality what has been conceived in ideation.

When we talk of speak of person (muntu), we usually do so in an abstract way; but since there are no abstract human persons, all persons are concrete human beings who belong, for example, to a gender. In life there are therefore two types of persons: male and female, two kind ofs persons, each of whom offers a mysterious, yet complementarily and wonderful diversity of humanness in a way that differs from that of animals. This too is recognized and expressed in the traditional understanding of human nature; not two different types of beings, but two human beings who manifest some specific biological and psychic differences. The Gĩkũyu and Mũmbi myths take cognizance of this reality through various tales. These differences are displayed in behavior before certain phenomena such as decision making, the care for other human beings and sensitivity in certain situations. Experience, and psychology shows that all these often follow different paths in man and in woman, thereby endlessly enriching human life. These are the main phenomenological characteristics of the human person that distinguish him or her from any other type of being.

Human Nature as Nurture: Culture and Cultures

Since he lives in the world, within specific space, place and time, man necessarily comes across other humans with whom he interacts, out of necessity, either of communication, or of existence. It is this need that leads to the *inter-subjective* character of human nature. Hence, although each human being has her or his own personal, un-transferable and un repeatable life, the human condition demands the need for other people.

The outcome of that necessity is that as the first condition, to be fully human, the individual person must learn from others what it means to be 'human'. A Kiswahili saying puts it this way: *Kabla hujafa, huja umbika.*[66] That is to say, until death one is in the process of becoming more; one is not fully 'created', not fully what he should be. In simple, proverbial terms, what this means is that human nature as 'given' is not complete without the inputs of the receiver and of the society. People are not born with developed capacities. The development of those capacities is part of the 'humanizing' project of becoming human. The human being is a product not only of the nature common to all human beings, but also of the kind of nurture he/she has received, of his socialization and culture.

'Kuumbika', or the 'humanizing' aspect of being human, depends on the individual's willingness and capacity, on the one hand and on the society on the other hand: the family, the clan, one's peers. On account of having body and spirit, and the fact that the world presents humans with multiple possibilities, every person can and should realize one's individual life project. The 'projects' are not defined by the given nature; they must happen as a result of freedom and socialization within the kind of society one is embedded into. Man's life project can be more or less elaborate giving rise to different kinds of cultures. Human creativity is dynamic, and results in culture. Human beings have cultures. Animals do not; they have uniform universal instincts, and their bodies have not been endowed with capacities for innovative or elaborate creative activity as is the human body. Animals do not have abstractive natures.

Ubuntu humanization gives much emphasis to 'the other'. The best way by which human beings reach out to other human beings is by giving to others what is theirs. A person reaches fulfillment as a person when he takes part of his intimacy and gives it to another as something valuable, and the other person accepts it as theirs.[67] This is Aristotle's view of friendship. Giving to other persons what belongs to one is called *generosity,* and generosity is not possible without a prior virtue, the virtue of *love.* Love in this sense is understood as a radical act of the will different from a mere physical emotion. It is what in Christianity is called '*caritas*'. Without much theorization as to 'why', the *Ubuntu* culture is born of this type of love, in a manner analogous to the Christian teaching of love as '*caritas*'. Needless to say, *Ubuntu i*s not lived by each and every African, but that does not stop it from being the truly accepted expression of the African spirit.

This love is manifested through willingness to understand other human beings and willingness to act in community with them, sharing our gift. This is a common approach in mutual treatment among many African communities. For the Bantu people of East and Central Africa, this is

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[66] Kiswahili proverb (Kenya).

[67] S.R. Yepes, *Fundamentos de Antropologia* (Pamploma: EUNSA, 1996), p. 83.

palpable through various proverbs in reference to the 'heart'. The 'heart' is often mentioned as the most significant force for all human conduct. As a result, the practice of these virtues contributes to *Ubuntu,* those who fail to practice them are said to be 'heart-less',[68] and thereby, are 'less', as far as being human is concerned. Consequently, conflicts such as racial, ethnic discrimination, or clan disputes and xenophobia have only one explanation, and that it is smallness of being or *n-tu* owing to the 'lack of heart'. Only persons can practice *Ubuntu*. Despite Alasdair McIntyre's recent proposal that some animals do some thinking, he does agree that it has yet to be proved that they can 'abstract', because willing does require abstraction, or that they can live the virtues such as charity or benevolence.[69] This is understandable because to go out of oneself, to give oneself to others, especially when it demands effort, is proper of humans. Only they can know that this effort contributes to one's own self-realization. In brief, what this means is that true human community, or *Ubuntu* is not possible unless it proceeds from love. It cannot be imposed or commanded.

Traditional African education was basically a process of socialization, of "humanization". An individual was taken through various rites of passage to enrich his 'humanity' so that he or she can hold proper community with other people. Man is born into a community, a family and a clan. He lives in a neighborhood community, exercises an occupation or in modern terms, a profession within a community. A *community* exists when a good is participated in by many and through which the members of the community communicate with one another. Inter-subjectivity or participation is a natural response to human wants. The need for 'humanization' of the human being stems from the spatial temporal character of human nature. Some phenomenologists refer to this community participation as *inter-subjectivity.* As first condition, to be fully human, one must learn from others, from interacting with others.

Human Nature as Freedom

We come to the last dimension of human nature and identity, the dimension which, one could say with Plato, truly belongs to the person as an individual, and this is freedom. For a deeper understanding of the status of individual freedom, we again turn to African proverbs regarding human nature and conduct, the realm of individual actions. Here, the 'given' nature of the human is, so to speak, like put into his own hands, so that after knowing what is right and what is wrong, one can make deliberate choices of action. We enter then into the realm of ethics, the deepest aspect of the topic in the consideration of whether human nature and identity is constant or changing. Freedom as referred to is that of an

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[68] Bujo, p. 122.

[69] Cf. A. McIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (London: Duckworth, 2009).

inner quality of human beings by which one acts, and by which one loves or hates what one does. It encompasses too, all human activities such as work, art, technology, and inter-subjectivity – that capacity to form relationships. It is here that the perfections of the human condition or human 'nature as given' and the virtues, the *Ubuntu*, are determined.

Experience shows that human beings are constantly making choices. They can do so because they have a capacity for abstract activity; they can decide to act as a group, according to how they have been socialized, or they can behave individualistically. They can work together towards a goal as a team, or they can fight to tear each other away from success. This is possible because since humans are endowed with the psyche, they have the capacity to reason and determine action, make a choice and convert those choices to reality. This capacity to act from within a given purposeful goal or end is what is here referred to as 'human freedom'. Consequently, the actions that are *truly* free are what define the human being as an individual person. We come then to yet another level of 'human identity', that which indicates the deepest part of the person, that which is what he or she has acquired or become as a result of personal choices.

Here again it is possible to identify African recognition of the psyche, the mind, but often the same word, 'heart', discussed above is used. One of the qualities of the heart is the desire for 'Kĩhooto' (truth/justice). The heart seeks truth as one of the qualities of the spirit, the non material aspect of humans. The heart is linked to intelligence, memory and will. It is the heart that either wills something or does not will it; the heart thinks or produces something creatively; the heart speaks.[70] Thus, the functions of the heart (spirit, mind) are multiple, and surpass the realm of emotions or feelings, to embrace the intellectual dimension as well. "[T]he 'heart', occupies the primary position, not only linked to love and hatred, but to practically all virtues or their absence (*thahu* or sin in Kikuyu), because these are brought into relation to it. Self-control – temperance –, justice, courage and bravery, *truthfulness* or *honesty* and all the opposite thoughts and actions proceed from the 'heart.'" [71] The distinction between good from evil advice of the 'heart' is covered in certain proverbs. For example: *"Practice self-control, do not let yourself be led astray by the desires of your 'heart.'"* Thus, regarding human conduct, the ethical ideal or excellence is a personality which displays self-control both internally and externally, where the latter dimension is dependent on the former. So another Kikuyu proverb says: *"There is no difference between a thief and one who covets,"* which means that theft is not simply the material action of taking something, it includes the unseen disposition.

Ideally, therefore, the '*ubuntuized*' person is also virtuous. He or she is a prudent and temperate person who knows how to balance *Kĩhooto/akili* (the mind), which is specifically human and his or her

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[70] Cf. Bujo, p.121.

[71] *Ibid*.

various emotions and sentiments which arise as characteristics that both humans and beasts experience. This dimension of human nature requires individual willingness and action. Hence, not everyone can be said to be human in this sense. To put it another way, not everyone has a heart.

This wisdom is not peculiar to Africa but is part of human experience in and beyond *Ubuntu*. Freedom of action means that the human person, even the '*ubuntuized*' person, can invent new ways of behaving, or he can act against what he has been nurtured-socialized to do. One can, in other words, do something against what he thinks s/he ought to do, or even can do it simply because he wants to, because it satisfies his mood at that moment. Because this dimension of 'human nature as freedom' demands individual willingness, understanding and effort, not everyone reaches the ideal of *Ubuntu*, nor of human nature. Ideally, the 'ubuntuized' person is also virtuous, just, prudent and temperate. She knows how to balance *Kĩhooto/akili* (the mind), which is specifically human, with emotions and sentiments which are characteristics that both humans and beasts experience. When this distinction is absent, one acts unjustly and inhumanly. This is the only way one can understand such phenomenon as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, Amin and Obote of Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s, and the post election violence in Kenya in 2007/2008. Because he is free, the human being can rebel.

Hence, among the Bantu of East Africa, the *Kĩhooto* proverbs identify desirable or praiseworthy traits of character such as honesty, which enable someone to be sensitive to truth and falsity, generosity which promotes goodwill; reciprocity of friendships, kindness, and self-control or moderation, which restrain personal greed and sensual appetites such as the use of food, sexual drive and property. There are proverbs to teach self-restraint. For example, *"one who does not possess a goat does not yearn for meat"*, which means that if someone does not possess a goat (property) he ought not to covet that of others. The implication is that often, one lacks things due to a lack of industriousness.

One other aspect of human nature as freedom refers to the transcendental character of our human condition. Part of *Kĩhooto* (cogency, logic) is the realization that existence is not something we invent for ourselves, but rather it is a received fact. We already alluded to this fact in the myths of origin and ATRs. The quest for origin, which in the history of mankind led to different myths of creation, and in philosophy to the problem of the existence of God, is the best manifestation of transcendence. Transcendence can occur at three different levels: with regard to things, with regard to one's relation with other people, and at a higher level, with the divine. Transcendence in the first level is part of *Ubuntu* as a worldview. In this sense, one transcends from being embedded, heart and body in the material reality surrounding him by considering that reality as something relative. At the second level, one transcends when one shares what one is with other people. This *intersubjectivity*, and participatory character of man is possible because the

human being is transcendental by nature. He is 'other' directed, directed to interpersonal relations.

A first step towards reaching out to others is dialogue; humans have a *dialogic* nature that springs from the uniqueness of the essence of human nature in that it has both a spiritual and a psycho-physical quality. The spiritual quality enables human being to share their inner richness and creativity that arise from their thoughts and sentiments. Dialogue makes it possible to communicate what is personal to someone else because nobody can know exactly what another person thinks or desires unless that person decides to reveal it. This dialogic characteristic of being human is manifested through the bodily organs of speech elaborated in a unique way.

For African cultures dialogue is considered to be an important feature for *Ubuntu*, or 'human identity', hence the abundance of song and dance in all significant African ceremonies. Songs and dances accompany a new birth, the various rites of passage to adulthood, marriage and harvests. Similarly, rogation prayers in times of droughts, floods or other calamities are often sung out loud. Similarly, the passage to the afterlife has, for some African societies, special funerary songs and dances. Good tidings are received with ululations. Among the Kikuyu of Kenya, for instance, tidings of the birth of a boy child are communicated through six ululations by the womenfolk; that of a girl with three. Dialogue is at the very heart of Ubuntu, and it comports certain norms of propriety such as *palaver.*

In this, African cultures are not alone, as can be surmised from the following words from Charles Taylor who also considers dialogue and language in its different expressions as a feature of human identity. In his words:

> We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining an identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression. For purposes of this discussion, I want to take "language" in a broad sense, covering not only the words we speak but also other modes of expression whereby we define ourselves, including the 'languages of art, of gesture, of love, and the like. But we are induced into the exchange with others. No one acquires the languages so needed for self-definition on their own. We are introduced to them through exchanges with others who matter to us – what George Herbert called 'significant others. …[72]

The most important function of dialogue is that it is the most meaningful medium to share one's inner life with other people; to explain

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[72] Charles Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, pp. 32-33.

oneself to them. Proof of the importance of this sharing is that the lack of it gives rise to misunderstanding.

Sharing of thoughts, desires and sentiments takes us to the realm of personal intimacy, of the inner life that belongs truly to oneself and therefore most "personal". The content of that life constitutes the personal history of each one which makes one to be who he or she is, a 'someone' rather than a 'something'. This reality manifests itself and expresses itself through one's sensitivity, feelings, emotions and self-awareness. These occur differently in different people. Thus, intimacy among persons is not the same; each human being has a distinct biographical history. One's inner life gives rise to something *incommunicable*, individual, and unique. Empirical research on human biological development of at least the last 200 years shows, according to Rene Dubois, that,

> All, having fundamentally the same structure, operate according to the same physiological processes and are moved by the same biological needs. Nevertheless, there are no two identical human beings, and, still more important consideration, the individuality of a person living today is different from that of all other persons have lived in the past or who will live in the future. Each person is unique, unprecedented, without a double.[73]

> Hence, notes Gilson, "evolution appears not to be oriented to the production of new species each consisting of millions of individuals similar to each other, but through existing species to the production of innumerable individualities, irreducibly different. ..."[74]

It is thus we can say of human beings that each one responds to the question: "Who are you?" rather than "what are you?"

Because these individual humans are immersed in time and space, this intimacy of which we are speaking, is not static. It is creative and therefore subject to change, to growth or decline, thereby constituting one's personal history. In an effort to distinguish between what he refers to as negative individualism or the dark side of individualism, that is to say, individualism is the claim to center on the self or narcissism, a trend that wrongly assumes the name of 'authenticity', and positive individualism, Charles Taylor says of the latter: "there is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life this way, and not in

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[73] R. Dubois, "Biological Individuality," *Forum* 12(1969):5, cited in *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution,* Etienne Gilson (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 99.

[74] E. Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin*, p. 99.

imitation of anyone else…" But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life. I miss what being human is for me."[75] In this sense it is correct to say that human nature and identity are different for different people, but nevertheless, all humans have equal dignity as human beings, as persons.

The dignity of the person means that every individual is a value in him or herself. In this sense, the Ubuntu, 'I am because we are', becomes problematic if interpreted literally. The level of action, this requires that every human being should, ideally, treat the dignity in every other human being in the Kantian way: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, either your own person or the person of another, always as an end, never merely as a means."[76] This appears to be a modernized way to express the very old maxim or the 'Golden rule', which exhorts all to treating other human being with respect. It can be interpreted in different ways: for some it is to treat them with fairness, for others to treat them with love. Rarely does one find in these claims any clearer explanation of love above or beyond what Aristotle already taught. Some theorists, in an effort to be more precise, pick several virtues and try to encompass in those the whole gamut of the meaning of 'love'. Alexandre Havard,[77] for instance, has found in 'magnanimity', the crucial virtue of good leadership. Magnanimity combines two words, these are, *magna* and *anima,* a 'big heart'.

Treating humanity in every person always as an end, and never as a means, implies that it would be wrong to instrumentize persons. Human dignity stems from the intrinsic and constitutive human nature on which one's very existence depends. Hence, human dignity is not a result, or consequence of the possession of any capacity to exercise certain qualities, but of the very fact of being human, even if one were to lack those qualities, including the qualities of *Ubuntu*. Thus, a human being or a group may be of a different race or gender, or lack some specific physical or psychic capacity, or development, etc, but that does not thereby reduce in any way the human dignity of that particular individual or group of individuals. In a word, fundamentally, one is either a person or not a person in a radical way, but one cannot be more or less of a person.

Experience of Human Nature and Identity as Spiritual and Transcendent

Common human experience portrays the human condition as fraught with effort or struggle to detain time. Human beings of all cultures try to make the past present either through keepsakes, or memory of the past,

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[75] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 29.

[76] I. Kant, *Foundations for Metaphysics of Behavior*, p. 429. In Yepes, p. 84.

[77] Alexandre Havard, *Virtuous Leadership: An Agenda for Personal Excellence* (New York: Sceptre, 2007).

especially the pleasant aspects of the past that make them happy. Many appreciate the 'good old days', when everything was better. Every generation has them. Script and storytelling have their origin in this effort to perpetuate the past and point toward the future. Humans try to anticipate (bring forward) the future in order to have influence on their destiny, and to exercise some control over it.

Seers and sages, or the miscreants such as witches are people who purport to specialize in seeing the future. Among the concerns of the future is the realization that since the human being is an embodied being, inescapably the human life-span must expire some time and with it the individual existence in the world of sense. That happens when one's time space in the body runs out leaving one with the longing to live longer. But if that was all, why would it matter so much? The African answer is the belief that there is an afterlife. This explains the longing; the entry into the unknown, some immortality or eternity which is the lot of every person. The transit to that unknown is an important rite of passage in African traditions. Although there are different understandings of the meaning of that transition, and how to deal with it, many African people believe that the dead continue living somehow. For the Luo people of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, (all non-Bantu) death is handled with great solemnity, lamentations, pomp and fuss so that the dead person see may see how valued he or she was. The greater the person the greater the fuss that might include the slaughter of as many as ten bulls. Every member of the extended family must visit the grave of the deceased, if not at the actual time of the burial itself, then at some other time, but they must come and mourn the deceased and thus placate them. For that reason, people do not bury their dead abroad, nor do they cremate them. Their bodies belong to the ancestral lands.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this paper, we see that both in the *Ubuntu* worldview and also within other systems that consider human nature, various dimensions of human nature and identity emerge. These consist in what human beings are as a result of the given nature, the use of their freedom, and what they are on account of their nurture and culture. Human nature as 'given' is not complete without the inputs of the receiver and of the society. People are not born with developed capacities, and the development of those capacities is part of the 'humanizing' project in becoming human.

Specifically, we have seen how despite the fact that African languages often do not employ distinctive and sophisticated terms to refer to certain concepts, these concepts do nevertheless exist, often expressed in the same words used equivocally. This has been shown to be the case with the concept of '*ntu*,' and 'heart' which are used equivocally to refer to 'will' and 'intelligence'. We have followed the meanings of *ntu* in at least

three dimensions: firstly, as it is used to contrast the human to what is nonhuman nature; *ntu* used to describe a higher dimension of personhood where one is referred to as having *ubuntu,* a particularly important dimension in African cultures; and *ntu,* as referring to personal growth in personality and freedom. No animal could be expected to have *ubuntu*, and people who do not grow in *ubuntu* are often seen as being less than human. A person that totally lacks *Ubuntu* is therefore likened, at times, to an animal or a stone, which has no heart.

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CHAPTER VII

DIALOGICS OF INTEGRATIVE IDENTITY

IKE ODIMEGWU

Any discourse of human nature or human identity is gifted with a number of advantages and, as well, fraught with a number of difficulties. Among the possible advantages is the fact that I am discussing myself and this, it is expected, will be an easy task. First of all, not much speculation is required. Among the difficulties would again be counted this same fact of proximate presence. I am too close to myself that my self would hide itself from me or my vision would be blurred. Or I am too dear to myself that objective presentation of data may be difficult especially where some of such data are not pleasing to my self assessment. And if this description of 'myself' is intended to serve as (re)presenting my fellow humans, other difficulties arise. My description would require, at least, the understanding of these fellow humans. In this matter, the very asset that makes my self-description easy becomes the primary obstacle to common understanding.

Particular discourses will present and/or encounter specific problems. What gives rise to my search for my identity will usually avail the basic context, specify the problems of the search and as well affect its nature.

In this paper, there are three fundamental concerns. First, to discover what human nature designates in the context of nature and animal nature. Second: to strive for an acquaintance with the meaning, implications and consequences of Western modernity, for the Western world and then for the rest of the world, particularly Africa. Third: to seek an understanding of how the integrative concept of human identity develops from the concept of human nature and thereby provides an answer to the crises of identity posed for the contemporary human person by the growing impacts of modernity. Besides these concerns, if any other comes along the way, it is incidental. As such, such a matter will receive attention in the measure of its instrumental value.

HUMAN NATURE: NATURE, HUMAN NATURE AND ANIMAL NATURE

Discussion of human nature usually involves 'what is nature' and 'what is human'. This discussion has been approached from various perspectives: what is natural in the human? What is human in nature? What is the relation between nature and the human? Aristotle's definition of the human as the rational animal also introduces the dimension of the animal in human nature. The whole discussion revolves around the existence of the "other" in being, i.e. the human tendency to "stand out" in being and, ultimately, to stand out from being. This otherness of being of the human

being or the human tendency to establish this otherness of being has generated the long standing search for the other as an "object". The great "other" would seem to have been classically captured in the concept of "Nature." The distance created by the otherness of Nature from the human has constituted – or been constituted – a veil, a blind that hides the nature of Nature from the human. Expectedly, this has caused the deep yearning in the human to know what lies beyond the veil. There is a tension however for the human yet desires its otherness of being even in the wells of the yearning for removal of the veil for the mastery or possession of the other. The desire to possess from a distance creates a tension which provides the context of the search for identity and also the background of our discussion of the relations of nature, human nature and animal nature in the search for the specifically human in all these.

What is nature and how shall we come to know it (him or her)? The long search for the answer to this question, in Western philosophy, has been affected by the enigmatic saying attributed to Heraclitus to the effect that "Nature loves to hide". This statement has generated the notion of the secret of Nature and thereby determined the search for the nature of Nature to the search for the secret of Nature. In this state of affairs therefore, if we shall know Nature or her nature, we must cause her to come out from her hiding or go in to meet her in her hiding place or else remove the shroud that hides her from us. The three possibilities present the three possible approaches to the mastery/understanding of Nature or conquest/discovery of identity. It remains however to show if there is a difference between the mastery and the conquest. This point also connects the search to the veiled goddess Isis and reroutes the search for nature to the attempt to unveil Isis.[1]

The notion of the secret of nature or veil of Isis introduces a number of issues. First, it introduces dichotomy between the human and nature where nature becomes the wholly other. One may choose to leave what is hidden to remain hidden. But this attitude does not last for "all men by nature desire to know".[2] This desire to know has taken the forms of the conquering quest of Prometheus or the conciliatory embrace of Orpheus.[3]

From a reading of Pierre Hadot's *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, Edward Alam[4] delineates seven conceptions of Nature as follows:

- Nature as the result of growth: the "definite form that results from a process of natural development;

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[1] P. Hadot, *The Veil of Isis* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 1.

[2] Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, R. P. McKeon, ed. (New York, 1941).

[3] Hadot, *Op. cit.,* p. 91.

[4] Alam, E. J., Seminar discussion on Hadot's *The Veil of Isis*.

• Nature as the process of realization of each reality or else (with) its result (p. 19); or a springing-forth of things, an appearance or manifestation of things that results from spontaneity (p.18).

• The origin or birth of the heavens and all that is contained within them. The birth (nature) of birth (nature). The origin (nature) of origin (nature).

• A process in the sense of the appearance of things

• Nature as Divine Art

• A principle of inner motion inside each thing, which is also a principle of growth

• An artistic fire that proceeds systematically and methodically to engender all things.

The last notion was proposed by the Stoics. And with it, the process of personification of nature was introduced into the search for the meaning and nature of Nature. Consequently, Nature has been variously personified as divine art, as encompassing the gods or merely as the physical universe. What one takes nature to be affects and is also affected by one's conception of human nature. There is however a seemingly perennial ambivalence regarding conceptions of nature in relation to human nature: Nature is variously conceived as the physical universe as opposed to the human universe or the universe of human art. This conception runs side by side with the conception of the human as part of nature but a special part with the extra characteristic of humanity. What constitutes this special human characteristic has remained controversial. And this point of differentiation of the human as the extra-natural often also involves the attempts at differentiating the human from the animal with the animal considered as the borderline of the purely natural and the extra-natural which is the human.

In his interesting paper on "Polanyi and Human Identity", David Kettle outlines the various attributes that have been projected as differentiating the human from the animal and from nature: "We might answer: unlike animals, as human beings we can abstract from our situation, visualising what is absent; we can reason; we possess language; we are self-aware (humankind is ''evolution aware of itself''); we are capable of intentional action; we possess free will as animals do not."[5] Acknowledging the valuable insight from these suggestions however, Kettle observes that the diversity of the positions leaves us wondering again if the human is adequately so described. He would further inquire if the human being is not rather "an integration as distinct from animal life as an animal is itself distinct, as an integration, from the biochemical structures of which it is made up? In this case the above descriptions are inadequate as a definition of the human being unless recognised as derivative upon this higher

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[5] D. Kettle, "Polanyi and Human Identity," Retrieved from http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/TAD%20WEB%20ARCHIVE/TAD21-3/TAD21-3-fnl-pg5-18-pdf.pdf on November 10,2010, p. 5.

integration."[6] But the question of the principle and nature of the higher integration presents another problem the solution to which has also led in a number of directions.

Culture is one major element that distinguishes the human in a variety of ways and at different levels. Seen as the human mode of living, culture acquires a distinctive status in the differentiation of the human. Significantly, culture encompasses the gamut of the ways of living that humans have come to recognize as uniquely theirs. The human being is therefore the natural being that has become inculturated. If the human is the cultural being, in the contrast between the human, the cultural and the natural, there is actually just one distinction: between the human/cultural and the natural. Yet the cognition that culture is the mode of being unique to the human and as well the whole of what pertains to the human and is created by the human as contrasted from the natural which pertains to the human but is not created by the human represents to us that there is the cultural as well as the natural in the human.

Some aspects of this conclusion call for further understanding. That mode of living unique to the human would seem to belong to the human by the very nature of the human, not by the creation of the human. It would seem contradictory to hold in this case that that by which a being is that which it is by nature is also created by the being, i.e. it may be that the being that is absolutely self-created may be so addressed, but none besides. If the cultural is that native element in the human that distinguishes the human from the merely natural, then the cultural is natural to the human. On the other hand, if we understand the cultural as that which pertains to the human which is created by the human, culture would seem not to be natural. Culture then by which the human is distinctively human is both natural and not natural, i.e. both artificial and not artificial.

Again, understanding the cultural as that created by the human whereby it is regarded as an artifice and not nature, we may be constrained to allow the cultural also to the birds who construct their nests with great artistic prowess. These nests, because they are 'created' by the birds will also be cultural and not natural. This will make the distinction between the human and the animal on the basis of the cultural problematic. Such a problem would be expansive because the cultural is effectively a heavy baggage that refers to the many elements that have been variously posited as differentiating the human from the animal, and further, from the natural.

If the distinction of the human from the natural by means of the cultural is questioned, it affects the distinction by such other elements to which the cultural refers even though they may yet remain open for specific inquiries. It would seem however that the positing of such specific elements as reason, freedom, language, work, etc. have not lived up to the billing of their distinctiveness. Ultimately, the query that any such positing would need to address is that they are posited within the confines of human

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[6] *Ibid*., p. 5.

experience. This implicates two important dimensions. First that conclusion for the whole is drawn from experiences experienced within the whole. Second, that these conclusions are drawn without experiencing what it feels, for instance, to be a bird. That the exclusion of the bird or any 'other' from the assumed human attributes must perforce be arbitrary.

Such considerations lead to the inclination that besides and beyond the realm of the corporeal where such elements as the physique, shape and form of the human body constitute distinguishing marks of our species, what ultimately defines us as humans is our consciousness of being human. This consciousness is developed in the community as a process of growth as a member of the community. It will be consistent to further hold that our consciousness of belonging to the human community is a fundamental defining element of our humanity. Again, our consciousness of our being human is one that finds us in multiple forms of relatedness and distinctiveness from the earth and the heavens and other beings that constitute our world. This consciousness of our common humanity will constitute the ground upon which the notion of identity may rise or fall.

MODERNITY

The modern is the current, the "just now" or the existing. The modern is the place and point of the moment. Even though the term 'modern' gained currency in the post Enlightenment period of European history, the idea of the modern was already used to distinguish the Christian from the pagan era of the same European history. In the early 1690s in the usage of the *Academie francaise*, "modernity" denoted the "renunciation of the recent past, favouring a new beginning, and a re-interpretation of historical origin."[7]

Modernity may be viewed from a number of perspectives and each of these perspectives yields a variety of basic characteristics. The sociological perspective to modernity is aptly captured in the definition of Anthony Giddens who sees modernity as "... a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization." Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society – more technically, a complex of institutions – which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past.[8]

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[7] Wikipedia, "Modernity" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity on November 10, 2010.

[8] A. Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 94.

An understanding of the concept and import of modernity in the search for human identity in our times requires an appreciation of the items of association mentioned by Giddens. The attitude of the human that the world is up for exploitation, the promethean attitude towards nature comes into its own and results in the industrial revolution – of course reinforced by the success of that revolution – which in turn gives rise to the market economy. Marx will interpret from here that "the emergence of capitalism and the revolutionary bourgeoisie, which led to an unprecedented expansion of productive forces and to the creation of the world market"[9] provided the basis for modernity. The scenario may rather be understood as an interplay of mutually reinforcing factors in the promethean attitude to nature, the success of this attitude and the furtherance of the attitude till it becomes a vicious cycle that imprisons the possessor of the attitude. It is such imprisonment that Taylor describes in the three malaises of modernity: individualism, adoration of instrumental reason and the socio-political consequences of the individualism and adoration.[10] Thus, while modernity promised and delivered industrialization and material abundance, it also engendered the preeminent rise of individualism and secularism that accompanied the wresting of the secret of nature. These have become new stumbling blocks to the understanding of the nature of the human. The certainty that characterized the human formerly conceived within the ladder of the great chain of being becomes one of the casualties of modernity. Delanty (2007) decries that with modernity arises "the loss of certainty and the realization that certainty can never be established, once and for all."[11]

A factor that contributes significantly to this loss of certainty is the loss of the foundations provided by religion and community. The sense of being human as well the balance in being which hitherto was defined and sustained by strings that linked the individual vertically to the divine and horizontally to the community had been severed by the individualism that characterized modernity. That the various attempts at proffering alternative support frameworks such as the scientific, political and ideological postulations of Comte, Marx and Freud have not been successful need only be appraised from the increasing crisis and growing uncertainty of the modern person in the modern world.

Modernity involves the rationalization of reality, knowledge and values, the relativization of truth and the good. The belief in the capacity of reason and in the idea of progress results in disenchantment consequent on the incapacity of reason to provide satisfactory answers to the ultimate

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[9] Wikipedia, "Modernity" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity on November 10, 2010.

[10] C. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991), pp 2-8.

[11] G. Delanty, "Modernity," in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, edited by George Ritzer, 11 vols (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

questions of existence as well as from its failure to deliver on its own promises.

Generally the characteristic features of modernity may be presented as follows:

- increased mobility and communication
- increased formal social organisation
- increased specialization of the segments of society

Some of the aspects of modernity may be gleaned from its criticisms by the postmodernists as well as from the defence of modernity by some of its advocates in their criticisms of postmodernity. One such defence is presented by Kalle Lasn and Bruce Grierson (2000) in a threatening description of our contemporary society:

> Post-modernism is arguably the most depressing philosophy ever to spring from the western mind. It is difficult to talk about post-modernism because nobody really understands it. It's allusive to the point of being impossible to articulate. But what this philosophy basically says is that we've reached an endpoint in human history. That the modernist tradition of progress and ceaseless extension of the frontiers of innovation are now dead. Originality is dead. The avant-garde artistic tradition is dead. All religions and utopian visions are dead and resistance to the status quo is impossible because revolution too is now dead. Like it or not, we humans are stuck in a permanent crisis of meaning, a dark room from which we can never escape.[12]

While the situation may not be as dreadful as described above, the signs are obvious that modernity is a movement in search of direction and relief. The loss of purpose is a consequence of the modern restriction of vision and value to individualistic horizons to the exclusion of the divine and the communal. In turn, it has resulted in the narrowing and flattening of human lives[13] and the death of community.

Modernity and Africa

Modernity has affected Africa in a number of ways. The philosophers of the modern period conceived of the African whom many of them never met in sub-human categories with the implication that the rights that pertain to the human did not apply to the African. With such philosophical

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[12] Kalle Lasn and Bruce Grierson, *A Malignant Sadness*, ADBUSTERS #30 (June/July) 2000.

[13] Taylor, *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

background, the modernity attitude of exploitation of nature and the attendant individualistic exploitation of the other which is a necessary corollary of capitalism became, in the political arena, an impetus for slavery and subsequently, colonialism. The industrial revolution created the need and provided the tool for colonization. From the economic perspective, the Berlin Summit of 1884-85 for the partitioning of Africa into colonial territories was to facilitate the sourcing of raw materials for the industries and safeguard markets for the products of these industries.

Indeed, it has been argued that while goodwill, religious and humanitarian considerations may have been instrumental to the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, commercial interests were fundamental motivations.[14] A number of factors support this reasoning: That Britain which was the leading industrial nation among the slave traders should be at the vanguard of abolition at a time when an environment of peace and a feeling of security were crucial for agriculture and markets in Africa; that these were necessary for raw materials and disposal of industrial goods; that with industrialization, Britain was no longer in need of slaves; and finally, that the abolition of the slave trade was followed almost immediately by the Berlin Conference that officially launched colonialism. It seems obvious therefore that the slave trade, abolition and colonialism were all consistent elements in a chain of developments consequent on the philosophy of modernity characterized by individualistic and instrumental rationalism manifested in imperialistic capitalism.

In affecting African cultures with its own philosophy and culture, modernity continued its impact of destruction on a stable humanity. "The same historical process that has taught us the value of modernity has also made us the victims of modernity".[15] The events of colonialism flow from the modernity attitude and continue to foster the same attitude globally. The continuing disintegration of cultures and communal notions of human identity results in the persisting crisis of identity and uncertainty regarding the foundations of human existence.

INTEGRATIVE IDENTITY

Our discussion of integrative identity shall proceed in two steps. First, we will study the method of the integrative process and the then inquire into the concept of integrative personhood.

Method: Dialogics

Integrative human identity is formed through dialogic involvement and encounter. It is also through the method of the dialogics that it may best

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[14] K.B.C. Onwubiko, *History of West Africa* Book One (Onitsha: Africana, 1967), p. 181.

[15] P. Chatterjee, *Our Modernity* (Dakar, Codesria, 1997), pp. 8–9.

be understood. It will serve some good purpose therefore to seek some understanding of the dialogics. As developed, the dialogics is a mode of being as well as the method of knowing of integrative personhood. It is the art and science of dialogue, the mode of being founded on the relatedness or communality of being. It is the method of knowing that grows by acceptance and mutual integration, the method of discussion or discourse characterized by the intercourse of complementarities. It is a mode of relation based on dialogue, i.e. the collecting and holding together of the various persons, arms, aims, stages and facets of a relationship, conversation or investigation in a harmonious whole by virtue of comprehensive and reciprocal appreciation. The dialogics conceptualizes the phenomenon of gaining by giving meaning and being.[16]

The dialogical process normally unfolds in four stages: thesis, en-thesis, pro-thesis and synthesis. The thesis refers to the original position that everyone/each party brings to a conversation or negotiation or the initial disposition of the self/every self in the approach of selves in relation. The en-thesis is the birth of new event or the projection of every self of its own self or position. The pro-thesis results from the dialogue of selves and the projection towards a common thesis, the synthesis which is the point of agreement or the mutual integration of selves achieved through mutual recognitions or donations of self or through interpresencing.

The synthesis is usually a creation of a new ident which is realized at both the sphere of the individual and of the group. It is the highpoint of the dialogics. It is the expected end or purpose of the dialogue. This may give the impression of unquestionable finality. If this were the case, then the end of life elements, like senility, atrophy, decay, or absoluteness, etc would be dreaded.

However, none of such may consistently apply to the synthesis of the dialogics because it belongs to the mode of being of a living community such that its life is a part of their life. Insofar as the communality of the community endures, the dialogics is a living process and its synthesis will be endure and be applied as it is or will evolve and be reviewed i.e. it will issue forth an enthesis as the need arises in the life of the community. Its enduring as it is or growing forth an enthesis is therefore as the community feels the need and not as an abstract logic or an extraneous 'Mind' dictates.

It is not just another point in the unending journey of the dialectics because the dialogics is not the movement of a universal mind. It is rather the group journey of the persons who commune in a dialogue. It is therefore characterized by purposiveness which is not the untrammeled ultimate purpose of an absolute being or one dictated down the line by a superior in a command structure, but the specific purpose of the persons in dialogue: the

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[16] I. Odimegwu, "Dialogics and Contemporary African Philosophy" in M.F. Asiegbu and J.C. Agbakoba, eds., *Four Decades of African Philosophy* (Ibadan: Hope Publications), pp. 229-231.

particular purpose that in the first instance, brought the dialogue into existence.

Because the synthesis is neither absolute nor dictated, it is also characterized by dialogue. Thus it belongs effectively to the dialogical mode and process. Again, because it belongs to the dialoguing community, this community feels the freedom to dialogue also on the synthesis and, where necessary, to alter it in response to further enlightenment from the dialogical process

The dialogics employs three principal tools or instruments in its operation namely:

1. Dialogical Attenuation: This instrument involves the reduction and diminution of the areas and levels of disagreement among the dialoguing community

2. Dialogical Augmentation: By this tool, the dialogics increases and amplifies the areas and levels of agreement, and uses one step to reinforce another.

3. Dialogical Accumulation: By this tool, the dialogics collects and adds up the areas and levels of agreement that have been achieved in the process. This instrument involves the bringing together of the instruments as well as the gains of the instruments of dialogical attenuation and dialogical augmentation in order to record the progress made and to employ this record as a further instrument for motivating more dialogical progress.

If integrative personhood is to be consistent with its communalist foundation, then the dialogics is its necessary mode of existence. While there is the communing of selves in communalism, there is yet the preservation of the individualities of the selves otherwise there will be the end of dialogue. In an individualist context, the individual may desire to indulge in dialogue but this is not necessary not even consistent with the conception of self here. In the context of communalism however, dialogue is necessary and not to dialogue will be antithetical to the concept and reality of existence.

Integrative Personhood and Identity

The growing concerns with the question of the nature of human nature and the nature of human identity that arise from whatever conceptions of nature entertained by the human are responses to the crisis of identity created by the dislocation of the traditional frameworks wherewith humanity and various human cultures have understood themselves. In the midst of the increasing crisis of identity that confronts humanity globally consequent on the growing impact of modernity, many attempts have been made to discover and present new frameworks for understanding the human being, his/her nature and his/her identity. Integrative identity is an attempt that seeks to recover the human from the crisis of existing within the

framework of modernity and then to evolve a concept of human identity from the communalist background using the dialogical method.

In the integrative concept, human personhood is seen as a continuously growing reality achieved through the process of mutual integration termed interpresencing. The definition of human personhood as 'the enduring self-presence of being constituted in the unity of individuality and communality by the dialogics of presencing'[17] presents the three basic constitutive elements of integrative personhood and as well tells of the mode of being and method of self realization of human personhood. The concept presents human personhood and human existence generally as the progressive realization of individuality in the framework of communality through the activity of presencing.

The three basic constitutive elements are individuality, communality and presencing. Presencing is the definitive element. Individuality or selfhood of the person is revealed by situatedness and further constituted by concrete circumstantiality of the being and existence of the person, corporeality, particularity and unity, reflexivity of presence and possessiveness of being. The individuality of the person is discovered and possessed in its communality. It is in the relatedness of my being that I gain the possibility and/or feel the necessity to strive to define and achieve the particularity and unity of my being a self in the community. Communality is therefore revealed by relatedness of human existence.

The interaction of individuality and communality takes place in presencing. It is also presencing that makes such interaction and mutual achievements possible. Presencing is revealed by intendency which is the active choice as well as the intentional action of integration. Presencing refers to the capacity of the human person to effect the presence of being, i.e. to cause being to become present to being. Taking off from the presencing self or locus of presence, it operates in three dimensions and thereby creates three relations of presence: the presence of other beings to me; the presence of other persons to me; the presence of my self to me.

All these, of course, are the relations through which being becomes present to itself by means of me (the human person) who is the being of its self presence. Essential qualities of presencing include selfhood, latency and openness. Selfhood refers to the fact of the existence of the self as the irreducible and inevitable starting point of the journey in integrative personhood. However, the self that is the initiating point is yet a self that is hidden. It is undeveloped or rather enveloped, but it has the capacity for development, for unfolding and enfolding. Indeed its concealment manifests its limitations, needs and potentialities to it and disposes it towards self development. Its latency refers to these limitations and needs. The latency of the self, the desire for self development inevitably makes the self break the shell of its hidden being, to open the doors of its feelings, needs, and

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[17] I. Odimegwu, *Integrative Personhood: A Communalist Metaphysical Anthropology* (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2008), p.104.

desires for interaction and communication. And so the third quality of presencing which facilitates its constitution of integrative personhood is the openness of the self to interaction, to communication and to development. This openness is basically characterized and reinforced by sincerity and acceptance, but it may also be characterized or marred by hesitancy and ambivalence.

In the presencing of the object to the person, the object is drawn into the locus of presence of the person. This locus of presence is the self as such.[18] In this relation, the world and circumstance of the person is constituted and as well the person is constituted by this circumstance[19] and world.[20]

The extensions and expansion of the world and circumstance therefore, in the degree of their constitution of the person, also mean the extension and expansion of the personhood. This is made possible by the elasticity and dynamism of presencing as well as by the inter-resolutions of dialogics. These possibilities are further enhanced in the interpresencing of selves where the overlapping of the loci of presence entails the involvement of persons with and in other persons.[21]

The experience of interpresencing is aptly captured in Polanyi's concept of deep indwelling and especially interanimation. Describing the relations of figure and ground polarity, Kettle says that,

> … our primary, lively experience of an emerging world and of our emerging selves is one of relatedness – of unity as much as of separation. It is an experience of participation and of creative response. This remains our experience in personal relationships and in moral, artistic and spiritual encounter – that is, in the realms of knowledge which entail, as Polanyi says, ''deep indwelling.'' Deep indwelling implies lively mutual interanimation of figure and ground, as we give ourselves fully and creatively to discovering the world and ourselves.[22]

The realms described by Polanyi as entailing deep indwelling are realms of dialogical relations which require the mutual interpenetration of presences and overlapping of loci of presence. In his discourse, Polanyi talks of relations of figure and ground, or then of self and world. Here, it is

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[18] F.A. Olafson, *What is a Human Being?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 141.

[19] J. Marias, *Metaphysical Anthropology* (London: The Pennsylvania state University Press, 1971), p. 179.

[20] P. Iroegbu, *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy* (Owerri: International Universities Press, 1995), p. 340.

[21] I. Odimegwu, *Integrative Personhood*, p. 129.

[22] D. Kettle, *Op. cit.,* p. 16.

deep indwelling of the self in the world or of the figure in the ground. In the interpresencing of integrative identity however, the deep indwelling becomes a mutual involvement where it is now a relation of mutually emerging and integrating of selves and consequent growing and forming of identities.

This idea of integrative formation of identity can also be found in the thoughts of the Igbo sage philosopher Anyiam-Osigwe. A dialogical reading of two principal concepts of his philosophy – the mindset factor and the group mind principle presents human identity as a phenomenon that grows through the communal interactions of dialogue. Evaluating the mindset as the supra-determinant factor in all development processes and initiatives, Anyiam-Osigwe conceives it as "a conditioned thought form of the phenomena(l) mind on which man's realities is (sic.) largely premised."[23] The mindset may be individual or group, fixed or open. In advocating the open or growth mindset which requires the interaction of the individual and group mindsets, Anyiam-Osigwe's concept contributes significantly to the idea of an identity that grows through the integration of dialogue in community.

This is further achieved in his concept of the group mind principle which would appear to be the summation of his philosophic prescriptions for human existence and holistic development. With the poetic beauty of the verses of a visionary, he describes the group mind as "a well-spring of ideas and thought processes that is created when people of a particular group or society blend together their respective ideas, questions, perspectives, aspirations, knowledge and experience in relation to specific goals or issues." [24] Offor interprets that in this conception, we discover a "co-operative relation, a form of team spirit…. The individuals not only employ these resources for a common good, they also project their goals, objectives and visions into that of the group…."[25] Such, of course, describe the process of formation of integrative identity in the interactions of the community. A basic requirement for the possibility of this process is the common disposition of the members of the dialoguing community to project themselves towards the point of common interest, i.e. the communality of existence which generates integrative identity

CONCLUSION: DIALOGICS OF IDENTITY

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[23] Anyiam-Osigwe, quoted in J.A. Aigbodioh, "The Mindset Factor in Economic Development" in Dipo Irele and Adebola B. Ekanola, eds., *The Development Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe vol. 3, Economic Existence, Awareness and Responsibility* (Ibadan, Hope Publishers, 2010), p. 21

[24] Anyiam-Osigwe, quoted in F. Offor, "The Group Mind Principle and the Challenges of Global Economic Crisis" in Dipo Irele and Adebola B. Ekanola, eds., *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

[25] F. Offor, *Op. cit.,* p. 226.

The form of human identity that shall arise from the concept of human nature and human personhood we have been developing will be dialogical and integrative. Integrative identity will evolve from the dialogic realization of individuality in communality and of communality in individuality. My identity at every time will be the synthesis of the dialogue between individuality and communality of my existence. This identity, manifestly, cannot be static considering the dynamism and openness that should characterize dialogue. This dynamism as well as the phenomenon of the integrative identity may be visualized in considering every self as a radiant center of magnetic pull and the community as a network of these centers. In the interactions of the radiations of the selves and the attraction of other selves, the identity of each self interweaves with the identities of the other selves such that what each takes away at each point is a progressive integration of other selves into its own old self. There is the tendency here to conceive identity as fluid and highly unstable. This may not follow however because the consciousness of our common belonging is a recognition of what is and not the creation of our consciousness or imagination. Finally, since this identity grows through dialogue, it follows that whatever affects dialogue affects the identity. However, because the identity of one's self is affected by the identity of the other selves in relation, such factors as rejection, unwillingness or refusal to dialogue which affect integrative identity affect the identity of all in relation. While these constitute limitations to dialogue, and therefore to integrative identity, it is argued that ultimately, it is through dialogue that these same limitations will be overcome for the resumption of the growth of integrative identity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DISPUTED HUMANITY OF THE AFRICAN: PHILOSOPHY AND MODERNITY

MARTIN F. ASIEGBU

INTRODUCTION

Culture is indispensable to any philosophizing. As true as this view appears for all cultures, it is still disputed by some philosophers, especially those thinkers who do not espouse a hermeneutical tradition. With respect to Africa, Towa (1991:187) strongly expresses this thought:

> Africa will not really attain its cultural [historic, political, and economic] maturity as long as it does not elevate itself resolutely to a profound thinking of its essential problems, that is to say, philosophical reflection.

In this passage, Towa underlines the significance of a people's culture – their way of life, their beliefs, pre-conceptions, myths, religion, language, artifacts, modes of dressing and architecture, their kinds of food and crops, agricultural methods, etc. – to their philosophy. Towa specifies African culture as his area of interest. Yet, his claim is valid for all kinds of philosophy and for various cultures. Actually, culture provides the philosophical materials for any philosophical reflection. Since such an insight is as old as philosophy itself, one wonders why Towa is at pains to specify the validity of the insight for the African and his culture.

If, however, "culture" designates some antiquated, ancient, and non-changeable "assortment of customs" (Lindfors 1972:5), or primitive aspects of a people's way of life, then no such a thing as African culture exists. Yet, this was the colonial idea of African culture – some static, obsolete pattern of life. The colonial assertion that Africa has "no culture, no civilization, no history, no religion" (5) derives from this false conception of African culture. Nothing but European arrogance describes Africa as a "virgin" territory, a people without a culture and a past.

Certainly, no group of people that possesses experience is bereft of a culture. Where a people's experience becomes a way or a pattern of life for the entire group, that experience becomes a culture. The percolations of a people's experience form this people's culture only when those percolations become a way of life. With respect to Africa's encounter with the West, this nuance assumes a cardinal importance.

In this connection, the colonial heritage, whatever its impact, is as much a part of African cultural heritage as language, for instance, is an

aspect of African culture. "[T]he condition that has resulted from the colonial obliteration of the "standards and practices of our fathers, ... and the consequent neocolonial inertness of our contemporary situation (Serequeberhan 1998: 9-22) as well as "the politico-existential crisis interior to the horizon of post-colonial Africa" (12) – together form inseparable aspects of African cultural heritage. Under pain of repetition, the colonial heritage and pre-colonial African culture are not two different cultures. Both form a whole – constituting African culture.

Towa had this whole in mind while he wrote down his thoughts. Commitment to the African cultural heritage underlies Towa's view. To philosophize in ignorance of the African cultural heritage is a disservice to Africa. Critical reflection on the elements of this cultural heritage, Towa insists, is the hallmark of all philosophizing in Africa. This heritage calls out the structures, and creates the philosophic discourse peculiar to Africa. Any philosophic reflection in contemporary Africa assumes, as primary, the common African experience in so far as this experience results from a confrontation of European modernity. African experience of modernity typifies the African lived experience of European colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The "felt and lived situation" (Serequeberhan 1998: 9) of the African constitutes the African's "essential problem" (Towa 1991: 187) and "our [Africans] enigmatic present." In so far as African philosophers in a contemporary African context take on this context in their critical reflection and activities, as far as their critical reflection involves, in addition to other tasks, this peculiar context of the African, then no task has any greater value than "that of systematically elaborating a radical hermeneutics of contemporary African situation" (Serequeberhan 1998: 11); the African situation has become a point of departure for elaborating contemporary African philosophy.

This paper focuses essentially on the identity crisis generated for the African by modernity. Western (European) modernity has had the African firmly in its grip. Its conception of the African as debased and subordinate to the European, the model of humanity, has marked the African pattern of life ever since 1492. As early as 1526, King Don Alfonso of Congo (Zaire) vigorously remonstrated against the despicable activities of notorious Portuguese merchants who breached the trade contract to deal in slavery (Chinweizu 1978:27). The reverberating impact of European modernity in Africa is notable in the arresting impact it has on the African psyche. Notably, Africans still entertain the idea that their liberation is very much tied in to the lot of their erstwhile colonizers (Owomoyela 1996:37). Not only does the continent lag behind in nearly all facets of development, more than this, its leaders and their subjects await the intervention of various aid programs to rescue the continent from its debilitating development problems.

After decades of exploitation of rich mineral resources in some African states, it still appears that nothing meaningful has ever occurred in

those states. In their internecine wars to gain control of the various resources of their states, rapacious leaders and politicians have further underdeveloped the state, giving vent to what Nyasanyi (1994:183 cited in Odimegwu & Oguejiofor 2008: 131) refers to as "a halo of superiority in inferiority." In Nigeria, people are wont to eulogize the breakthroughs of European modernity. In Africa, it is urgent to master European languages rather than one's mother tongue, not with a view towards globalization, but for the opportunities they hold out for people. The people have successfully canonized the highly priced life-style afforded by European modernity.

The prominence which anti-Eurocentrism has gained in contemporary African philosophy, derives from the philosophic concern with which African thinkers call into question the mistrust that the African has for himself. Indeed, the major concern of contemporary African philosophy, its "aims and intentions, the questions and the problems," and indeed the premier preoccupation of any twentieth century African philosopher "are stalked by a singular and incisive Occidental model of man" (Eze 1998: 218). The enduring challenge which this Western ideal poses to the African philosopher obliges him or her to investigate its appeal.

The expression "disputed humanity of the African," is the English translation of Eboussi Boulaga's *"l'humanité contestée"(1977:7)*. In fact, the full phrase is this: *"le désire d'attester une humanité contestée."* Eboussi Boulaga employed the expression while addressing the question of the possibility of African philosophy; the question of what "reveals and hides" the African pretension to possess a philosophy. I employ this expression in my paper since it captures centuries of European perception of the African as an "inferior Other." Certainly we are not referring to the ever present chauvinistic nationalism characteristic of different countries, whereby, for instance, Caesar once referred to the British as incurably ignorant barbarians, who could not master simple musical notes. In the same light, Cicero counseled Atticus, his friend, against purchasing British slaves since "you could not teach them to read; they are the ugliest and most stupid people I have ever met" (*Panafrikanus* cited in Okere 2005). Rather than this chauvisnism, we refer to decades of negative images and misrepresentations of the African within Western modernity.

In this paper, we seek to underline the African experience of Western modernity. After establishing the reference and scope of modernity, the paper argues the view that the constituents of Western modernity – colonialism, imperialism, trans-Atlantic slavery – all provoked the African identity crisis. The philosophy of negritude specifies one of the basic but vitiated responses of the African to the impact of modernity. Thus, in the eighteenth century the ex-slaves and Afro-Americans initiated the movement for the liberation of the African and people of African descent. Negritude philosophy typified a philosophical engagement in that direction. Its major loophole consists of its diminishing conception of the African, for which African thinkers have not ceased criticizing it. The "apologetic" tradition for Africa (Okere 2005:88) points to a major requirement for

liberation and decolonization in the African context. This type of liberation, when finally achieved, would imbue the African with the dignity, self-worth and respect he once possessed in the world. This response prevailed within the intellectual terrain. However, it was not until the 1990s that the entire African continent gained political liberation.

MODERNITY AND AFRICA

If we understand European modernity (EM) in West's description as the "Age of Europe" (West 1998), then EM not only refers to a long period spanning from 1492 to 1945, it also depicts that Age in European history mostly characterized by momentous advances in nearly all facets of life – in science and technology, in seafaring, agriculture, commerce, state formation, etc. With these advances, there originated the urge to dominate and found colonies outside Europe. Where European intervention in Africa occurred at this period, colonialism and imperialism became EM's constitutive features (West 1993; 1998).

Around the fifteenth century, the West gained access into Africa. In the early times, it was a relationship of equals. At the time, European records represented Africa as extremely organized ethnic nations and kingdoms with perceptive merchants. Prior to the fifteenth century, Snowden Jr's *Before Race Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* portrays an extremely positive conception of black Africans. In no way did skin color constitute any hindrance in their encounter with other people. Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel: A Short History of Everyone for the Past 13,000 Years* is particularly striking. Diamond argues that 13,000 years before our time, it was impossible to predict what regions of the world would lead other regions in advances in science and technology. The different regions would have developed on par with others but for a host of factors.

That glowing account was swept away in the Enlightenment Period, when trade relations between Africa and the West took a turn for the worse. Rather than raw materials, the human labor force became the West's priority. Within the context of the study of human nature, it becomes interesting to investigate the African experience of European modernity. When modernity began in 1492, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and imperialism became major constituents of European modernity. Modernity is really all about the human subject.

Modernity and the Human Subject

The Cartesian philosophy of the subject privileges reason as the constitutive feature of the human subject. Reason not only became the defining feature of the human person; it, also, became the constitutive principle of the "Age of Europe." Thus, all through EM, reason reigned supreme. Whether one refers to advances in science, breakthroughs of the

period, or the sterling universal ideals of EM, one appeals fundamentally to the principle of reason that underlies these achievements. Reason, definitive of human nature, became identical with the human subject. Thus, in articulating the progress of reason, EM raises, in some respects, the question of the human subject. Thus, in all its various expressions – whether as knowledge, thought, scientific pursuit, methodic inquiry, or even as the Absolute – one studies the human subject. As Eze (1998: 218) puts it, in all these codes it is more fundamentally the question of the "anthropos," of the human, that is at stake, since "questions of knowledge and identity, logos and anthropos, always hang together."

If there is any context within which Europe highlighted its distinctness as the model of humanity over/against the African, it was in philosophy understood as the unique and highest activity of the rational human being.

Philosophy as the Noblest Expression of Human Nature

As the noblest expression of human rationality, philosophy is one of the highest cultural achievements of human history. This does not derive simply from the peculiar nature and form of knowledge that philosophy accords humankind, but rather, from representing "the totalizing reflection of all that man is, knows and does;" since "[p]hilosophy is really man as knowledge" (Okere 2005:62), philosophy remains the highest expression of human nature.

Plato recognizes the exceptional value of philosophy. Indeed, his conception of philosophy conforms to the tradition that Pythagoras handed down to him. According to this tradition, philosophy consists in hunting down "that which is worth knowing, that wisdom which makes one unconditionally wise" (Piepper 2004:159). Since this kind of wisdom belongs solely to the gods, no wise person possesses it, not even Solon or Homer (*Phaedrus* 278b 7-6d). All the wisest person can do is to become a *philosophos* (philosopher) – "a loving seeker of wisdom" (Piepper 2004:158-159). Plato makes much out of the Thracian maidservant who ridiculed Thales when he fell into a ditch lost in contemplation. Really, for Plato a philosopher in pursuit of wisdom remains a laughing stock of ordinary people. Indeed, Plato describes it vividly:

> The whole rabble will join the Thracian maidservant in laughing at him [*philosophos*], as he walks blindly and stumbles into every pitfall (*Phaedo* 59b1).

To acquire this divine wisdom, Aristotle maintains, is beyond all human abilities. "Such a science either God alone can have, or God above all others" (*Metaphysics*1.2.983a9-10). Whereas Plato sees the major task of the philosopher as the contemplation of the archetypes, for Aristotle,

wisdom in its totality is the subject matter of philosophy. For only as a wise person can the philosopher command obedience. Aristotle expresses it thus,

> For the wise man must not be ordered but must order, and he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey him. (*Metaphysics* 1.2.982a 15).

The Disputed Humanity of the African

Since philosophy is the highest expression of human rationality, the African – a race much less human than the European (if human at all) – did not possess it. Nonetheless, the attempt to demonstrate that the African was capable of philosophy, and by implication, that he was equally as rational as the European, consumed African thinkers of the 1970s. Eboussi Boulaga's view (1977:7) that nothing but "le désir d'attester une humanité contestée ou en danger" (the commitment to defend the denigrated humanity of the African) encapsulates the major contention of the discourse about the nature, existence, and content of African philosophy.

While African thinkers disputed one another in an attempt to (dis-) prove the nature, existence, and content of African philosophy, it shows that African thinkers took the utterance to heart. Why, one may ask, did those African thinkers take the "colonial talk" seriously? Were the Europeans actually of the view that Africans possessed a nature entirely different and much less human than that of Europeans? Was it not a metaphorical way of asserting European superiority to say that the African possessed no culture, no history, no human nature? At the root of the lopsided conception of the nature of the African was the European ideology of a superior race.

The Supremacist Ideology of European Modernity

The European supremacist ideology constructed a stark distinction between the European and the African. According to this ideology, the European considered his race far superior to the African's. The conditions of the time led to the articulation and propagation of this belief. Darwinian evolutionism, Lovejoy's Great Chain of Being, Durkheim's theory of society, and especially the racial theorizing of the Enlightenment philosophers – all these lent momentous support to this ideology.

The idea that the African was a lesser human being pervaded the Enlightenment period. Ever since that period period, the African has born the stigma of that nebulous ideology. The power of this ideology appears in its particular affirmation about the humanity of the African. The African belonged to a different stock distinct from the European model of the human. Such a belief, according to Arendt (1979: 185), raised the issue of race. She puts it this way:

> Race was the emergency explanation of human beings whom no European or civilized man could understand and whose humanity so frightened and humiliated the [Europeans] that they [Europeans] no longer cared to belong to the same human species.

If, really, the European characterized the African continent as "Heart of Darkness" (Conrad 2008), he actually believed that "savages" populated the continent. That the Europeans regarded the Africans as "brutes" rather than humans is seen in some of the horrible massacres they carried out. Leopold II's decimation of the Congolese population remains most outrageous. For Arendt (1979:185), this event remains "the darkest pages in the history of Africa." James (1943:305 in Arendt 1979:185 fn 2) comments, "There was only one man who could be accused of the outrages which reduced the native population [of the Congo] from between 20 to 40 million in 1890 to 8,500,000 in 1911 – Leopold II."

A "savage" is no more than a "brute." If at all human, his nature was, no doubt, an inferior one. He possessed an inferior type of humanity. Africans, therefore, exemplified an "uncivilized" race, a people who "lacked the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, so that when European men massacred them they somehow were not aware that they had committed murder" (Arendt 1979: 192). Though disputes over the humanity of the African were widespread at the time of the Enlightenment, it became entrenched once philosophers claimed to demonstrate its truth. Nonetheless, of all the philosophers of the Enlightenment, Montesquieu alone explicitly denied the human nature of the African. He stated,

> *Il est impossible que ces gens-là soient des hommes; parce que, si nous les suposions des hommes, on commencerait à croire que nous ne sommes nous-même chrétiens.* [It is impossible for us to assume that these people are human beings: because if we assumed that they were humans, we would then be suspected of being non-Christians.]

This view of Montesquieu was inspired, no doubt, by the indignities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The captured African slave, not only landed in chains in the West, but were also forcibly compelled to work on the plantations. They had lost any freedom they had. The exotic stories about the deadly diseases of Africa, how "dark" the continent was, etc., which the commissioned travelers, government anthropologists and ethnologists peddled about Africa, played no small role in entrenching deep-seated prejudices about the African. As widespread as these false tales were at the time, it took a philosopher of Montesquieu's stature to categorically state the inhumanity of the African.

In so doing, Montesquieu gave vent to a mix of propaganda and mistaken conceptions of the African. Whereas ontology has to do with the

being of things, Montesquieu's claims about the African and the essence of human beings demonstrated his attempt to philosophize about the being of the African. In this way, he canonized all the philosophies of race of the Enlightenment. If a philosopher lacks an adequate grasp of the facts, he certainly will err. Depending on unfounded accounts and hear-say, Montesquieu erroneously produced a false philosophy of the African race.

Apart from the external features of the African, he provided no other basis for the above conclusion. Montesquieu had imagined that God, as the highest good, could not have created a species of human being with the supposedly ignoble features as the African possessed: broad nose and dark skin, thick lips and dark brown eyes etc. These features, for Montesquieu, depicted a non-human. Color, for Montesquieu, typified the essence of a human being (Montesquieu 1952; 1956). As he finally concluded, God could not really have infused a soul worth redeeming, in so ugly a body as the African's.

In Africa, Christianity and colonialism were rarely distinct from each other. Montesquieu's *caveat* about Christianity came to nothing, actually, since the colonialist was the same person as the missionary that brandished the Bible. If the Papal Bulls arrogated to the Popes the authority to parcel out Africa to contending Portuguese and Spanish powers, how naïve it was for Montesquieu to give some thought to "Christian morals" about the humanity of the African. Montesquieu reasoned that the horror of the trans-Atlantic slavery was lessoned if the victims were non-human. If only the moral responsibility of human action were calculated in the manner Montesquieu viewed it! But such a "Christian morality" at the time was non-existent. Montesquieu could proceed with his beliefs since no God was overseeing his thought!

The British empiricist David Hume represents the view of some English thinkers about the African. As a functionary of the colonial office, Hume was able to comment in a footnote to his "On Character" thus:

> I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them … Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen … if nature had not made the original distinction betwixt these breeds of men (cited in Eze 1998:13).

This passage sees Hume employ biological features to pontificate about the differences among human beings: between the "negroes" and "whites," the "civilized" over against the "barbarous," the "eminent" and the "superior" over the "inferior." Although one may argue that Hume does

not, like Montesquieu, explicitly maintain that the African ["Negroes"] were devoid of humanity, the differences he highlighted in the text, more than all others, have a great significance for a study about the disputed nature of the African. Accordingly, the African possessed a humanity that was diametrically opposed to the European's. The European in Hume's racial thinking stood for the human *per se*.

Much in the same line as Hume, Kant held equally that the difference in skin color represented a difference in rationality. While the skin color black denoted, according to Kant, stupidity or ignorance, white skin color stood for rationality. The German philosopher, Hegel, continued the link between rationality and the biological features of skin. For Hegel (1952), Africa was not a worthy place for the revelation of the Absolute Spirit. As a result, Africa could not develop politically, culturally, historically, or even ethically. Devoid of reflexive thought, African society could boast of no laws. A deserted place not fit for human habitation – that was Hegel's Africa.

In contrast, Tempels's account of the African pulls the rug from under the feet of the Enlightenment thinkers. A missionary from the Netherlands, Tempels worked among the Baluba of Congo. Although his book received stiff objections from African intellectuals, it negates the view of the Enlightenment thinkers about the humanity of the African. Unlike the Enlightenment thinkers, who drew from less credible sources, Tempels (1959/69: 22-23) writes,

> To declare on a priori grounds that primitive peoples have no ideas on the nature of beings, that they have no ontology and that they are completely lacking in logic, is simply to turn one's back on reality. Every day, we are able to note that primitive peoples are by no means just children afflicted with a bizarre imagination.

Tempels goes on to say that rather than just primitive children, Africans are men [and women] whom he has come to know "in their homes." While Lèvy-Bruhl argued that the African was bereft of logic, and the Enlightenment thinkers maintained that the African was irrational, Tempels argued, on the contrary, that Africans possessed a philosophy. A race which was devoid of rationality would be unable to elaborate a philosophy. Since philosophy in the West typifies the highest and noblest expression of rationality, attributing philosophy to the African contradicted the program of the colonialists. For this reason, the circulation of Tempels's book at the time became restricted for one sole reason: because it challenged the view of the status quo. Tempels's attribution of philosophy to the African elicited, as a result, a multitude of reactions from his fellow missionaries and Europeans. Tempels was not only forcefully withdrawn from the missions, but attempts were also made to ban his book. The impact

of the colonial conception of the African is notable in African philosophy. It elicited a response from Africans known as "Negritude."

NEGRITUDE: BACKGROUND OF A PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT AND A REACTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

> The long exercise of colonial subjection and the mystification of racist ideas of superiority that went with it saw francophone Africans being taught to discard whatever they had of their own and to acquire instead the trappings of French civilization. "Gallicization" was the basis of almost all education in French territories. A few Africans were given the keys to French culture. However, the intention was not to promote symbiosis, but assimilation. This project failed entirely: the best and the brightest assemblies used the keys given to them to open another door, the door to African cultural liberation (Salih 2004: 9-23).

In the passage above, Salih (2004: 9-23) expresses the major motivations of Senghor's philosophy of Negritude. The philosophy originated principally with French thinkers of early twentieth century and was developed as a counter-response, in resentment, to the French colonial policy of assimilation that sought to make French citizens out of francophone Africans. The philosophy of Negritude was also reacting to the basic ideology that animated the colonial culture, that is, European supremacy and the inferiority of the African (Oguejiofor 2009:79-94). Negritude became a significant philosophy for the study of human nature, elaborated from an African perspective. The philosophy sought to show how Africans view their own humanity and how that view squares with the colonialist conception.

Senghor – a Senegalese, whose idea of negritude occupies us here – bestrode two different cultures: the French colonial culture and his African culture. Immersed in the most refined French culture, Senghor could have passed for a French national but for his African origins that gnawed incessantly at his being. His alienation within the French culture memorialised his African origins. In response to the void that recalled his African identity, Senghor developed the idea of negritude. Really, the French colonial policy of assimilation provoked the reactionary attitude within which the philosophy of negritude sprouted.

Although they suffered a similar fate under the British colonial culture, Anglophone African intellectuals seemed much less reactionary than their Francophone counterparts. The British colonial ideology of "indirect rule" may even have contributed to the intellectual reflections of Anglophone African thinkers. Thompson (2002:143-153) argues the view that Anglophone African intellectuals entertained less fear of British Westernization policy. He put it this way:

It is commonly suggested that the "indirect" or non-assimilationist style of British colonial rule may have softened the reaction that provided negritude in French-controlled areas. Protestant missionaries were more likely than Catholics to learn native languages and to translate the bible into them. French administrators, as an outcome of the ideas of 1789, were more likely to make Africans French citizens, or at least to assert equality under the law. The concomitant assumption was that the citizens were becoming completely French without a backward glance at culture that was being lost.

Given the French colonial policy of assimilation, the misrepresented identity of the African, and the European supremacist ideology, Senghor's negritude, concerned itself, in its earliest beginnings, with conceptualizing anew and in a positive sense the misconstrued African identity. Thus, initially, negritude was singled out as a reactionary philosophy. With the changing times however, it grew in multiple dimensions. It eventually manifested historical, essentialist, aggressive, conciliatory and inventive elements (Hyman (1977: 23; Asante-Darko 2000: 157-162).

Negritude as Philosophy

In so far as Senghor elaborated the philosophy of negritude in an attempt to set aright the misrepresented image of the African as "inferior," his philosophy of negritude was an exercise in hermeneutics (Oguejiofor 2009:86). This attempt to correct the falsified image of the African, to correct the European misunderstanding of the African and all he stands for – his history, tradition, culture, and heritage – sets the primary outlook of negritude. In Valiant's view (1991: 286, 244), this entails "the strengthening of the unique elements of African culture." He continues, "Negritude [in its earliest expression] is the simple recognition of the fact of being black, and the acceptance of this fact, of our destiny as blacks, of our history and of our culture."

Irele (2007: 203-209) characterizes the early content of the philosophy of negritude as

a distinctive and significant aspect of the comprehensive reaction of the black man to the colonial situation, a situation that was felt and perceived by black people in Africa and in the New World as a state of global subjection to the political, social and moral domination of the West.

Irele situates negritude within a broader black awareness of the time. He does not, however, recoil from identifying negritude with black consciousness. He emphasizes both its distinct particularity about its specific origins on the one hand. On the other hand, he identifies negritude

with the global situation of people of African descent. In these dual dimensions, Irele argues that negritude denotes

> [T]he black world in its historical being, in opposition to the West, and in this way resumes the total consciousness of belonging to the black race, as well as an awareness of the objective historical and sociological implications of that fact (204).

But negritude does not contend against the colonial culture all the time. In its richly expansive aspects, negritude typifies an affirmation of personality (Irele 204). As a philosophy of social action, it not only thrusts forward the development of Africa, but also signals, a "quest for new values, for a new spiritual orientation" (204). In short, negritude for Irele

> represents a movement towards the recovery of a certain sense of spiritual intensity by the black man, as the definition of a black collective identity, as well as of a new world view, derived from a new feeling for the African heritage of values and of experience (204).

Negritude Philosophy and the African

A distinct view of human nature that operates in Senghor's philosophy of negritude has elicited severe objections from a cross-section of his admirers. Senghor makes a demarcation between the mode of knowing peculiar to Europeans on the one hand, and to Africans on the other. Africans object to the theory because it appears to institutionalize a division in human nature between the Africans and the Europeans: Africans possessing one kind of nature, and Europeans another kind (Senghor (1962: 7; (Reed and Wake 1976).

Epistemology serves as the context for this cleft of human nature. The Cartesian mode of knowing, peculiar to the European, Senghor argues, dismembers, analyzes, and objectifies the object in a manner that marks out the subject-object relation clearly. The way the African comes to know reality is completely different, Senghor maintains. Unlike the European, whose mode of knowing, according to Senghor, relies on an application of "logical intellection," the African depends, on his part, on the emotive dimension of reason to grasp reality. The African remains bound up with nature and reverences, adores, communes with nature, or as Senghor puts it, "dances" with it. Rather than logical intellection, the African's grasp of reality highlights the emotive dimension of Reason. It gives priority to the creative sensibility of imaginative Reason (Irele 2007: 205). Since the African was "one of the worms created on the Third Day … a pure sensory being" (Senghor1976: 36), emotion, Senghor argues, remains the dominant feature of the African's consciousness.

With the African mode of knowing, there arises between the subject and the object a "dynamic relationship in which intense perception through the senses culminates in the conscious apprehension of reality" (Irele 2007: 205). In this mode of knowing, the subject imbues the object with life. In short, it amounts to "living the object… in the depth of his soul, penetrating through the senses to its essence (205). Senghor (1976: 35) notes more sharply,

> Knowledge then is not the superficial creation of discursive reason, cast over reality, but discovery through emotion: less discovery than re-discovery. Knowledge considers, here, with the being of the object in its discontinuous and indeterminate reality.

Senghor's view closely relates the African's physiology with his psychology. The "hot and humid climate" (quoted in Irele 2007:205), Senghor argues, is a cardinal influence on the African's mode of knowing. However true this influence is, it is no less erroneous, it appears, to claim that the cold weather determines the "logical intellection" of Europeans. Rather than the Cartesian *cogito*, another mode of reason – "the Negro-African *cogito* defines the mode of knowing of the African." Senghor (1962: 7); Reed and Wake (1976) write:

> I think, therefore I am, wrote Descartes, the European par excellence. I feel, I dance the other the Negro-African would say. He does not need, like Descartes, a 'tool word' as my old master Ferdinand Brunot used to term it, a conjunction, in order to realize his being, but an object complement. He does not need to think but to live the other by dancing him.

African thinkers have consistently disputed Senghor's opinionated classification of the mode of consciousness. Such a classification, critics are quick to point out, is mistaken. The place of reason in Europe's pursuit of modernity appears to underlie his modes of knowing. As critics maintain, the distinction between the two modes of knowing carves out, even if unknowingly, the two natures of a human being – one the European, the other the African. To claim that the African's mode of knowing underplays logical, analytic intellection lacks sufficient basis of argumentation. The climate of Africa is the least ground for such a view. Really, his view resembles some early anthropologists' account of "the man-eating giants of Africa." Those exotic accounts, which depended on hear-say, compared the "illiterate farmers/peasants in Africa" not with "their equivalents and counterparts among Europe's back wood peasantry and illiterate unwashed but with city dwellers from higher, privileged social classes to which the philosophers belonged" (Okere 2005: 63). Senghor's demarcation of two modes of knowing does just that. Thus, Senghor differed but a little from

the views of the Enlightenment thinkers. Though Sartre feared to decipher an "anti-racist racism" in Negritude, one discovers that Senghor denigrates the African more.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN IDENTITY

The idea of the denigration of the African assumes another dimension – that of the decolonization. The problem of the identity of the African becomes an issue of decolonization. European modernity had Africa firmly in its grips. Despite the celebrated political independence of South Africa, the last bastion of colonial rule in Africa, there still remains the intellectual decolonization of the continent. Thus, though all African states are presently independent, Africa still has to face up to the problem of decolonization intellectually.

In philosophy, this process of decolonization is still at its neophyte stage. The idea that African philosophy is no more than a compendium of the traditional African mores, myths, proverbs, artifacts, languages and religious beliefs derives from a colonial conception of African philosophy (Wiredu 1984: 31-54). Africans are incapable of philosophy so reasoned the colonialists, therefore, "African philosophy" merely stands for "the communal Weltanschauung of traditional African societies, for philosophy in the modern world is an essentially Western phenomenon" (Wiredu 1984:31). This conception restricts the meaning of African philosophy to traditional folklores, maxims, proverbs, and religious beliefs. Further, it identifies African philosophy with these. Hountondji (1983) ridiculed such a conception of philosophy as "ethnophilosophy."

Alongside Hountondji are grouped all thinkers who defend the scientific approach to philosophy. These thinkers join issues with the Ethnophilosophical School that accepted the colonialist conception of African philosophy. The Scientific School of thought privileged a self-reflective and critical stance. The Nationalists objected to a critical reflection on the lore and customs, maxims and proverbs, local wisdom, religious beliefs and concepts that compose folk philosophy. For the Nationalists, "criticism [of the traditional folk philosophy] implies disrespect to our [African] peoples" (Wiredu 33). To be sure, this is, according to Wiredu (34), "misplaced nationalism." For the Nationalists, at issue was African culture.

The colonial assumption that Africa is bereft of culture, civilization, religion, and history (B. Lindfors et al. 1972: 5-15) inspired the reactionary attitude of the Nationalists. "Cultural self-affirmation" in the view of the Nationalists implies "a wholesale retention and prizing of [African] traditional beliefs and customs" (Wiredu 34). Yet, the Nationalists lost sight of the fact that a critical reflection on the customs and traditions would create a genuine African philosophy. The major schools of thought in African philosophy arose in their bid to address the basic colonial claim about African philosophy. The crisis about African philosophy arose from

the colonial attempt to impose on African experience a particularly foreign philosophical approach that made the idea of African philosophy questionable.

In African philosophy, therefore, there are two typical heritages: the purely African and the colonial. Some African thinkers model their systems on European philosophies and derive their individualism from such models. This is clear in a good number of dissertations by some African students. "Aristotle on Friendship: Implications for Nigeria" readily comes to mind. These works ground their vision in European experience and culture. The African dimension of the research – often an uncritical addition – seeks to replicate, discover, and isolate the key features of the European experience in African culture and environment.

Another aspect of the colonial heritage is the issue of language in which the African thinker engages the African experience and carries out his study. Just as the African draws his inspiration from Western experience and culture, so also is his language entirely Western. Western languages become the means of communication. These languages transmit the thought and the experience the African commits into writing. For nearly all African thinkers, language poses a major challenge. Wiredu (1984:34) describes this challenge of the language of communication. According to him, no language is "philosophically neutral," since its structure, concepts, and even vocabulary "are apt to incline the native thinker in particular directions."

Wiredu readily allows for the influence of Western languages, or as he expresses it, "languages with a written tradition of philosophy" (34). Philosophical terms developed in those languages are rarely neutral. Those concepts enshrine centuries of philosophical reflections, squabbles, formulations as well as assumptions. To employ those philosophical terms in a different cultural milieu than in the context of their evolution raises problems of interpretation and decolonization. While the mind-body problem, for instance, is non-existent in Greek and African cultures, it is a basic philosophical problem of European philosophy. Yet, it is absent from Greek and African philosophies for different reasons.

In this regard, Wiredu (1984), and other African thinkers discuss the process of the decolonization of foreign concepts employed in African milieu and experience. Along this spectrum, the process of decolonization assumes a definite meaning.

To decolonize our [African] philosophical thinking means divesting our [African] thought of all influences emanating from the modes of thought of our erstwhile colonizers" (Wiredu 1984:35).

All things considered, conceptual decolonization is actually basic to all other kinds of liberation. Nonetheless, the process does not entail an utter and radical rejection of all concepts and languages foreign to the African experience nor does it entail an abandonment of trying to articulate liberation for the African. What it all comes to is this: Subscribing to any use of a philosophical concept, current of thought or an ideology, one need

not lose sight of the "peculiarities" conditioning such a concept, vision, or ideology (Wiredu 35).

CONCLUSION

Liberation of the Black man was in fact linked to effective recognition that the Black man, humiliated and exploited by slavery and the slave trade, was fully human (Smet 1984: 81-88).

The intellectual liberation of the African is the greatest obstacle the African faces at present. If one considers the lot of the African at the turn of the twentieth-first century, one discovers that the African is still struggling to overcome those initial obstacles strewn along his path: decades of military rule, internecine wars, irratic leaders, "Presidents-for-life," and the rise of militant Islam – all signify that there is yet to arise a greater prize than being human in Africa.

In this paper we have explored the African experience of Western modernity. Forced upon the African, Western modernity had the African in its grip, even as far as determining the people's humanity. Political liberation notwithstanding, the process of decolonization remains the last frontier of African liberation.

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RETHINKING HUMAN NATURE: AFRICAN VALUES AND CREATIVE EVOLUTION

J. CHIDOZIE CHUKWUOKOLO

INTRODUCTION

Mankind's true disposition revolves around the historicity of his being. This entails the dialectical and integrative interaction of his essence with his environment. But this dialogic interplay has manifested itself in various modes with varying interpretations of his nature. While some see nature both in its substantial or participial forms as hidden, and not unveilable, others see it as hidden but veilable. The former belongs to the mode of thought attributed to Heraclitus: "Nature loves to hide". If nature loves to hide, what is the mode of human nature? In essence, is man's essence fixed and hence absolute? Or is his nature constantly unfolding?

The need to properly understand the nature of man can never be overemphasized bearing in mind the challenges of our time. Philosophers over the years have engaged themselves in actually trying to unveil the nature of man. This was manifested in trying to make out meaning in the relationship between human ideas, interests and human actions. Asouzu, captures rightly this role of philosophy:

> One of the ways of viewing philosophy is that it is a reflective activity that is directed at analyzing and understanding ideas with the aim of relating them to human interest in a way that enables us explain and understanding reality better in a comprehensive, total and universal manner.[1]

These ways have emanated from such historicist interaction between "fixed" and "evolving" views of nature. Over the years, philosophers have tried to understand man's being in order to unravel it in a predictive manner from his behavioral motivations: this has not been fully achieved. The challenges of our time have become more pronounced following the after-math of the September 11 attack in the U.S. This brought to the fore, the clash of Western and Islamic civilizations represented by modernity and fanatical jihadism respectively. What is perplexing is that both the Western and Islamic players operate in a sort of assured moral paradigm that fore-

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[1] Innocent I. Asouzu, *The Methods and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy* (Calabar: University of Calabar Press 2004), p. 6.

closes the acceptability of the morality of the other group. This has resulted in a brand of Islam perceiving everything Western as meaning the enthronement of Western cultural ideas and Zionist imperialist hegemony.

In the face of the above, the challenges become more demanding for philosophers to articulate an acceptable global morality. It becomes imperative, therefore, to take a leap to the ultimate cause of our perceptions and interests. Human nature, is it fixed or evolving? The answers to this will enable us understand human nature or identity and its dignity and authentity in order to forge a global morality needed in our time. But we cannot understand this very clearly without inculcating the "Darwinian challenge" in the understanding of human nature. This is because our attitude towards life and the future is influenced by our viewpoints on the origin of the cosmos. This means that our ideas, interests and actions, which in turn influence our moral consciousness, are to a large extent influenced by how we perceive the origin of things and what we expect after death. Lovian et al captures the import of this position correctly when they assert that, "from the perspective of the historians of religions, many of the ethical systems of the west-both religion and philosophical systems – appear to relate the order of their present actions to cosmogony."[2]

As can be seen, Darwin's evolutionary theory is a "scientific" reaction against creationism. At the root of creationism is the notion of finality and *ipso facto* an ideology. The implication of this is that every created being is made for a certain end. From this construal, man is a being towards a certain fixed end. His nature therefore, is created for a certain end toward which it must develope. On the other hand, evolution entails mechanisms, based on natural selection, in which modern physicalism has tried to reconcile with teleology. Though this has not been successfully done, what is evident is that there are two radically opposed notions undergirding the understanding of human nature. Either way, theoreticians have developed their theories of human nature in contradiction to the other. This is our challenge.

If this challenge is rightly articulated in this direction, this would be the cause of the elusiveness of understanding human identity, nature, authentity and dignity. Since those who believe in creationism have failed to accept the evolutionary challenges of our being and vice versa. The challenges go deeper as the crises of understanding our being and identity broadens. The major issue therefore, is, how do we contend with the issue of the stable but mutable essence of human nature as an impediment to man's progress? It is in order to battle this challenge that this paper proposes a complementary integrative approach in understanding human nature. This approach could be drawn from the African view of creative – evolution. At the root of this is the appreciation of the ambivalence of the existential condition of man in his decision making.

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[2] R.W. Lovian et al, *Cosmology and Ethical Order* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1985), p. 2.

The philosophers of our time therefore should provide a platform for mastering our ambivalent conditions. Asouzu asserts, "we can measure the adequacy of any philosophical methodology, largely, by the level of assistance it provides us towards mastering our ambivalent situation."[3] This is seen in the integrative and complementary approach of creative-evolution that we shall enunciate in this paper. Complementarity entails an understanding in such a way that issues that seem exclusive would be understood in inclusive terms in order to utilize the advantages and disadvantages therein. Asouzu again explains the philosophy of complementarity:

> This entails working out the condition under which our diverse interests, opportunities, worldview, and challenges can be harmonized with each other such that they become advantages to us instead of disadvantages. Such conditions must take into account the fact that contrary views are not necessarily contradictory exclusive positions that can never be reconciled with each other. On the contrary, these are opportunities towards full synthesis of all compatible opposites for the overall goal and welfare of humanity.[4]

We shall pursue our end towards the achievement of the synthesis of creationism and evolutionism using the African 'principle of complementarity' of ideas in creative-evolution. Before that, let us review the theories of human nature and how they relate with with social order.

HUMAN NATURE: CONCEPTIONS AND SOCIAL ORDER

This paper cannot be justified except when one premises it on the reflective understanding of the motivators for both the progress, and or the decay in human civilizations. In other words, neither the collapse of the social order nor its sustainability can be effectively understood without understanding the philosophical construal that undergird the conceptions of human nature. Philosophers of varying persuasions have presented a paroxysm and plethora of interminable positions on the nature of man. Baltista Mondin captures this view: "The modern and contemporary philosophers have obtained a whole series of images of man which have sparked great interest. For example, anguished man (Kierkegaard), economic man (Marx), erotic man (Freud), existential man (Heidegger), uptopian man (Ricoeur), etc."[5]

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[3] Asouzu, p. 8.
[4] Asouzu, p. 10.
[5] Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology: Man an Impossible Project?* (Bengalore: Theological Publications 1955), p. 9.

What this evinces is that the conceptions of man have been variously given by philosophers but that theories of human nature are at the root of such conceptions. These conceptions give overall meaning to the whole expectation of man in this life and hereafter. This is in line with Leslie Stevenson's view that "the meaning and purpose of human life, what we ought to do and what we can hope to achieve – all these are fundamentally affected by whatever we think is the real or true nature of man."[6]

Amerigo Lapati's view is not different: "basic to the study and understanding of any theory that deals with human behaviour is the concept of the nature of man underlying that philosophy or theory."[7] It could be seen from the above that certain metaphysical and epistemological conceptions underpin the various conceptions of man, as for example, passive and autonomous. The passive conception which is mechanical and deterministic entails a fixed nature of man. Man is thus seen as floating in a law-clad cosmos governed by environment and genetic. The idea of an absolute being that directs the activities of man is removed from this conception. Man is, *ipso facto,* devoid of essence as his essence is manipulable, investigable and scientifically predictable. This is akin to what Martin Hollis has called a "plastic man as against the autonomous man."[8] On the other hand, the autonomous conception of man, according to Hollis, is precisely what confers on man freedom, choice and responsibility.

What has been said so far is that man is either free or determined and these conceptions of human nature have spurred various theories of the social order inherent in human society. Is man necessarily free or determined? Answers to this question have come in various forms and theories. For instance, Jared Diamond in postulating his own theory sees man as a bio-geographically determined being and thus eventuates into environmental determinism. B.F. Skinner, on his part, describes man in terms of psychological determinism where all social actions and phenomena are reduced to psychology. Determinism perceived in this sense enthrones necessity thereby consigning man with the ad-infinitum search for casual antecedents.

This obviously is in conflict with the concept of the subject as a unique entity that transcends deterministic analysis with free will and responsibility. It is noteworthy that Hollis contradicts the notion of the self as a unique entity beyond the consideration of mechanistic laws. It is on this ground that he asserts that man can only be unique if such a one "is the only instance of the intersection of a complex of laws."[9] Perceived in this way,

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[6] Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1974), p. 3.

[7] Amerigo Lapati, "Skinner and the Nature of Man," in *The New Scholasticism XXXXVII* (1973), pp. 501-502.

[8] Martin Hollis, *Models of Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 197), p. 5.

[9] Hollis, p. 11.

free will and free action will be a ruse if we conceive it as a deed emanating from an uncaused unique subject with the capacity of making choices from various options.

Determinism denies "chance events" even when modern physics postulates that the particles that compose the cosmos are conceptual waves of probability. This probability theory that extends to even human action is linked by laws with previous events. But again, existentialists like Pierce, reject universal determinism using "tychism" which entails elements of spontaneity in nature. What is evident is that conceiving determinism in the thorough-going sense, removes elements of prediction in the world as not sufficient laws for governing events that could ever be known at any time.

However, before we accept or reject determinism, it is worthy of note that though it cannot be established or denied empirically, its value and position in human affairs are axiomatic. Ernest Nagel was right to aver that it has the status of a "guiding principle capable of formulating in a holistic way one of the major objectives of positive science."[10] Let us affirm that most advances in science and technology enhance the plausibility of determinism in our daily interactions. Thus, J.C.A Agbokoba rightly asserts:

> We do have some good reasons to agree with the thorough determinists: … in our everyday interaction with fellow human beings, we do ensure the operation of causality and law-like regularities… We thus generally presume that choices and decisions don't just happen, but have causes and effects and thus determined.[11]

However, determinism as we have presented it here has obvious difficulty of sorting out the perennial philosophical problems of freedom, choice and responsibility. In other words, can man be said to be actually free and wholly responsible for his actions? Reuben Abel says that "this is an important problem because freewill lies at the intersection of two fundamental but perhaps incompatible convictions: the subjective or inward phenomenological certainty of freedom: and determinism, the insistence that every event has a cause."[12] It is to grapple with this obvious problematique emanating from the issue, that is, whether freewill contradicts or occludes determinism, that reconcilliationism, libertarianism, etc., were postulated. The pertinence of the unsuccessful reconciliation of the dialectical opposition between determinism and freewill begs for conclusive results so far. This is because at the fundamental metaphysical level is what human beings think of themselves: if determinism were true,

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[10] Ernest Nagel, "Determinism in History" in W.H. Dray, ed., *Philosophical Analysis and History* (New York: Harper and Row 1996), p. 354.

[11] J.C.A Agbakoba, *Philosophical Issues in Development* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers 2003), pp. 8-9.

[12] Reuben Abel, *Man is the Measure* (New York: Free Press 1976), p. 243.

man's conception of morality, law, responsibility and will crashes. But these concepts are integral parts of our daily operations. This is more worrisome when we observe that those adhering to determinism are materialists and naturalists who jettison the notion of a self that acts freely.

Theories of human nature seen in this way have these metaphysical commitments inherent in them that impinge on the conception of the ideals for a veritable social order. Yet these positions (determinism and freewill) are realities of the material and behavioral worlds we live in. We shall show how these conceptions undergird the various theories of human nature that there are. We shall also show how these emanate either from evolutionism or creationism. But just as determinism is not necessarily contradictory to freewill, creationism is not necessarily contradictory to evolutionism. We shall use the African theory of complementarity enshrouded in creative evolution to synthesize this.

But before that, it is relevant to assert that these theories intersect with teleology and causation and in explaining them properly, we shall be able to understand and grasp fully human nature's impact on the social order. This is done with the aim of redressing the decadence in our current social order. Teleology, sort to explain reality in terms of purpose and or goal states: goal directed and goal oriented. For a goal intended orientation, the agent consciously sets out the desired goals and exhibits stimuli towards its attainment. While a goal directed behavior is integral in the nature of the agent without necessarily imputing consciousness and intentionality to the activities, these activities could still be said to be purposive. Certain philosophical issues arise with teleological explanation: the fallacy of projecting a casual explanation as if effect precedes a cause. This revolves around the nexus between the determining and determined factors of this explanatory model. It is easier to explain goal-intended behaviour in this way, but more tenuous to confirm goal-directed behaviour of this kind.

Another philosophical issue is that presented by Nagel and Carl Hempel who discard teleological explanations as misleading ways of stating casual explanations. This is compounded when it is noted that teleological explanations do not assert the obvious attainment of goals. It is even more compelling to note that though many non-teleological explanations exist, they are never included in the teleological explanations. This attitude takes for granted that progress comes, under normal conditions, without any attempt at pinning down teleological explanations as presenting the conditions for development. No matter how weak and inclusive teleological explanations are, they spur plasticity to the foundation of the theories of human nature that undergird varying perceptions of the social order. However, the justification of our intended thesis is that though plasticity is inherent in their discussions, they do not eschew choices from alternatives. This results from the fact that accepting that human beings act within the confines of laws and necessities. They do not contradict themselves as they could either accept or reject such laws or necessities.

What implications have these metaphysical commitments for social order? The relevance of social order which is described as "the sustenance of …proper definition, and reference of social roles, obligations, and responsibilities by the citizens and government respectively"[13] can never be over emphasized. This is a sequel to the fact that if the main aim of social theories is to posit the organizational structure of society, its functions, institutions and patterns of development, it follows that human nature impacts on human behaviour. Society is the 'axis mundi' of human social relations. As molecular behavior enhances the understanding of the pattern of gases, the proper understanding of human nature spurs the understanding of human societies. Thus, it can be concluded that the understanding of the coherence and consistency of any social theory enhances the understanding gained about human nature. These have been explained in three ways as we have noted earlier namely teleology, causality devoid of teleology and freewill. Our own fourth way is a complementary approach of synthesizing the above without losing any of their essences. But before that, let us examine creationism and human nature.

CREATIONISM AND HUMAN NATURE

Creationism posits certain fundamental philosophical approaches to the understanding of human nature. Those who accept it as the foundation of the explanation of the origin of the cosmos do so with certain attendant moral and aesthetic expectations. The issues shall be discussed in five phases. First, what are the main problems of evolutionism concerning creationism. The second phase revolves around the problem of the inconsistencies of evolutionism as capturing the origin of the universe. The third is the issue of the status of Plato's demiurge; and the fourth shall dwell on creationism and the element of time. Finally, we shall evaluate how all these relate to human nature and, thus, to the social order.

So much evidence abounds for evolutionary theory as grounding creationism, but the one point that even Charles Darwin accepted is the issue of the evolution of the composite parts or organs of the human body. The problem here is that organs such as sight or hearing have to work together for hearing or sight to take place. Such human organs would have been useless until the individual parts were fully evolved. So the critical question arises: could the chance element that is assumed to drive evolution have brought all these parts jointly at the rightful time to produce such elaborate mechanisms? Darwin's acknowledgement of this pitfall when he asserts that "to suppose that the eye … could have been formed by

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[13] A.K. Fayemi, "A Philosophical Examination of the Nexus between Human Nature and Social Order," in M.F. Asiegbu and J.C. Chukwuokolo, eds., *Personhood and Personal Identity: A Philosophical Study* (Enugu: Snaap Press 2010), p. 116.

[Evolution], seems I freely confer, absurd in the highest degree"[14] is quite informative. This shows that the universe with its awesomeness, complexity and precision would not have arisen by chance. The galaxies, the human cells, and the complexities of the brain do not give irrevocable credence to the universe originating by mere chance.

The pre-Socratics were cosmogonic in their philosophy but they were perplexed by the origin and development of the universe. Hence, they tried to espouse various views on the source, and origin of the universe by positing ultimate principles. Thales, Aniximander, Anaximanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, etc., saw this 'stuff' in terms of water, air, fire and change, water, air, fire and earth etc respectively. R.O. Madu, sees these physiologists as differing "in their notion of the first principle depending on their specific understanding of causality. They also differed in the number of principles."[15] What is clearly brought out here is the issue of 'creatio-in-nihilio' where matter is eternal. This is contradictory to the Judeo-Christian perspective of 'creatio-ex-nihilio.' Thus, it has been noted that: "the Greek accounts of how the universe begin here often described not its creation in strict sense but its birth from primordial ancestors such as Oceanus and Choas. In effect, the language of creation as used by them is of construction and craftsmanship."[16]

This brings out clearly the question of agency and Plato's Demiurge. Plato suggests that the events already existing were arranged by the Demiurge that brought being, space, and becoming (three distinct things) into existence before the heavens came into being. This disorderly state was what forced the generous Demiurge that is infinitely good to instill order into the chaotic state. This results from the "mixed outcome of a combination of necessity and reason" (Timaeus 47E5-48AZ). The above is a clear case of a *roi faireneant* (do nothing king). The Demiurge lacks omnipotence and omniscience. The Judeo-Christian conception does not deny this notion of God as it appears to describe the cosmos as coming from darkness and water. Gilson seems not to understand this when he presented the Greeks as if they were the only people that conceived the creator as relying on nothing independently existent. As he puts it: "Plato's Demiurge does not create matter but only arranges already existing matter while Aristotle's God is only a mover and not a creator at all."[17]

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[14] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species: Part One* (Geneva: Edito-Service 1902), p. 250.

[15] R.O. Madu, *Essays on Metaphysics* (Nsukka: Fulladu Publishing Co. 1997), p. 5.

[16] J.C. Chukwuokolo, "Creationism and Its Implications for Mankind" in *Flash Journal of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki Vol. 1 No* (2007), p. 109.

[17] E. Gilson, *The Spirit of the Medieval Philosophy* (New York Scribner's,: 1936), p. 36.

The raging issues not withstanding, what is evident is that there is a conception of time before time, that is, a beginning to the universe. In fact, Plato holds to this position which Aristotle opposes. This arises from the Aristotelian view that every beginning entails an end. But Plato tried to insulate himself from this view when he insisted that the universe has a definite beginning but shall never end. Thus he conceives time as the "moving image of eternity" or the "everlasting image resolving according to number." What implications do these have for human nature?

Creationism, as we have seen, spurs some expectations on the subscribers to its tenets. It is fundamentally rich in the evaluative or evocative overtures that characterize the doctrines of world religions. For instance, if there is a supreme energy that authored and sustains the cosmos, then the cosmos is a purposive and planned enterprise. Thus, to speak of the universe as absurd as the atheist existentialists do would be wrong. The attitude of purpose has certain implications, for example: the raising and answering of certain questions like; why are we here? What is the purpose of the creator in creating us? The interpretations of these questions give rise to certain molding of behavioral expectations. These in turn shape our nature and influence the type of social theories we subscribe to.

This is a sequel to the teleological explanation that our being-here results from. If God had created this universe, he has a purpose for creatures. Therefore, creatures have ends in view by being created. This means that human nature is created towards a certain end-purpose that the human must live up to in order to be fulfilled. If we examine this, we shall find out that certain theories of society and human nature are structured with this conception of man. Man must find fulfillment in behaving in line with the "divine purpose" for creating him.

The theists amongst creationists also make idealists explanations for this – worldly and the other – worldly expectations. This, of course, takes seriously the behavioral stimuli that makes us fully live life but in preparation for the next-life. The import of this has been clearly stated as:

> Two aspects of this are fundamentally noteworthy: the world seen as a historical process and the world seen as the subject matter of a natural science. Creationism portrays the view that sciences could be constructed apriori as a system of necessary truths. This could be true, had the universe been identical with God or his thought but it is utterly distinct from it.[18]

It is equally fundamental that creationists have tried to sort out the problem of evil wherein the freewill of man comes to force. This is because in grappling with this-worldly activities, the creator made man with certain endowments for making rational choices which are categorized as either good or evil. However, man is rationally responsible for whichever choices

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[18] Chukwuokolo, p. 114.

he makes as a gateway for the next-world or the other-world. This unique reconciliation of teleology and freewill though not shared by all creationists, has helped tremendously in the creation of theories of social order.

We shall sum up our efforts so far by saying that there could be no other justification for some behavioral patterns of our world other than in how we have conceived our origin, and its attendant expectations. For instance, how can we explain the fundamentalism and decay of our time if not on how people have (mis) applied the teleological expectation of our maker on us? The philosophic–religious roles played by creationism in the history of ideas can never be overemphasized. Paul Edwards asserts:

> Creation, creatures and related concepts are indispensable in any adequate moral and aesthetic philosophy. In those contexts, they are logically connected with the idea of human freedom, moral vision, moral criticism, idea of inventiveness, originality and the life of imagination. Indeed, a significant part of the metaphysical and theological discussion of creation can be translated or demythologized into moral and aesthetic terms, and it has been indirectly relevant to the development of moral philosophy and aesthetic theory.[19]

Thus far, there is no doubt about the extent that most of the social theories that regulate our social order stem from creationism: humanism, fundamentalism, etc., arise from it. Thus, it is necessary to admit that since reality is manifested in idealistic (creationist) and materialist (evolutionist) views, any theory that tries to explain the universe in either of the views is faulty, reductive and bound to fail. This could be seen with such religious actions as fundamentalism, Jihadism, Zionism, crass materialism, etc. To stem this tide, humanity needs to evolve a theory that captures reality as it is – a creative-evolution. This is what we set out to achieve in this work. But before turning to that, let us examine evolutionism and human nature.

EVOLUTIONISM AND HUMAN NATURE

Creationism seems not to give minute explanation on why the universe seems to be ever expanding in all directions. Is the creator in an ever creating process? To answer this question seems to form a stemming point for evolutionism. Elements of evolutionary thought were seen in Erasmus Larmak but it reached a more scientific level in Darwin. Unfortunately, Darwinism became saturated with evolutionism and its

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[19] Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 1 and II* (New York: Macmillan Coy and Free Press 1967), p. 256.

attendant atheism. But not all evolutionary theories are atheistic.[20] This section shall examine evolutionism, human nature and social order.

The big bang theory supposes that about 20 billion years ago, there was no time, no matter, no empty space except an infinitesmal particle (singularity) which suddenly exploded into the present universe. Evolutionists took over from there to assert that life developed from the cosmic soup created in a gradual cooling down of the heat created by the bang. Darwin describes this process as a "descent with modification" where reality tended to evolve from simple to complex forms.

Herbert Spencer was caught up in this philosophy when he describes the universe as developing in accordance with the laws of evolution described as the law of progress or law of the transformation of things. What is good here is that evolutionism is seen as cutting across all the cosmic spheres without any exception.

At this point what is relevant is that evolutionists conceive it in variegated ways as either mechanistic or teleological while some others reject both views. The mechanistic view which is deterministic sees the future as, of necessity, determined by the past. Teleological views conceive evolution as following a predetermined pattern towards an end state. Henri Bergson rejects these view points as improper: according to him, the 'élan vital' keep struggling to emancipate itself from matter and this is the history of evolution. Although Teilhard de Chardin interpreted world history in this evolutionary orientation, his was linear while Bergson envisioned a creative *élan vital* in perpetual self unfolding. While the evidence for evolution is not our concern here, we should note that the theory has serious scientific undertones with attendant far reaching implications for creating social nature.

We have noted earlier that evolution has both teleological and mechanistic dimensions and these ground the conceptions of human nature. Those who link teleology to evolution have the difficulty of explaining the notion of progress. Spencer for instance presents his notion of evolution as implying the necessity for progress. But, experience has shown that the future is not necessarily better than the past. Yet, adherent of this view have always wanted the future to be better than the past and this has contributed in part to the tension in the social order today. People who think in this teleological way now have conditioned their being such that their expectations condition how they behave. This calls for serious concern in the creation, training and tracking of social order.

For the mechanists, the scientific roles played by evolution in the history of ideas, is very enormous. It was Darwin's *Origin of Species* that

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[20] I had pursued this trend of thought elsewhere. For full understanding see J. Chidozie Chukwuokolo "Scientific Cosmogenesis: An Evaluation of the Critical Issues of the Origin of the Cosmos" in *Nigerian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 2* (2008), pp. 1-19.

routed the hitherto existing peace between science (evolution) and the Bible (creationism).

> Prior to the publication of Darwin's, *Origin of Species,* Science and Religion enjoyed a fairly amicable relationship such that scientific discoveries were seen as evidence of grand creation. But this book ushered in a subtle rift which degenerated into outright skepticism and rejection of the authority of the bible. In the minds of many, science and the bible could no longer be harmonized.[21]

Religion was consequently perceived as an obstacle to development and atheism became intellectually self–fulfilling, consequently, a new behavioral outlook on human behaviour was enthroned in philosophy, politics, and morality. There was a change in human nature such that the reason for the subjugation of a nation by another was found in natural selection and the survival of the fittest. People had no scruples in enslaving and killing others in expansionist expeditions. There was no supervening moral authority except in the superiority of arms and wits. Philosophers like Nietzsche reinterpreted the world in a non purposive and disorderly manner where people assert what was real and thus constituted the social order for them.

There is no doubt that Darwin's view in a letter to his friend to the effect, that in the future lower races of the world would be eliminated by higher civilized races, influenced Adolf Hitler. Ruthlessness, egocentricism, egoism, brutality, and cunningness became a virtue for Hitler, as he was caught up in the web of this thought. Subsequently, he developed his doctrine of eugenicism that helped trigger World Wars II. The will to power made war a necessity grounded in the survival of the fittest.

We have seen how the conception of human nature grounded by evolutionism has deteriorated the social order. We have also seen that the corruption of our values by mechanistic and technologal mindsets has left us with a vacuum regarding how to get out of this conundrum of despair in our social order. It is on these grounds of pervasion, where survival of the fittest has become a creed for dominance in the world order, that we want to turn to philosophy of compementarity in the African context. This 'rescue' approach might offer a creed of peace based on a creative-evolution.

HUMAN NATURE: THE AFRICAN VALUE OF CREATIVE-EVOLUTION

At the beginning of this work, we have stated that our aim is to use the complementary and integrative philosophy of Africa to rethink human nature in lieu of creative evolution. Our approach shall be to espouse this

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[21] Chukwuokolo, *Evolutionism*, p.15.

complementary and integrative philosophy and afterwards use it to recreate an ideal human nature that could help the world in attaining social order. What then is complementary philosophy?

We have stated that the human condition is bedeviled by the clash of varying interests in an ambivalent situation. The role of philosophy therefore should be to assist man to master his ambivalent situation in a sort of transcendental manner of detaching himself from the ideologies that his ambivalent situation spur. Complementary philosophy stipulates that contrary views are not necessarily contradictory exclusive positions but are embedded in what Jude Uwalaka has called "inclusive humanism."[22] This position is devoid of the exclusiveness that sees contradictories as irreconcilable positions devoid of the synthesis of all opposites that are compatible for the overall good of humanity. It therefore understands the reality of relative existence as moments of existing in the world. This is captured by Asouzu thus:

> It views all relative realities as aspects of the transcendent unity of consciousness, which expression diversely in history. … It understands the need to relate all ties to a common foundation of meaning and legitimization in a universal and comprehensive perspective. For such a philosophy, the moment of contradiction subsists in the inability of the mind to concede to its inherent relativity and to assist in affirming its absoluteness.[23]

We shall present some views of African writers expressing this complementary position in order to affirm that Africans conceive the universe as a complementary whole where all reality serve as a missing link of being. For Chris Ijioma, complementarity in the African world view is known as "harmonious monism." As he puts it, "the connection, in terms of justification between African metaphysics and epistemology lies in the principles of intercommunicability, complementary or the hypocycloid archetype."[24] This is typical of a unified view of reality, everything in kinship with the other. This is the sense where Izu Onyeocha affirms:

> There is a web of continuity between events and their causes, between the living and the non-living, the human, the subhuman, and the superhuman, the physical and the spiritual, and the living and the dead. The African thus has no

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[22] See Jude Uwalaka, "Inclusive Humanism: The Basis for a Sound Socio-Political Order for Africa," in J. Obi Oguejiofor, ed., *Africa: Philosophy and Public Affairs* (Enugu: Delta Publications 1998), pp. 99-113.

[23] Asouzu, pp. 38-39.

[24] C.O. Ijiomah, *Contemporary Views about Philosophy of Education* (Calabar: Uptrico Press 1996), p. 43.

misgivings about claiming this creativity with the divine reality.[25]

Chukwunyere Kamalu, sees a nexus between traditional African philosophy with Egyptian philosophy when he used the Egyptian concepts of *Maat* (good) and *isfet* (evil) to argue for a similarity of harmonious and reciprocal philosophy in both systems of thought. For him, therefore, the universe "is ordered in accordance with a principle of how opposites co-exist and interact"[26] harmoniously. This trend of thought pervades every sphere of traditional African thought. For Jim Unah, "It is conventional and in fact convenient to describe the ancient African view of the world as "one of extraordinary harmony', one of the synthetic unity and mutual compatibility among all things."[27]

This harmonious relationship between the visible and invisible worlds of reality determines the socio-political, economic, moral or behavioral and cultural order entirely. For Anyanwu and Ruch, therefore, African metaphysics "does not accept or even think of a dichotomy between the world of experience on the one hand and the invisible, meaning-giving world that lies beyond the empirical world and accounts for it."[28] Even the African conception of the relationship between this world and the other world is explicated by Chinua Achebe in complementary parlance: "the world in which we live has its double and counterpart in the realm of spirits. A man lies here and his 'chi' there. Indeed, the human being is only one half (and the weaker half at that) of a person. There is a complementary spirit *chi*."[29] It is equally pertinent to note that even in linguistic categorization, Africans express this complementary philosophy. D.I. Nwoga captures this when he asserts that "the Igbo see things in complementary dualities." This is such that there is harmonious dynamic complementarity in the understanding of reality. Things do not exist merely as material or spiritual but as combinations of these elements as moments of being in reality.

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[25] Izu Onyeocha, "Africa's Ideas about the Nature of Reality" in *Journal of Humanities*, Vol. I, No. 11, September (2000), p. 16.

[26] Chukwunyere Kamalu, Foundations of African Thought: A World Now Grounded in African Heritage of Religion, Philosophy, Science and Art (Great Britain: Karnak House 1990), p. 24.

[27] J.I. Unah, "Ontologico-Epistemological Background to Authentic African Socio-Economic and Political Institutions" in A.F. Uduigwomen, ed., *Footmarks on African Philosophy,* (Ikeja: Obaroh and Ogbinika Publishers 1995), p. 107.

[28] K.C. Anyanwu and E.A. Ruch, African Philosophy: Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa (Rome: Catholic Book Agency 1981), p. 120.

[29] Chinua Achebe, "Chi in Igbo Cosmology" in E.A. Eze, ed., *Philosophy: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 1998), p. 68.

We have tried so far to present views of African scholars who have expressed the African universe as one of harmonious complementarity, an inclusive and integrative blend of contradictions. It is pertinent to note that pockets of such views are found in Western thought. As early as the Ancient Greek period, Empedocles saw being as emanating from the combination of the four basic elements of fire, air, earth and water. On his own, Baruch Spinoza explained reality as a coherent belief that all true ideas are integrated in a whole that eventuates into absolute or metaphysical reality. This relationship manifests structures that present the universe as governed by iron clad laws. Unfortunately, this attempt at complementary explanation left Spinoza with an obscure delineation of God and reality in a logico-mathematical pantheism. Nonetheless, the African method does not compromise one being for the other. All beings are presented in a hierarchy of being and importance yet in a harmonious web of symbiotic relationships. Even when Hegel's dialectics tries to envision this complementarity, it ends at the level of concepts and could not make provisions for the resolution of opposites devoid of mutual opposition. Even in the realm of modern physics, Neils Bohr explicates the principle of complementarity in quantum physics. But Bohr uses the term "complementary in the sense that any given application by classical concepts precludes the simultaneous use of other classical concepts which in a different connection are equally necessary for the elucidation of the phenomena."[30] Bohr's explication fails the unique inclusive criteria of the African complementarity theory, and instead presents its ideas in exclusive terms. This accounts for the failure of the Western complementary theories, whereas the inclusiveness of that of Africans makes it unique.

We have so far exhaustively presented the complementarity theory of the African, it is now incumbent on us to use it in reconciling evolutionism and creationism. In doing, this, we shall rethink human nature to reflect such a complementary overture. This is by no means an easy task, but philosophers are known for auto-transcendence understood as "the ability of the mind to go beyond immediacy in view of an ultimate unifying foundation of meaning."[31]

As we have already posited, evolutionism and creationism presented in the West in exclusive parlance have spurned the understanding of human nature that are diametrically opposed to each other. To start with, these have created varying expectations for living and the creation of social (dis) order. In a religio-mystical sense, it would be reasonable to assert that creationism complements evolutionism. There is nothing wrong if we affirm that the big bang was caused by the absolute, infinite God and He allowed the attendant universe to cool and evolve. This shall serve as complementarily inclusive and exclusive in order to find a harmonious unifying whole of meaning. If

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[30] Niels Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1934), p. 10.

[31] Asouzu, p. 35.

God created the world, in the sense creationists posit, those inherent contradictions we observe in the universe will remain at the periphery but without resolution. For instance, creationism has not explained why the world created by God over 10 billion light years ago is still seen to be ever-expanding. It would not be meaningless if we explain it that God after causing the big bang, infused a germ for continuous expansion in the universe – a sort of Augustinian seminal reason. The African conception would see such complementary and integrative inclusion as a more holistic approach to the harmonious understanding of reality.

This entails that creationism is complementary to evolutionism. While evolutionism offers the facts about the explanation of the events of the origin of the universe, creationism complements the contrasting issues, eg., the incapability of evolutionism to explain away the idealistic divide in reality. At the level of human nature, the mechanical conception of man presents him as selfish, and egoistic. This could be deciphered from Thomas Hobbes' description of man in those damning concepts, but man is also altruistic as can be seen various actions. These two behaviours should be seen as moments in the behavioral tendencies of man and hence inclusive. It is even evident that the mechanistic fixated conception of man was rejected by the renascent humanists who assert that man has no fixed essence or nature but fixes his own essence.

It is obvious from our experience that there are elements of mechanism, teleology, freedom, and determinism in our universe. Nonetheless, any of them taken in exclusion of the other creates the problem of explaining reality as it is not. This has been the responsibility of the kind of human nature that was created by a rigid adherence to any of these positions in exclusive terms. Our position is that these positions are mutually inclusive. Man was created by his maker in a teleological – but determind – free universe. By this we mean that the universe is composed of iron-clad law in realty in the midst of freedom of will. Man is thus in a world governed by a web of laws yet he is free and responsible for his actions. He is equally created with certain ends in view – becoming what he would by freely applying his will.

If we understand human nature ideally this way, we shall then have the onus of rethinking our nature not in mutual exclusivism as we were wont to do but in mutual inclusivism as we have tried to demonstrate. Indeed, man is made with a certain essence – a sort of goal-directed essence where he is expected to apply his reason for his over-all well being. Reason becomes this fixed essence that he applies to become what he would become. He uses reason to achieve those goal-oriented stimuli. Any person that does not apply reason therefore is denying his essence. The expectation of this-worldly and the other-worldly reality will now revolve around a harmonious unifying foundation of being. This results from the fact that man seeks always a holistic explanation of his reality in such a way that he enhances his well being. This is the kind of nature that we are advocating – a human nature that applies reason in its inclusive harmonious whole for the

enhancement of human well being. This will provide the kind of social order where one will understand that his survival depends on the survival of the other being around him. That he is not better than the other being and has the responsibility of uplifting the well being of every being on earth since all beings are unique moments in the evolution of the cosmos. If a being is in a rung where it hierarchically sees itself as "superior" or "prior" to other beings, such a 'superior' being should understand that there are some senses in which every being is indispensable. This is the uniqueness of this integrative, inclusive complementary humanism we are advancing.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper we set out the task of creating a new orientation that would underpin human nature in order to change the inherent social (dis) order. This task is based on the African principle of complementarity. We asserted that most theories of human nature were created by the perception we have of the origin of the cosmos. It was on that basis that we discussed creationism and evolutionism with the view of examining critically their respective impacts in creating human nature and social (dis) order in the history of human affairs. We discovered that since it is the duty of the philosopher to understand the world truthfully and authentically, we have to report issues as they are, namely, that the real outlook of how things originated in the cosmos is a kind of creative-evolution. This captures a new conception of human nature where the human is presented as a process reality with a fixed but yet evolving essence. This new understanding of human nature in complementarity parlance is unique to Africa. It sees reality as a paradox of harmony of opposites where opposites are appreciated as moments in the self-evolving of beings but in an ultimate unifying foundation of meaning. This does not entail the presentation of opposites in the Hegelian sense where the opposition can never be resolved in a harmonious whole. What implications does this have for man in society?

Throughout existence on this earth, the human's existence has reflected the historicity of events around his being. Indeed, he has always reacted to the exigencies of time. The signing of the Magna Carter, the French Revolution, the Habeas Corpus Act, etc., were attempts at curtailing the excess of leaders and enthroning equality and a sense of humanism. However, it can be noted that our period is bedeviled by what Asouzu has described as the "global paradox."[32] This is expressed in various political and socio-economic manoeuvers geared towards the domination and subjugation of the weaker peoples of the world.

This history is manifested in various forms as economic and political imperialism. It is common in history that this kind of situation elicits reactions on the part of those who understand themselves as weak and

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[32] Asouzu, p. 27.

oppressed peoples. In our time, the greatest challenge comes from Islamic fundamentalism and Zionism. These reactions often made the notion of human rights an anarchical fallacy of the legal system.[33] Too often, the notion of human rights has been turned into a ruse by the incessant abuse and incursion into the rights of others. The new theory of complementarity that spurs from creative evolution is intended to present human nature in such a way that every being is in harmonious relationship with the other in a sort of "my survival depends on your survival: if you do not survive, I will not survive."

Moreover, is the spirit of complementary value where religions should see the other as moments in God's, expression of his divine message to humanity. This will enhance our understanding that no religion is in a harmonious fullness without the other, but that each religion compliments the other. In this sense, even when scientism is manifested as religion, it should see the need to have a supervening and referencial authority in terms of the hollowness of being. It is in order to achieve this orientation in our social order, that this work finds its justification. It therefore rejects Thomas Mason's view that a "philosopher changes nothing except ideas"[34] on the grounds that any philosophy that changes ideas without changing the social order is a failure. Philosophers should change the social order for the better; this they have done in various ways. My modest effort here entails changing our social order for the better by creating a creed of peace that arises from this new orientation in conceiving human nature.

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[33] See J. Chidozie Chukwuokolo, "Human Rights a Philosophical Examination of the Anarchical Fallacies of the Legal System," in www. unn.edu.ng/index2.phl.

[34] Thomas F. Mason, "Towards an Agenda for Philosophers in Africa," in *Uche: Journal of the Department of Philosophy University of Nigeria Nsukka Vol. 6* (1982), p. 1.

CHAPTER X

SCIENCE AND HUMAN NATURE: A CONFUSING DYNAMICS OF REALITY

SAMUEL ASUQUO EKANEM

INTRODUCTION

The human as a being is a complex issue of discourse. This complexity has made it rather difficult for human nature to be made totally comprehensible. As a result of this, human nature has posed great questions and challenges within the realm of philosophy and science. These questions and challenges tend to penetrate the entire spectrum of knowledge, thereby making the search for the understanding of human nature to be multi-dimensional and inter-connected. So, the complexity of human nature presents us with diverse pathways towards it.

Therefore, over the course of human history, people have developed several interconnected and validated ideas about human nature. These ideas have enabled successive generations to achieve an increasingly comprehensive and reliable understanding of the human species and its environment. The means adopted to develop these ideas are particular ways of thinking, observing, experimenting and validating. These ways represent a fundamental aspect of the nature of philosophy and science and reflect how human nature tends to be diverse.

It is through the union of science and philosophy that the understanding of human nature would be made possible. Although each of these human enterprises or activities has a character and history of its own, each is dependent on and reinforces the other. Accordingly, it is through the philo-scientific approach that human nature can be understood.

Science presumes that the things and events in the universe occur in consistent patterns that are comprehensible through careful, systematic study. It is the belief in science that through the use of the intellect, and with aid of instruments that extend the senses, people can discover patterns in nature.

Also, science assumes that the universe is, as its name implies, a vast single system in which the fundamental rules are all the same. Therefore, knowledge gained from studying one part of the universe is applicable to all other parts. This can be seen in the principles of motion and gravitation that explain the motion of falling objects to the surface of the earth, which equally explain the motion of the moon and the planets. With certain modifications over the years, these same principles of motion have applied to other forces, indeed, to the motion of everything.

Despite this, science cannot provide complete answers to all questions that include human nature. There are indeed many matters that cannot be meaningfully examined in a scientific way. There are, for instance, beliefs that by their nature cannot be proved or disproved as can be seen in the existence of supernatural powers and beings, or the true or real purpose of life. Also, there cannot be a valid scientific approach to the explanation of miracles, fortune-telling, astrology and superstition. Again, scientists have no apparatus to settle issues about good and evil and the identification of the nature of human mind, which is the seat of human consciousness.

It is clear from this analysis that there is an epistemological vacuum created within the scientific domain as far as human nature is concerned. This is largely due to the empirical pattern of science. Science, with its empirical tools cannot really grasp the dynamics of human nature, which is the anchor point of reality. This has brought about an epistemological conflict as to what constitutes human nature. It is therefore the position of this paper that this conflict or confusion can only be resolved through a philo-scientific mediation. Thus, our analysis turns us to basic concepts: science and human nature.

SCIENCE

It is rather difficult to provide a single definition of the concept of science. This is due to the fact that science as a concept conjures up several meanings for different people. However, dictionaries see science as the means through which knowledge is arranged in an organized pattern. Again, this knowledge is derivable from experience, observation and experimentation. It is on the basis of this that scientific knowledge is seen as proven knowledge. So, within the scientific enterprise, there exist nothing like personal opinions, prejudices, superstitions and speculative imaginations (Ekanem, 2007).

This notion of science makes it rather difficult to grasp the whole of reality within the scientific module or method. This is because science is basically limited in terms of its methodology of observation and experimentation, which is anchored in experience. This puts the concept of "man" beyond the scope of scientific comprehension. Despite this, however, science is said to be a systematic and comprehensive approach or method that addresses specific types of questions and provide certain types of answers in which results are usually dynamic. This shows that the aspect(s) of reality that science can capture and understand can never be stable, but remain ever changing.

It is therefore, on the basis of this that Uduigwomen and Maduka argue that science does not seek the supernatural explanation of our world (reality) but rather attempts "naturistic and mechanistic explanations of events in their specific domains." They further posit that science is broadly split into two, namely, "real science and formal science". In real science, we have the natural sciences and the cultural sciences, while mathematics,

structural science, the social sciences, and formal logic fall under formal science (2007).

From this, we discover that central to the real science are empiricism, objectivity and rationality. These imply that real science must essentially and necessarily be in tune with empirical data perceivable through the sensory organs or senses.

Science is also viewed as the study about the mastery of man's material environment. This implies that science involves the application of scientific knowledge and principles with cogent effort to provide solutions to man's environmental problems. This definition is seriously limited because it is just the identification of science with material results and excludes the non-material (spiritual) components of man and the world (Ladgmen, 2002).

Also, science has been defined as a systematic process of trying to discover the truth about nature with the aid of logical inference based on empirical observations and testing. This inductive process introduces some metaphysical elements into the realm of science, which could make it possible for science to penetrate human nature that transcends the physical. In this paper, therefore, science will be taken to mean the sensory process of epistemological comprehension of nature towards the discovery of objective principles that aid man to logically interpret and domesticate his environment without dislocating the web of nature. It is the process of penetrating nature with the aim of discovering the laws that aid man to live sustainably. This is the relationship between man and his environment, which is based on careful and objective study by humans in order to sustain the relationship. So, science involves efforts directed at discovering and understanding human nature as an essential and fundamental component of reality.

HUMAN NATURE

Human nature is a basic concept in ethics; it highlights the different conceptions of human life as can be seen in classical Greek and Christianity. Also, the enlightenment philosophy made effort to discover a constant and subsisting human nature beneath superficial differences that could be traceable to culture and society (Blackburn, 1996).

It is a concept that holds that there is a set of inherent distinguishing characteristics, which include ways of thinking, feeling and acting. It highlights the peculiar traits inherent in man with universal characteristics or form. It deals with the causes of these distinguishing characteristics of humanity and how fixed human nature is. This has vital implications in ethics, politics and theology since these are regarded as "providing standards or norms that humans can use when judging how best to live" (Wikipedia 2010).

Human nature involves the views that there exist inherent universal human qualities. This permeates diverse intellectual activities that include

metaphysics, psychology, sociology, religion, science and ethics that fall under philosophy. It is a broad epistemological notion that tends to discover the unique universal human qualities. It involves the philosophical and scientific search for the understanding of the inherent complex nature of man as a social being.

HISTORICAL TRENDS IN HUMAN NATURE

The realization of the complexity of human nature dates back to the ancient epoch of Greek philosophy. This can be seen in the postulations of some of the ancient philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, among others. As a complex problem, the ancient philosophers could not resolve the issue or problem satisfactorily. It was therefore on the basis of this that the medieval period, characterized by scholasticism made a spirited effort to reinvent and introduce Aristotelianism into its theology. This was made manifest in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Thus, in the pre-modern scientific notions or understandings of nature, human nature is comprehended with reference to final and formal causes. The implication of this reveals the existence of an ideal, "concept", or "idea" or "form" of the human that exists independently of individual humans. Nonetheless, Charles Darwin provided a shift and laid the scientific foundation for the modern scientific arguments that humans have no fixed nature.

This position by Darwin, generally known as evolutionism or transformism, has generated much debate among philosophers and scientists alike. From the mid–nineteenth century therefore, the concept of human nature has occupied a central place in the discourse of several thinkers such as Bacon, Descartes, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Sartre among others. They introduced diverse intellectual opinions into the debate. Therefore, what we intend to do in the next sections of the paper is to briefly recast and evaluate some of these prominent and influential historical trends, from the ancient epoch to contemporary time.

Plato

Plato was one of the ancient Greek philosophers that borrowed much from Socrates. His study under Socrates also influenced his concept of human nature, and it was from this that he built his metaphysics and anthropology. The soul as can be seen in *Timaeus* has a rational propensity that is situated in the human head, a spiritual aspect that is found in the human heart, and an appetitive yearning that is located within the belly and genitals. To Plato, therefore, it was the function or duty of the "rational" element to check and tame the other two natures of the human. This notion or belief conforms with Sophism that is parallel to the goodness attained by the Demiurge at the origin of the universe.

A cursory look at Plato's metaphysics reveals a dualism between the soul and the body. This dualism as postulated by Plato has been very influential from the ancient period to the present day. This approach also has penetrated Christian theology and can be seen in the Gospel of John.

It could be argued also that the methodic doubt of Descartes about his classic dictum of the soul that thinks and the body that is extended is a connection tapped from the Platonic circuit. This also applies to the Kantian contrast between the noumenal and the phenomenal aspects of human nature (Ferguson, 2003).

Aristotle

Aristotle was one of the prominent students of Plato that took a rather radical position that tends to place him in opposition to what Plato represents. Accordingly, Aristotle made certain profound and fundamental postulations about human nature. To him, man is a social-conjugal animal and this can be seen in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. The meaning or implication of this is that man is an animal that is born to couple at maturity and build a household and by extension in certain cases, a clan or a village that runs on patriarchal lines. This understanding goes far in explaining the foundational role of the human in the evolution or development of society.

Also, to Aristotle, man is a political animal, and this is contained in his *Politics.* The implication of this is that, man developes from and through complex communities, starting from the family and clan life, towards the making of laws and traditions. All of this represents the outpouring and aim of human rationality.

Furthermore, Aristotle sees man as a mimetic animal as can be seen in his *Poetics.* Here, Aristotle pinpoints and revalidates the importance of human reason in its clear and undiluted form. This implies that man appreciates the utilization of his imaginative energies, and not only in the making of laws.

It is evident that for Aristotle, reason is not just what makes the difference for humanity, is also simply what humans were meant to attain at their best. Although Aristotle's notion of human nature has not been popular in the modern period, it is still very relevant today (Aristotle, 1887).

Rousseau

Jean Jacques Rousseau is one of the social contractarians, and his idea of human nature reflects this. Though he wrote before the French Revolution and Charles Darwin, his postulations on human nature, which are contained in his *Second Discourse* was a rude shock to Western civilization. He posits the natural freedom of human beings at birth. This freedom, according to him, is innate, inalienable and basic. He proposed that humans had once been solitary animals but had learnt how to be political. The import of this assertion is that it reacts against the position

that human nature is fixed. This was against the position previously held and advanced by most philosophers. Indeed, humans are political, and rational and now have language, but this was not originally the case. According to the theory of evolution, humans originally had none of these attributes (Ncha, 2008).

Rousseau presented himself as a student of nature, and so he never denied the existence of human nature. This, however, was defined in terms of the instinctive passions of an original, irrational and moral human, linked with self preservation. This Rousseauian conception of human nature has been viewed as the fertile ground that led to the planting and germination of shocking political developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries like totalitarianism (Delaney, 2006).

Indeed, Rousseau had a vital influence on Kant, Hegel, and Marx.

Marx

There have been misconceptions about Karl Marx's notion of human nature. It is a general belief that Marx denied the existence of human nature, and that human beings are just a blank slate, whose character is dependent wholly on their socialization and experience. This Marxian conception tallies with the "tabula rasa" postulation of John Locke. It is clear that Marx had so much confidence in the view that humans are mostly influenced and, at least, partially determined and shaped by their environments, even more than their material existential conditions.

Despite this, it is a fact that at a particular stage of his development, he had a virile view about human nature. During this time, Marx discussed the concept of "species-essence", which is taken from the German "*Gattungswesen*", and usually translated as "species being". He holds that under Capitalism, human beings are alienated, that is, completely separated or different from aspects of their human nature. He envisioned the possibility of a society following Capitalism that would permit human beings to fully exercise their human nature and individuality. He provided the name "Communism" for this "imagined" society. However, there has been a divergence of usage that is far from the original meaning that Marx intended.

Marx's understanding of human nature not only influenced his critique of Capitalism but also his belief in the emergence of a better society. It also influenced his theory of history. The fundamental dynamic of history, according to Marx, is the expansion of productive forces. Marx, in *The German Ideology,* asserts that the two or the three aspects of social activity that ground history are the tendency of humans to act with the aim to fulfill their needs, and then, the ability or capacity to bring about new needs. Anchored in the dialectical principles, this human capacity is the oil that lubricates the wheel of continuing expansion of productive power in human civilizations.

We have not been able to discover the term "species-essence" outside *The German Ideology* in all the writings of Karl Marx. However, most of the major translators of Marx like Louis Althusser, argued that "species-essence" is very irrelevant to Marx's later writings, but others like Terry Eagleton and Andrew Chitty hold that it is still a vital concept in the understanding of Marx (Wikipedia, 2010).

This paper, however, is of the view that the "specie-essence" is a vital component of Marx's philosophy as can be seen in the historical root of Marx's "historical materialism", which presents an inverted "camera obscura from the Hegelian Absolute Spirit".

The opposition to Marxism can be seen among the thinkers of the Austrian school of economics around 1871-1940. Their views as were largely developed were in direct opposition to Marx. Thus, they were able to come up with a distinctive view of human nature though greatly influenced by earlier philosophers of the Enlightenment. Like Descartes and Kant, the Austrian School held that there exists an invariant human nature but that progress can only be achieved through a more holistic understanding of that nature.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis

In the same period, Austria also played host to the development of Psychoanalysis. Its founder, Sigmund Freud, held that the Marxists were right to focus on what he referred to as "the decisive influence which the economic circumstances of man have upon their intellectual, ethical and artistic attitudes." However, he posited that the Marxist view of the class struggle was too shallow. For him, the conflicts they described were, indeed, primordial. However, according to Freud, behind the class struggle there is the struggle between father and son, and between clan leader and a rebellious opposition. Accordingly, Freud brought to the fore his notion of *id*, ego and super ego and the desires that come with each aspect of personality.

Wilson's Sociobiology

Among the most recent contemporary works on human nature are those of Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* written in 1998 and Pierre Hadot's *The Veil of ISIS: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature,* published in 2004. These books contain fundamental and central issues on human nature. However, the book that is of interest and relates more to this paper is that of Wilson. In his book, Wilson opined that it is time for a cooperation of all the sciences to explore human nature. He viewed human nature as a collection of epigenetic rules, that is, the genetic patterns of mental development, cultural phenomena, rituals, etc. There are actually products and not part of human nature. He posits that art works are not part of human nature, but that the appreciation of art is. He argued that

art appreciation or fear of snakes or incest taboo can be studied as the methods of reductionism. Before these phenomena were actually part of psychological, sociological and anthropological investigations but Wilson's proposal is that they should come under interdisciplinary research. This same approach is illustrated in David E. Jones' *An Instinct for Dragons.*

Having been grounded in the views and trends on human nature from the ancient to the present day, we turn now to look at, what seems to me, the best approach to the understanding of human nature.

Science and Human Nature

It has been established through our analysis that human nature is a complex concept or issue of discourse. Historically, there has been a serious debate about human nature. This debate was initiated by Democritus' atomistic philosophy. However, the debate became more complex and classic when Aristotle introduced the notion of homogeneity into what could be termed the philosophy of nature. It was at this point that the scientific and philosophical approaches to the understanding of nature were really established. However, Aristotle's approach was never scientific (in the modern usage) but teleological, which has a foundation in metaphysics, since it has to do with causality. This causal notion was to be high-jacked by later philosophers in an effort to make the understanding of nature scientific. The argument then was anchored on cause and effect.

This ancient problem was carried into the medieval era through Aquinas who tried to adopt the Aristotelian method or approach to the understanding of nature. The medieval church fathers could not really divorce this problem from their theological origin and so the problem persisted until the emergence of Descartes, Kant, and Bacon who made efforts to scientifically study the nature of man. However, it was Descartes' methodic doubt that laid the foundation for the modern debate on the method of understanding human nature. But the question still is, how do we study human beings scientifically? Is it possible to use the methods developed in the study of the rest of nature in order to the study humans?

To be able to respond to this question, it is imperative we understand both the nature of science and the nature of man.

The Nature of Science

Fundamentally, the various scientific disciplines are alike because of their reliance on evidence, the use of hypothesis and theories, the types of logic employed, and several other aspects. However, scientists differ greatly from one another because of the kind of phenomena they investigate and how they go about their work; the reliance they place on historical data or on quantitative methods in their recourse to fundamental principles; and in how much is drawn on the findings of other sciences.

The validity of scientific claims is usually settled by referring to observations of phenomena; hence, scientists concentrate on getting accurate data. Such evidence is obtained by observations and measurements taken in situations that range from natural settings (like a bush or a river) to completely contrived ones (like the laboratory). In making observations, scientists use their senses, instruments, like microscopes, that enhance the senses, and instruments that can trace characteristics more accurately and differently than humans, such as magnetic fields. Scientists probe the world in diverse ways.

In certain circumstances scientists control situations and conditions deliberately and precisely so as to get their evidence. This control is usually referred to as a "controlled variable." This may involve the control of temperature, changing the concentration of chemicals, or choice of specimen(s). Through the variation of just one condition at a time, scientists hope to identify its exclusive effects on what happens, uncomplicated by changes in other conditions. However, in most cases, control conditions may be impractical (as can be seen in the study of the stars or the sun), and/or unethical (as can be seen in using humans as objects of experiments). They are even likely to distort natural phenomena, as we can see in wildlife studies when animals are held captive (Dupre, 2001).

Also, science is a blend of logic and imagination. Imagination and thought are usually used to come up with hypotheses and theories but these have to conform to the principles of logical reasoning, which is the testing of the validity of arguments through the use of certain criteria of inference, demonstration, and common sense (Ekanem, 2007).

Furthermore, scientists attempt to make sense of observations of phenomena through the construction of explanations that are consistent with generally or currently acceptable scientific principles. These explanations and theories may be sweeping or restricted, but they must be logically sound and have to incorporate a significant body of scientifically valid observations. Indeed, the essence of science is the validation of observation. It is through this that prediction is made possible in the sciences.

Basically, our analysis reveals empiricism as the capstone of science. It is on the basis of this that the limitation of science emerge, hence, science cannot study or investigate all things and so cannot provide complete answers to all questions. This assertion can be seen in the words of Florice Tanner(1973) in the book, *The Mystery Teachings in World Religions* as she writes "Consciousness of the Absolute goes beyond the limits of all the various force fields which scientists explore. A nonmaterial Reality transcends the transitory fields in which man usually thinks and lives...."

Human Nature

Human nature as a concept is very complex. As a result of this complexity, the discovery of human nature must first begin with the understanding of the human person. It is on the basis of this that Omoregbe

(1996) began his discourse on human nature by first providing the classical definition of Boethius of a person, as "an individual substance of a rational nature". The implication of this is that a person must, as a matter of necessity, be a rational being, or as Omoregbe (1996) puts it, "a rational substance." As a matter of fact, a rational being must possess self-consciousness or, put differently reflective consciousness. It is not just that a person must have consciousness, he must be conscious of the very fact that he is conscious. There must be that awareness of consciousness.

It was the awareness of this consciousness that made it possible for Rene Descartes through his methodic doubt to be conscious of the fact that he was a thinking being. This assertion tallies with the graphic presentation of Omoregbe (1996):

> … Descartes became conscious of himself as a thinking being, his consciousness became, as it were, conscious of itself. This enabled him to affirm his existence – "cogito ergo sum" ('I think therefore I am'). Descartes might just as well have affirmed his personality. But in that case he would have had to add the fact that he knew that he was thinking. He could have said something like this: "I am thinking, and I know that I am thinking, therefore I am a person"

From this, it is clear that one of the natural characteristics of humans is rationality. This characteristic must however, come with consciousness. So, by his very nature, the human person is a rational being, and this rationality begets morality. The implication of this is that a rational being is also a moral being. However, this does not mean that a person that is moral has to or is always doing what is morally right. The meaning of this is that humans are always subject to the moral law and so are liable to be held responsible for all their actions, whether these actions are good or bad. It follows that the human desires to be praised, blamed, punished or rewarded for his actions depending on whether such actions are morally right or wrong.

It is the realization of this fact that prompted Omoregbe in his book *Metaphysics without Tears: A Systematic and Historical Study*, to allude that;

> … a person is necessarily a rational and moral being. But the concept of morality presupposes freedom. No being could be a moral being if it were not a free being. To be a moral being therefore is to be a free being. It follows that a person is not only a rational and a moral being but also a free being… (1996).

> We have so far discovered three essential attributes of man and these are rationality, morality and freedom. The third

attribute conforms with Rousseau's description of human nature when he says, 'Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they' (1913).

Following Omoregbe's submission, he argued that a baby, though a human being, is not a person. He says;

A baby is, of course, a human being, but it is not yet a human person because it does not yet meet the essential requirements of personality. Although a baby has the potentiality to become a self-conscious, free and moral being eventually, as long as it remains a baby it is devoid of these essential attributes of personality. It is not yet self-conscious, makes no free decision, nor is it morally responsible for its actions. It will become a person when it shall have grown up and developed these attributes.

Indeed, Professor Omoregbe displayes a shallow knowledge of the meanings of consciousness, personality and freedom here. This is because a baby at birth has a personality of his own; possesses consciousness of his environment and makes choices. This can be seen when a baby cries, but will suddenly keep quiet when carried by his mother or father. We have also seen a baby that refused to suck the mother's breast when the mother mistakes his cries for starvation. All these go to prove that a baby is conscious, rational, and free and can make choices. Again, life according to scientific proof begins at conception. To be alive is to be conscious.

What the baby may be said to be lacking is a formal language to communicate his feelings and thoughts about his environment and those he relates with. However, a baby displays appreciation and communicates through smiles, cries, and withdrawals. And language is one of the characteristics of the human. Man uses language because he is a rational, thinking being. Both Aristotle and Aquinas rightly confirmed this fact when they argued that language presupposes society because it is only in a society that language is used and learned. Therefore, language is a medium of social interaction and this is what makes a man, a social being.

Professor Omoregbe consents to this fact when he says that "… man, a language–using being, is also a social being (since it is only in a society that he can use language)". So, it is very wrong to say that a baby is not a person because it lacks consciousness of using language. To accept this will also imply that a baby is not human, and this will also include the deaf and dumb who cannot talk but uses sign language, which a baby also does.

Having stated this, we can, therefore, add that man is a social being because of his use of language for inter-personal relationships. This by extension adds to the Platonic fact that man is a political animal, which also means an animal that socializes and seek to dominate, control and dictate.

Also, man is essentially, according to Descartes, a thinking substance whose basic characteristic is thought. The human has a body, but some philosophers do not see this as part of his nature. For Descartes, therefore, man is fundamentally a mind that happens to have a body. "Mind is characterized by thought while body is characterized by extension. The mind is an immaterial substance while the body is a material substance" (Omoregbe, 2001).

A critical look at the above explanation shows that man is basically dual in nature, and that is, the physical and the spiritual. So, it is very wrong to deny that man's body is not part of his nature. Following this therefore, we can say that human nature basically and broadly comprises of the physical and the spiritual. Other features or characteristics of man like being rational, moral, free, social and capable of interpersonal relationship could be classified as the metaphysical dimension of the nature of man.

Having explained or related the nature of science and human nature, the most fundamental question therefore is; can we study or understand human beings scientifically? The position of this paper is that human beings cannot be studied or understood wholly through scientific method. To attempt to use the principles and methods of science in understanding human nature will surely lead to reductionism and mechanism. Science cannot provide all the answers about human nature.

The Problem of Scientific Method and Approach

Observation, according to Ekanem (2007), is the defining module of the scientific method. Observation as a process or method of science involves perception and cognitive characteristics. The implication of this is that one cannot make an observation in a passive manner, but rather, one must necessarily be actively involved in differentiating the thing that is being observed from surrounding sensory data. As a result of this, Sapir-Whorf (Ekanem 2005) maintains that observations depend on some underlying understanding of the way the world functions. This understanding greatly influences what is perceived or considered to be worthy of consideration.

Also, observation that is empirically carried out, is usually used to determine the acceptability or denial of some hypotheses within a theory. Whenever a claim of observation is made, it is proper to demand a justification of such a claim. And in providing such justifications, reference must as a matter of fact, be made to the theory's operational definitions and hypotheses in which the observation is embedded. It follows then that observation is a component of a theory that also contains the hypothesis that it verifies or falsifies. The understanding here is that observation cannot be taken as a neutral or impartial arbiter between hypotheses that compete.

From this, it is clear that human beings cannot be empirically observed holistically. This is because there are fundamental aspects of human nature that cannot be observed within the power of sensory data.

Again, there are no theories that generally explain human nature. So, applying the principle or method of observation will create problems and limitations.

Empiricism is the anchor point of the scientific enterprise. It is a major and fundamental concept in science. It is the root of reliability of evidence in any scientific endavour. As an epistemological or philosophical idea, it is the notion that knowledge is basically derivable from sense experience. Viewed from this perspective, scientific statements become subject to, and are derivation of our experiences or observations.

This approach or method cannot be successfully employed in understanding humans that are very complex. Again, humans are not just material or physical entities that could be mechanically controlled. Indeed, humans represent a complex network of realities that are ever dynamic. The unstable nature of humans makes them a confusing reality of sorts. This is because a human is not just himself or herself, but a totality of nature that represents reality. The human, indeed, determines what nature is, just as he or she is part of nature. This constitutes reality, but is confusing from the empirical standpoint. This therefore, makes it difficult for science to unravel the complex network of human nature. Reality cannot be approached from a single standpoint.

THE PHILO-SCIENTIFIC METHOD: A PROPOSAL

It is clear from our analysis so far that any attempt to adopt the methods of science will greatly distort our understanding of human nature. This fact is anchored on the idea that humans are not law-governed machines that operate or function with the touch of a button. Indeed, there exists in human nature a wide variety of phenomena related in diverse and complicated patterns or ways, at every level of the hierarchy are distinctive causal powers that do not depend on behaviour of lower-level-entities. This can be seen in the Cartesian effort to explain the relationship between the mind and the body. His choice of the "pineal gland" that is situated in the middle of the brain was abandoned by his followers such as Geulinex and Malebranche, who settled for God as the influence and cause of the body's movement (Omoregbe, 1996).

A scientific approach to the study of human nature would amount to the adoption of the mechanistic view of the world, which was first made known in Western philosophy through the atomism of Democritus that rules out teleology. This would presuppose the following:

• That there is only one basic stuff out of which all material objects are made;

• That this stuff has only one intrinsic character apart from its purely spacio-temporal and causal attributes;

• That there is only one basic kind of change, which changes in the relative positions of the particles of this stuff;

• That there is only one basic law according to which one particle of this stuff affects the changes of another particle (Broad, 1925; Omoregbe 1996).

For philosophers and some scientists, pure mechanism cannot adequately explain the world of our experience. This also applies to human nature. The truth is that the external or physical human nature as perceived by us cannot have the kind of homogeneity demanded by mechanism, which is scientific. The organism of the human body reveals evidence of a careful design, and so it will be more difficult to key into the mechanistic view point which is unipolar.

Human nature is more complex and cannot be grasped from the single perspective of the scientific. It requires a combination of philosophical and scientific methods to understand man in his true nature. The broad aspect of man which is the spiritual dimension or nature that includes his being rational, moral and free can better be understood through philosophical methods. Here, the rational aspect of man can be better comprehended through epistemology; the moralality and freedom aspect can be appreciated through ethics, while his conscious (mind) and creative nature can be studied through metaphysics and aesthetics. However, the physical aspect of man that includes his having a body, being social, political and capable of interpersonal relationship can be understood through scientific methods. This is because the human body can be studied scientifically through the scientific processes of Biology, Physiology, Anatomy and Medicine. The social, interpersonal, and political nature of man can be unraveled through sociology, psychology, political science and law.

It is in realization of this dual approach to the study of human nature that prompted Professor Ozumba to come up with his book *Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism.* In this book, Ozumba explained that humanity and nature cannot be understood through a single method of either science or philosophy. He therefore proposed an integrative approach or method which he called "integrative humanism". He says:

> Having seen that every philosophical theory lacks the capacity
> for comprehensive application to philosophical problems, it
> becomes only philosophically needful and expedient to think
> out a method and a way by which the benefits of different
> theories can be harnessed and deployed for the explication of
> philosophic tangles and the expansion of the frontiers of our
> cognitive landscape-with a view to attaining comprehensive or
> better knowledge on issues that affect man and his World
> (2010).

He buttressed this view further through an epistemological analogy of a "monolithic integrative circuit and a multiversity of integrated circuits",

which he posits is the technology that led to microprocessors, which could perform vast and varied functions. He declares:

> It is a truism that in many areas of application, the performance of integrated circuitry is far superior to that of conventional circuits. But it is worthy of note that integrated circuits, because of their small size, low power requirements and heat generation, modest cost, reliability and speed of operations, they make possible electronic system that would otherwise be impossible or rather impractical (2010).

This electronic analogy that has been introduced into philosophical discourse, explains the relevance of our philo-scientific proposal as a method that could enhance our understanding of human nature. The objective of the integrative humanism as outlined by Professor Ozumba tallies with the aim of the present philo-scientific proposal. This is so because, this proposal will make it possible for the physical and spiritual aspects of man to be wholly captured and analyzed by man. This can be seen in the words of Ozumba when he writes "The undergirding objective of integrative humanism is the need to place man's physical and spiritual wellbeing at the centre of every intellectual endeavor. Man's intellect seems to be skewed towards the development of material resources rather than human resources. There is the receding interest in catering to the real interests of human beings" (2010).

It is this misdirected human intellectual interest on material development that prompted Ekanem (2005) to advocate for "Essencism" as a philosophy of Education that could help promote technological development in Nigeria. In his work "A Philosophy of Education for Technological Development in Nigeria" he writes:

> This new philosophy as a proposal, seeks to evolve and design a national focus, which is reflective of the real nature of man as a dual being. This dualism is clearly expressed in the mind – body interactional principle. …
>
> Essencism as a philosophy of education seeks to justify the divine importance of education. This is because, the dualistic nature of man is nobly catered for through the spiritual and physical dimensions. This philosophy attempts to place and project man as the central object of education, science and technology. It postulates that any development of the society through technology must be viewed as advancing the course of man. It seeks to create the much–desired harmony in man, which hitherto has been very elusive. This was because there was a collapse of the cherished channel that links man and his creator. This will help to re-open the spiritual link for man to tap the abundant potentials of this

aspect for his full manifestation as an effective and functional member of the society (2005).

The value of the above advocacy is hinged on the fact that philosophy is a unified science, because there is no science without a philosophy. Hence, philosophy is taken to be a scientific enterprise that attempts the discovery of ultimate reality through a systematized process of logic, analysis, explanation and criticism which is anchored on speculative inquiry into nature and human activities. So, philosophy is the concrete foundation of human knowledge that aids man's comprehension of the universe and his nature.

Science in its empirical form or pattern cannot achieve the goal of comprehending the universe and human nature in their entirety. The reason for this is that, you cannot isolate man from his environment and nature. Man is intrinsically part of nature and constitutes the core of reality. So, any effort to study or understand man in piece-meal or fragmentally will be a fruitless intellectual exercise and will create a series of confusing dynamics of reality as buried in nature. So, the most rewarding approach to overcome this problem is through philo-scientific method. It is in line with this thinking that Omoregbe declares:

> …civil society with all its complexity is a mirror reflecting human nature with its multiple needs. Human nature is therefore the foundation of human civil society. But it is also the foundation of human knowledge with all its ramifications. For every branch of knowledge is in some way related to man and is intended to cater for some aspects of the needs of his complex nature. All the various branches of knowledge, with their multiple areas of specialization arose as answers to some questions posed by some aspects of human nature or as solutions to some of its problems (2000).

This view must have inspired Ozumba's "Integrative humanism," that he defines as:

> …a ratio–spirito–centric approach in understanding human existence, interpreting human affairs, and a rigorous philosophical attitude which takes into consideration, the spiritual and the mundane dimensions of human existence and reality. It attempts at philosophizing from the point of view of holistic truth bearing in mind that man is both mortal and immortal, terrestrial and preternatural, spirit and body ... (2010).

These views of Omoregbe and Ozumba are all unpacked in "Essiencism" as a philosophy by Ekanem when he says that "Philosophy of

Essencism seeks to develop a complete human personality. This is because no aspect of the human nature or aspect is ignored. Man is totally developed as a physical and as a spiritual being through essencism" (2005). This affirms the fact that science alone cannot capture or explain the nature or essence of man.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It is a fact that science with its reliance on empiricism, observation and evidence cannot unravel the mystery of human nature. The reason for this is because, scientific method is limited in scope and is mechanistic in its application. Science can only study to some extent the physical aspect of human nature. So, to overcome this limitation of science, it is important that fundamental steps be taken to broaden the scope of the scientific enterprise through the following.

- Science must embrace metaphysics which is a fundamental aspect of nature and human.
- The knotty issue of mind which science has completely refused to investigate should be brought into the scientific enterprise.
- Science must strive to be speculative and imaginative.
- There must be a consistent effort to introduce the spirit of curiosity into the scientists. Scientists must be curious about the unobserved aspects of phenomena.
- The concept of spirit (immaterial substance) must necessarily be brought into the focus of science.

The relevance of logic and mathematics in adopting the philo-scientific approach can be enriched through the historical understanding of these concepts and their roles in the understanding of nature, humans and the environment either as material (physical) or non-material (spiritual) entities. However, it must be noted that historically, that mathematics was never a science but a philo-religious concept as employed by the Pythagoreans and ancient mystics.

With this adjustment and understanding within the scientific enterprise, a philosophy which is more open to the scientific method could become more integral to science. This would challenge the *status quo* of science and make it more open to penetrate the intricate web of human nature. With this approach, dogmatism which is, often the hallmark of science, would be mitigated. A philo-scientific method would bring more thoroughness, analysis, critique, speculation, evaluation, logic, ethics and metaphysics into the process of intellectual inquiry. It is only through this holistic approach that the complex nature of man can be explained with a higher degree of certitude.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN IN HUMAN WELL-BEING

UCHENNA OKEJA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

One of the main tasks of political philosophy is the examination of what it means for human beings to live in a community, that is, the implications and possibilities of living the reality of what it means for (wo)man to be a social and political being. This is why the central themes in this field of endeavour encompass issues that range from justice (in all its forms but especially its distributive form), war and peace, systems of political organization of society (Democracy, Aristocracy etc.), polity and group difference (multiculturalism), nationalism, patriotism to human rights and responsibilities. Discourse on each of these themes, whose overall aim is connected with the quest for human well-being in one way or the other, presupposes the existence of human beings in a political community, for without human beings living in community, there would be no political organization which would necessitate the conceptualization of these themes and their area and more fundamentally, their manner of application.

But exactly what does it mean to be human? What, in effect, are the constituent elements of being human that forms the basis and possibility of the application of this concept to every human being, regardless of age, geographical location, religious affiliation etc.? This question is the concern of this paper. The aim is to explore the notion of the human from both the perspectives of African and Western philosophy, based on the articulation of this concept by thinkers in both traditions. Thus, the objective is to show what comparative philosophy can offer in this regard. The task of this paper becomes even more pressing when it is called to mind that we live in an ever changing world which stands on some unchanging foundations one of which is the conception of what it means to be human and thus, the possession of human identity.

SETTING THE STAGE: HUMAN WELL -BEING

Let us begin with the following personal experience of Chinua Achebe who recounted:

> I believe it was in the first weeks of 1989 that I received an invitation to an anniversary meeting – the twenty-fifth

year, or something like that – of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris. I accepted without quite figuring out what I could possibly contribute to such a meeting/celebration. My initial puzzlement continued right into the meeting itself. … As I listened to them – Europeans, Americans, Canadians, Australians – I was left in no doubt by the assurance they displayed, that these were the masters of our world savouring the benefits of their success. They read and discussed papers on economic and development matters in different regions of the world. They talked in particular about the magic bullet of the 1980s, structural adjustment, specially designed for those parts of the world where economies had gone completely haywire. The matter was really simple, the experts seemed to be saying; the only reason for failure to develop was indiscipline of all kinds, and the remedy was a quick, sharp administration of shock treatment that would yank the sufferer out of the swamp of improvidence back onto the high and firm road of free market economy. The most recurrent prescriptions for this condition were the removal of subsidies on food and fuel and the devaluation of the national currency. Yes, the experts conceded, some pain would inevitably accompany these measures, but such pain was negligible in comparison to the disaster that would surely take place if nothing was done now.

Then the governor of the Bank of Kenya made his presentation. As I recall the events, he was probably the only other African at that session. He asked the experts to consider the case of Zambia, which according to him had accepted, and had been practicing, a structural adjustment regime for something like 10 years, and whose economic condition was now worse than it had been when they began their treatment. An American expert, who seemed to command great attention and was accorded high deference in the room, spoke again. He repeated what had already been said many times before: 'Be patient, it will work in time, trust me', or words to that effect. At that point I received something like a stab of insight. It suddenly became clear to me why I had been invited, what I was doing there in that strange assembly. I signalled my desire to speak and was given the floor. I told them what I had just recognized. I said that what was going on before me was a fiction workshop, no more and no less! 'Here you are, spinning your fine theories to be tried out in your imaginary laboratories. You are developing new drugs and feeding them to a bunch of laboratory guinea pigs and hoping for the best. I have news for you; Africa is not fiction. Africa is people, real people. Have you thought of that? You are

brilliant people, world experts. You may even have the very best intentions. But have you thought, really thought, of Africa as people?' [1]

This story captures vividly the import of the consideration embarked upon in this paper. This is because any appeal to human nature, which, in Achebe's case, consists in an appeal to "considering Africans as real people," seems to be the magic for any argument, especially if it is an argument seeking to find a normative basis for its claims. Thus, considering, as we are here attempting, the issue of what exactly the human means, it is of great importance. Is the human a generic notion that is sacrosanct or, is it temporal and contingent upon changing factors? This issue would have been a straight forward matter of fact if it were an issue of experimentation. If that was the case, we could simply rely on "established" scientific method of inquiry to find out, through experimentation probably, what it means to be human. But that is not the case here because what is implied is rather normative and thus not subject to empirical inquiry. This, however, does not mean that it is an impossible or obscure inquiry that we are engaged in.

One debate that has accentuated concerns with the comprehension of exactly what it means to be human today is the contemporary debate about what has come to be dubbed "liberal eugenics" which has at its center the controversy between scholars like Jürgen Habermas and their opponents such as Elizabeth Fenton and Allen Buchanan. Concisely put, the main issue is that,

> Liberal eugenics holds that people should be able to choose genetic enhancements for their offspring, should these become safely available [but] this view is opposed by ... the 'human nature' objection to genetic technology. This objection holds that human nature, or 'what it is to be human', is definable and *natural* (that is, has not been tampered or interfered with, by, say, human technology). The human nature objection also assumes that a clear line can be drawn between what is natural and what is unnatural, and that this line marks a moral difference: whatever is unnatural is wrong, or at least morally suspect, and whatever is natural is morally valuable, perhaps intrinsically valuable. From this assumption comes the claim that human nature is fixed, to the extent that it should not be improved upon. [2]

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[1] Chinua Achebe, "Africa as People," *Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Autumn 1999), p. 313f.

[2] Elizabeth Fenton, *Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 36, No. 6, (November-December 2006), p. 36.

With the foregoing, it should be apparent that there is a tension of change and permanence in the conception of what it means to be human. Also, it should take little imagination to decipher that a specification of what it means to be human is not a matter of course. The problem of those who oppose genetic enhancement is not based on the claim that the technology will fail, rather, it is based on the outlook that it would succeed. Further, the divergence of opinions in this regard needs to be put in perspective by asking the following question: what does genetic enhancement aim at achieving?

The answer to this question concerns the idea of human-welfare. On this ground, genetic enhancement could be said to be aimed at the attainment of human-welfare. If this is the case, then, it is evident that in striving for human-welfare, there is a presupposition of what the human in the notion of human-welfare stands for since without such a presupposition, no matter how minimal, there can be no reasonable talk of 'attainment of human-welfare.' This is because striving for human-welfare is to strive for the attainment of what the human is not yet but could be be in the future. This means seeking to bring about what the human lacks at the present moment since it would be better for the human to have such features. Now, without a presupposition of what the human is, how could one possibly be engaged in the task of seeking to bring about what it should (or could) be? In seeking to evaluate the divergent positions on the quest for human-welfare through either economic (financial) aid (as in the case of Achebe's experience recounted above) or through genetic enhancement (as in the case of the debate just recounted), the most viable way to proceed is to inquire into the various understandings of the human held by these thinkers which they bring along as they sashay into the dialogical forum.

To approach the full task of this paper, however, would be daunting and exceeds by far the aims set here about reviewing what various philosophers have understood the human to mean down through the history of human-welfare theory. Instead, this paper will be engaged in a more modest task that is the provision of snapshots of the dominant positions in both Western and African philosophy regarding what the human means. This is done with a view to making a comparative analysis.

DOMINANT WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

The first question that should naturally arise with regard to the title of this sub-topic is this: what makes the positions considered here the 'dominant' positions? Is this based on the frequency of reference to them or is it because of the popularity of those proposing these positions? If this is or is not the case, does their being dominant make them a really suitable representation of the western perspective on the human? Without wishing to shy away from considerations of this kind,

it would suffice to note that the concern here is not with the justification of why these positions are conventionally considered to be the dominant positions; the concern is the articulation of the conventions and patterns of thought as evident in the literature dealing with the subject matter in this knowledge tradition. However, occupation with these questions would be out of context here.

Nonetheless, there are basically four positions noticeable in Western thought with regard to the notion of the human. These positions are: 1) the view that human beings are subordinates of an absolute sovereignty (God) 2) the view that humans beings are beings whose destiny is controlled by mysterious forces 3) the view that human beings are possessors of innate drives that direct their conduct and 4) the view that human beings are creatures of a social and cultural milieu.[3] These four positions could be reduced in a broader categorization to only two conceptions of human nature. Thus, on the whole, it could be said that "the Western tradition offers us two broad kinds of human nature myths. They can be described as 'closed' and 'open' images of humanity." [4] The closed understandings of human nature 'specify restrictions on the freedom of people to direct their lives, restrictions that lie within people themselves' while the open conception of nature "represents people as both free and obliged to form their thinking and their conduct by their own actions in a material and social world."[5]

These two conceptions of the human in Western thought are profoundly opposed to each other especially when viewed as strategies of analysis of what the human implies. This is because,

> [O]ne favors appropriating the divine, or what seems close to the divine, in our earthly world: we hat belongs to Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle; the medieval world; Kant and the post-Kantians; and more recently, thinkers as diverse as Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, and some of the British idealists. The other prefers description and explanation in terms restricted to the inanimate physical world: what belongs to the reductive and eliminative convictions of the unity of science program, positivism, the radical forms of neo-Darwinism, computationalism, and other manifestations of what may not unfairly be called scientism.[6]

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[3] See Kenneth Bock, *Human Nature Mythology* (Chicago, 1994), p. 1ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Joseph Margolis, *The Arts and the Definition of the Human: Towards a Philosophical Anthropology* (Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 7.

The profundity of this difference becomes even more complex when it is argued that, in opposition to the first position which holds that the human cannot be defined in terms restricted to the natural world; the second position suggests vehemently that an adequate definition can be rendered in terms sufficient for the entire inanimate and subhuman world. How then do we proceed in rendering an explanation of what the human in this framework of thought implies? Before addressing this issue, it seems pertinent to point out that, although the two positions are opposed to each other, they are, however, broadly united in their most fundamental failure which is their failure at the normative level especially with regard to what constitutes this mode of being that sets it apart from other animals and still enables it to maintain a connection to them. The sense of this observation is that "the human is entirely natural, as natural (or naturalistic) as anything we might otherwise specify; yet, in being natural, the human is also sui generis, uniquely competent in ways that cannot be conceptually captured by categories that initially refer to anything less (or more) than what the distinctive processes of history and culture immediately display."[7] Thus, both positions are guilty of a one-dimensional treatment of the issue at hand.

One thing that is obvious is that the Western notion of the human has been faced with the perennial question of change and changelessness since the beginning of philosophical thoughts with Heraclitus and Protagoras defending change and Parmenides defending permanence. The basic issue in this regard is this: "if the changing world were not (not known to be) in need of a changeless stratum, we would hardly need to admit that human nature must itself be changeless or depend in some ineluctable way on a changeless world."[8] In this context, the question becomes whether or not the human is something static, changeless or steadily in a flux, that is, changing without a substratum that is changeless. Now, if there are two distinct worlds called the worlds of change and the world of permanence, why is a changeless world needed to ensure the presence of the changing world? Why, in other words, does an ever changing human nature need a changeless substratum?

Answering this question would require us to account for the distinctively human, that is, to account for what makes humans different from other species. If this can be accounted for, it would then be easy to determine whether or not a changeless substratum is presupposed by that which defines the distinctiveness of the human. Thus, we ask: what makes the human species different from other primates? Let us begin from the beginning in answering this question.

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[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The beginning here refers to the origins of the classification of some species in the category of the human in Western thought.

In 1735, Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist named the genus *Homo* and classified it alongside apes and monkeys, which he called 'Simia', in a family that he named *Anthropomorpha*. The distinguishing trait of the members of this family, according to Linnaeus, was the form of their teeth but they were all quadrupeds. In 1776, however, a German anatomist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach disagreed with the claim that humans were quadrupeds. He opined that humans were bipeds and he placed them in a separate class, the *Bimana*, or the two-handed.[9] One thing that needs to be noted in this context is that the human was thought of, especially by Linnaeus, to be fixed like other species. Linnaeus rejected the notion that human races were significantly different from one another, and therefore assumed that the genus *Homo* had always contained only one species namely, the *homo sapiens* – the modern human type. Today however, two other extinct species, the *homo habilis* and the *homo erectus*, are classified as *homo* alongside *homo sapiens*. They are considered to be ancestors to modern humans.

With this brief consideration, let us return to the question which was our point of departure, namely, what makes the human distinctive? The ubiquitous response has this to say: various changes in morphology marked off the human lineage from other primates. Those most commonly cited are the switch to bipedalism, which is associated with the specialization of the hands, changes in the shape and function of the jaw and teeth; and increases in brain size. Also, the specifically human skills stand at the center of this distinctiveness. These skills include: hunting, tool-making and language. But enumerating all these morphological changes is certainly not enough. This is because they do not show how specifically the human is in a class apart. This fact was recognized by Linnaeus and most of the theorists after him. They supposed that one particular element in the makeup of humans drove the evolutionary process. For Linnaeus, the peculiarly human attribute is the ability to reason. And with Darwin, reason was naturalized. Although he was very much impressed by the size of the human brain, Darwin argued that the exceptional growth of the human brain had caused the intellectual and moral development that ensured human success.[10]

This point brings us to a crucial aspect of Western thought on the human, namely, the adequacy of biological understanding of human nature. It has been pointed out that "the fundamental limitation of any concept of human nature, in the sense the term is used by most biologists, is that it fails to capture the very characteristic of humans that, fr om a broader perspective, distinguishes them from other species: the human

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[9] Adam Kuper, *The Chosen Primate* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 19.
[10] *Ibid*., p. 21.

capacity for devising and acting out, from time to time and place to place, radically different modes of life."[11] The crucial point here is that it is not in human nature for people to make and live by certain social arrangements or to shape and use certain cultural items. With this objection, it should not be hard to see that "the biological concept of human nature ... catches practically no part of what is most distinctive and important about human beings."[12]

Does this limitation of the biological concept of human nature just pointed out then mean that we should be contented with just practical knowledge of human beings, with just what humans are said to do or not to do? This is not the case because there is the conviction palpable in Western thought on the human about the need for an idea about what people can do. This is the need for an enabling, liberating and compelling vision of human capacity and responsibility. In the light of Western experience in self-reflection, the question becomes: what would be an appropriate understanding (myth) of ourselves? Central to most descriptions contending for the tag of 'the most appropriate' definition of the human is the idea of deliberate activity, that is conscious and intentional action. This is what distinguishes human action from those of other animals. Thus, "by recognizing, cultivating, and facilitating this ability to shape our social lives and perform our cultural work, we express ourselves in art, language, science, politics, religion, economics – all the forms of historical doing."[13] It is in this sense that humans are unique, that is, humans are unique in this basic fact of their activity – conscious activity. This also distinguishes human society from animal society because human societies have conscious histories.[14]

DOMINANT AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMAN

The dominant positions on the human in this knowledge tradition could be gleaned through the various kinds of ethics. One of the central considerations in ethics in African philosophy is the interrelatedness of individuals within the community. The central idea is that *relationality* is central to human flourishing and existence. This thought is expressed in the conceptualization of a person as existing in a perpetual state of dependence and interdependence both with other human beings and the community. In this regard, the concept of the person has a grounding that connects it to the very idea of existence and life which is the basis of understanding all that exists. Thus, "the sense of being

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[11] Kenneth Bock, *Human Nature Mythology*, p. 102.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] *Ibid*., p. 109.
[14] *Ibid*., p. 111.

connected, bounded in one common life, informs human relationships and defines behavioural patterns."[15]

The African understanding of life which emphasizes the interrelatedness of the whole is the metaphysical basis of the ideas encapsulated in her ethics as expressed in the concept of *Ubuntu* which simply states that a person can only be a person in relationships with others. This is not only the bedrock of the most central dimension of African ethics (*relationality*) but also the foundation of its community dimension. In African ethics, the "concept of community also arises from this understanding of the bondedness to natural life or the feeling of being in the network of life. From this it follows that the ethical imperative is not to treat the other or nature as a means, since the other is also a part of the self."[16] The community dimension of African ethics refers to the notion that "being bonded in the network of life, a human being is seen as a being through belonging to the community of fellow human beings, the community of the natural environment, the community of those who existed in the past as well as the community of those who will exist in the future. It is thus by virtue of belonging to these communities that human beings attain their humanness."[17]

The foregoing claims show that African ethics "gives primacy to *relationality*. For this philosophical tradition, the guiding question for decision making is how a particular decision will affect one's relations in the community of existence."[18] The conviction of African ethics regarding the social character and goal of the moral rule has an ontological basis. This is because human being is ontologically related to other human beings. Simply put, the conviction is that

One cannot be a human being without being related to other people. The individual's relatedness to the community finds its expression in the African concept of Ubuntu, a concept that literally means humanness. What it means to be human is something that the individual derives from the community; there is simply no dichotomy between the individual and the community because the individual and the community exist in a symbiotic relationship.[19]

This vividly shows that the individual is not a being that is intrinsically independent and autonomous whose sociality is necessitated by means of a social contract. The individual is a social being whose identity bears marks of relatedness and interdependence.

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[15] Harvey Sindima, *Africa's Agenda, the Legacy of Liberalism and Colonialism in the Crisis of African Values* (New York, 1995), p. 127.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 127.

[17] Munyaradzi Murove, "Beyond the Savage Evidence Ethic: A Vindication of African Ethics," in, Munyaradzi Murove, ed., *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative Ethics* (KwaZulu-Natal, 2009), p. 29.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 30.

[19] *Ibid*.

One obvious problematic inherent in this thought pattern is that it could be inferred that it is the community that confers humanness on the human being. But if this is the case, then, it could be claimed on this ground that the independence and freedom of the individual is at the mercy of the community who could choose to override the wishes and desires of the individual in an arbitrary and draconic manner. This problematic was at the core of the debate which had Ifeanyi Menkiti and Kwame Gyekye at its center. The core of the debate is the issue of the place of the person in the community which could be extended to mean a concern with the right pattern of the relationship between the community and the individual in African traditional thought. While, in drawing out his own interpretation of the traditional African view on this issue, Menkiti began by pointing out some significant contrasts between the African conception of the person and various other conceptions found in Western thought, [20] Gyekye, in a direct rebuttal to some of Menkiti's claims, focuses on the normative aspects of personhood and community.[21]

Although it is beyond the scope of our concern here to consider this problem an interesting dimension of the African perspective on the human that could help us decipher the above issue is explicit in the commonplace pattern of referring to a person who behaves badly as not being a person and the morally mature person as truly a person. The Igbo people in Nigeria, for instance, often invoke this kind of thought by saying *onya bu (ezigbo) madu* (s/he is a [real or true] human being) or *onya aburo (ezigbo) madu* (s/he is not a [real or true] human being). *Madu* could be taken to be human being and every member of the human family is considered as *madu*. However, in saying that this or that fellow is or is not really or truly a person, what is implied is normative especially in the moral sense.

This thought resonates with what Wiredu reports about Kenneth Kaunda and Margaret Thatcher where the former said of the later at the end of the peace talks that led to the independence of Zimbabwe that she was a person. The meaning of this way of thinking about the human is that an individual may be said to be a person and not a person where the one commends and the other downgrades. According to Wiredu, "such evaluation presupposes a system of values. Since the context of such evaluations is nothing short of the entire sphere of human relations, the system of values presupposed cannot be anything short of

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[20] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," in Richard Wright, ed., *African Philosophy* (Lanham, 1984), p. 171.

[21] Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community in Akan Thought," in Kwame Gyekye and Kwasi Wiredu, eds., *Person and Community* (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), p. 101.

an ethic for a whole society or culture." [22] This presupposed ethic is communalism which has already been characterized in the consideration of African ethics above. The interconnectedness expressed in African ethics is of a *human* rather than kinship sort because "the potential mutual benefits of the wider relationships were not lost on those brought up on kinship reciprocities." [23]

From the foregoing analysis, it is apparent that a human being could be said to be less than a person. But how is this possible? The issue here has to do with the double signification of many African equivalents of the concept 'human being'. In the case of the Igbo, the paraphrased equivalent is *madu*. This means different things from both the normative ethical point of view and the descriptive ontological point of view. In the former sense, *madu* refers to an individual of a certain moral and social standing whereas it means in the latter sense an individual who is simply a member of the biologic and cultural human family. It is in connection to the second signification of *madu* that one can seek to find out what the constituent elements of the human in this framework of thought are.

The Igbo have a structure of the self that is basic and can be aptly accounted for by considering the constitution of the self. According to Okere,

> In Igbo one refers to oneself as *Mu nwa*–Myself, *Gi nwa*–Yourself, *Ha nwa*–Themselves, where *Mu* means "I," *Gi* means "you," and *Ha* means "they;" the attached *nwa* is a demonstrative which means "This here." Thus *Mu nwa*, literally "This I" or "I here," is essentially an emphatic pronoun. But the primitive noun that names the self, the core concept in the structure of the self is *onwe* as in *Onwe m* "myself," *onwe gi* "yourself," *onwe ya* "himself" or "herself." *Nwe*, which seems to be the original root, means to own; *onwe* would then mean "he who owns." Thus the above-mentioned expressions would translate literally: *Onwe m-* "he who owns me" or "myself;" *onwe gi-* "he who owns you" or "yourself," etc. *Onwe* is therefore a self-owner, an independent self. [24]

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[22] Kwasi Wiredu, "An Oral Philosophy of Personhood: Comments on Philosophy and Orality," *Research in African Literature*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring 2009), p. 15.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Theophilus Okere, "The Structure of the Self in Igbo Thought, in Identity and Change," *Nigerian Philosophical Studies I*, Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Valus and Philosophy, 2010. Assessed online at http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II3/chapter ix.htm (12.10.2010).

This *onwe* is the subject of identity perduring and enduring all human experiences. It is that part of me that I cannot refer to in the third person. To explicate the point here, we note that the the possessive adjective *m* in *Onwe m* (my in myself) is not exactly the same as the *m* in *ahu m* (the my in my body) which latter does convey some distance, some alterity, a subject-object relationship. Self is not an object but rather the ultimate subject.[25] To be human is to possess this attribute. But then, there are other attributes that are constitutive elements of being human. These include *Muo* (spirit), *obi* (heart), *ahu* (body) and *chi* (the individuation principle or divine double).

Thus, the self owning self, *onwe*, consists of the elements of *Muo* (the special aspect of *Onwe* that is synonymous with the very life of the individual, while being responsible for the vital faculties and functions of thought and memory, understanding, deliberation and wisdom), *Obi* (the self as emotion and morality), *Ahu* (the external [body] but by no means merely exterior manifestation of the *Onwe*) and *Chi* (the divine part of the self; in a way of speaking it is god made man, as transcendent to the self as it is also immanent to it, helping to work out the individual's destiny as much from within as from without).[26]

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This brings us directly to the need for the comparative analysis we are aiming at. Now, to proffer a comparative analysis of the two traditions of knowledge's views about the human, it is pertinent to make some preliminary remarks. First, it is important to note that what is being sought here is not a reconciliation of these thoughts or convictions. What is sought is rather 1) to highlight the differences 2) to show their consequences for thoughts on the human, and 3) to point out the goods of complimentary reflection in the face of these differences. The basic difference between the Western and African notions of the human have to do with the following issues 1) the focus and assumptions behind the scenes 2) the normative-moral designation, and 3) the community dimension.

In the Western framework of thought, the notion of the human concerns itself more with the ontological aspect. Here, the problems of matter and form, soul and body and the relationship between them play an important role. In the African context, however, the consideration is more ethical than metaphysical. As we have seen, the African (Igbo) context is not innocent of metaphysical thoughts about the human but the emphasis is on the *normative moral* rather than the *descriptive ontological*. The reason for this was well captured by Wiredu when he noted that the reason is because "sharp dichotomies, such

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[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*

as that between mind, as a non-extended substance, and matter, as an extended one, do not exist on the African side."[27] The two frameworks of thoughts also differ in their assumptions about the human. This has to do with the natural goodness of the human. In the Igbo framework, for instance, the human is a being of impeccable goodness at birth. This is a contrast with many strands of Western thought that see the human as being born with either an original sin or other forms of impurity.

The normative moral signification of the human (*madu*) as different from the descriptive ontological signification also introduces another dimension of difference between African and Western thought on the human. The core of this difference is the notion that an individual could be considered in the African parlance as less than a person. This connects to the third basic difference identified above which is the centrality of human interconnectedness (communalist thought) to the African notion of the human. A person, indeed for the African, is a person only in relation to others. This is why the metaphysical singularity of the individual which is characteristic of Western thoughts on the human is less emphasized by the African. A human being for the African is not something akin to an atom colliding with other atoms in the test-tube of community.

What then are the consequences of these differences to thoughts on the human? One basic consequence is that our thoughts on the human have a lot of influences that are dependent on the patterns of the convention of our oral tradition. The point of this is that the conventions of our oral tradition are laden with a direction of thought that a philosopher might take up, possibly unconsciously and develop.[28] Thus, with the disparity of thought categories, on the one hand, and the divergence of directions of thought that these thought categories suggest to the philosopher, on the other hand, it will be impossible to claim to be engaging in philosophizing about the human without a context. But this does not mean an endorsement of unbridled relativism. It does mean, however, that for any reflection that is worthy of the name philosophy, there is the need for the application of both descriptive and normative rationality. The one presents an account of what can be gleaned from conventional thought about a subject matter and the other evaluates and possibly recommends or rejects, based on reasons.

With this, it is not hard to see that complementary reflection; especially here with regard to thoughts on the human, is a *sine qua non* to a well-rounded inquiry. Without wishing to gloss over the problem of method in this regard, it seems valid to suggest that discourses on the human that have serious consequences for the entire globe – for example, human welfare concerns like aid and biotechnological issues like genetic enhancement – should be pursued in the light of

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[27] Kwasi Wiredu, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.
[28] Kwasi Wiredu, *Op. Cit.*, p. 15.

complementary reflection where the contextually transcendent strands of thought in each framework of thought is taken note of with the aim of fostering better understanding, evaluation and prescription.

CONCLUSION

In the light of our reflections, I suggest that the human is a kind of being – a personal and conscious "self." Human beings, however, are not entirely in the natural world, though they "exist." Moreover, human beings are not simply members of a biological species who become persons. They are beings that become persons by acquiring language and other cultural traits. And since these are not natural (if not humans would all have the same language and culture; or at least, culture would have the same prescriptions everywhere). Thus, human beings are hybrids of ontological and acquired second nature elements.

PART III

PERSPECTIVES FROM CHINA AND INDIA

CHAPTER XII

HUMAN NATURE AND FLEXIBILITY: SOME CONFUCIAN VIEWS

SHI YONGZE

BACKGROUND

The French philosopher, Foucault, attached great importance to the concept "difference." He once visited Japan to talk with a group of monks. When one monk asked: "Do you think that Eastern thought can help you re-understand Western thought?" Foucault replied, "If there is a future philosophy, it will be born as the result of exchange and collusion between Europe and non-Europe." [1] With similar concerns, Heidegger also was interested in Chinese philosophy, especially to Lao Zi.[2]

François Jullien, a French philosopher also sought to understand Western philosophy by studying a different approach; he found that in Chinese traditional philosophy. Because the old Indian culture used Sanskrit, and Sanskrit belongs to Indo-European linguistic roots, Indian culture is closer to European culture; the Hebrew world is one of the sources of Western thought, so he excluded that approach. So far as Arab philosophy is concerned, medieval Arab scholars translated and conserved a lot of ancient Greek texts. In the process Arab and Muslim philosophy was influenced by the West. Because Japanese culture was a branch of China culture, Japan does not have an independent status in the cultural sense. All in all, Jullien considered Chinese the most different from the Western philosophy. [3] According to his strategy, comparing China to Europe, indicates the modern Western philosopher's interests are not in Chinese philosophy itself, but rather in the otherness which can become a tool for re-structuring Western philosophy.

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[1] Françoise Jullien, *Reflecting Europe from Outside*, Daxiang Press, Zhengzhou 2005, p. 12. (弗朗索瓦·于连、狄艾里·马尔塞斯：《（经由中国）从外部反思欧洲–远西对话》，张放译，大象出版社，2005 年，第 12 页).

[2] Zhang Xianglong, *Martin Heidegger and Chinese Tian Dao*, Sanlian Press, Beijing 1996, p. 424. (张祥龙：《海德格尔思想与中国天道–终极视域的开启与交融》，北京三联，1996 年，第 424 页).

[3] Du Xiaozhen, *Dialogue between Greece and China*: On Françoise Jullien, Renmin University Press, Beijing 2004, PP4-5.(杜小真：《远去与归来》，中国人民大学出版社，2004 年，第 4-5 页，略有改动).

In the early twentieth century, philosophers Hu Shi（胡适, and Feng Youlan（冯友兰） returned to China after getting Ph.Ds in America. Hu Shi wrote a book, The *Outline of Chinese Philosophy (Volume I)* and Feng Youlan wrote a book, *The History of Chinese Philosophy*. The two books had a strong influence on the community of scholars in China. They proved the fact that China has philosophy like the Western world. But in a sense, writing the history of Chinese philosophy in a Western model, perhaps, misunderstood Chinese philosophy. While not denying the historical significance of these books, their limitations are obvious. Such studies probably obscured the true spirit of Chinese philosophy because the form of Chinese philosophy is different from the West. Rather than a branch of the humanities, using contemporary language to translate ancient Chinese thought, this Western method generally engaged in a scientific model. With such concepts and thinking, along with European classifications, the original meaning of classical Chinese thought is greatly reduced, and becomes boring. To split the traditional Chinese thinking into categories: ontology, ethics, logic, etc., and paste classification labels on them, is too artificial.

How, then, might we compare the two different philosophies? Perhaps texts are not comparable. So we can only trace the original source and try to understand that philosophy derives from a human existential state. Thus, we can appreciate Western philosophy and Chinese philosophy as different forms. In other words, Chinese and Westerners do philosophy in different ways, as Hadot's paper P*hilosophy as a Way of Life* indicates.[4] Beginning with Plato, through Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, Western philosophers formed logical concepts and systems with 'Being' at the center. (The approach was very different in China.)

Many Western philosophers, e.g. Karl Marx, Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger, reflect on or criticize traditional ontology. Marx introduced the concept of practice. He once said, "In the past, philosophers interpreted the world in different ways, but the problem is to change the world." Heidegger re-understood the Being (Sein) issue. Derrida created the theory of deconstruction. It now seems clear to many thinkers that Western philosophy has come to a crisis.

Hegel argued that Chinese philosophy was still in its childhood and had not yet reached the concept（*begriff*）stage. One might turn Hegel's concept around and realize that Chinese philosophy belongs to the original stage of thought. Chinese philosophy may be closer to life itself, to nature, and to the proper way (Dao, 道).

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[4] Pierre Hadot, Philosophy as Way of Life, trans. Li Wenge, World Philosophy Vol., Beijing 2007, pp3-12. (P. 哈道特"作为一种生存方式的哲学"，李文阁译，《世界哲学》2007 年第 1 期,第 3-12 页).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Concerning"Being"

Traditional Western philosophy searches for truth in a stable and unchanged state. When the true is linked with "being", it become the absolute truth. In other words, philosophy in its highest form is Ontology. However, there is no concept of "being" in China. We must proceed from this basic fact, language has to explain the problem. Moreover, there is no term for "being" in classical Chinese. This hinders Ontology and theoretical models from coming into being, as well as associated language and meanings.

The important fact is not that classical Chinese had no word corresponding to the word "being", but rather that language and culture did not foster the needed semantic network based on "being". On the language level, Chinese philosophy prohibits the series of relationships and oppositions that come with Ontology. Indeed, there are no relationships and oppositions; we cannot even imagine the idea of being! For example, the terms "being" and "becoming" do not work in Chinese philosophy. Because the terms "being-becoming" are inseparable. One can only be defined by/with the other. In ancient Greek, the difference between "being" and "becoming" is essential. But this kind of difference in classical Chinese philosophy cannot be formed. In addition, in ancient China there was no "eternal ideas" that are always "being." However, there is "regular becoming" (Chang, 常), namely, no change consists in changing.

Traditional Chinese scholars have never considered "being," "form" (*eidos*), and the concept of paradigm, the timeless eternal nature, etc. The question is: if this concept is the inherent knowledge in Western thought, how is that China does not have this kind of knowledge? Why has it not emerged in Chinese thought over thousand years? Of course, Chinese thought has its own richness developed over centuries, but it is not Ontology.

Western philosophy has a strong mathematical background and enhanced the meaning of being with a model of process. Indeed, Aristotle had analyzed "being" through a variety of meanings. Descartes, Husserl, Frege, etc. never broke away from the mathematical background that Plato had established at its base. In ancient China, people also developed Mathematics, and in the era of Confucius there were 'Six Arts' including 'Math' (数). But the fact is that math has never played a "model role" for the Chinese intellectual. The result is that Mathematics did not constitute thinking patterns for the Chinese people. Instead, image or picture thinking is the Chinese model. We know this from the Bagua map (八卦图) in "Book of Changes", or hieroglyphics. Thus, the linkage of Mathematics and thinking did not happen in China, as it did in ancient Greece, and later, in Western thought.

God in the West and Tianin China (Sky, Heaven, 天)

Many scholars believe that there are two traditions in Western civilization: "Athens" (philosophy) and "Jerusalem" (religion). China has nurtured very different philosophies and religions from the West. In 2000 BC, like other great civilizations, China had its nature gods. Afterwards, there was a more abstract concept 'God.' This concept was of great interest to the Jesuit missionaries in the 16th century. They believed they found a "truth" close to their own ideas. However, the problem was that 'God' gradually was excluded from Chinese culture, or, better said, slowly marginalized. Finally, the concept of God became less and less practical. Interestingly, the concept of God in China has never been critically evaluated. The Chinese people have never thought much of the idea, for or against. For the most part, the Chinese are indifferent to the concept.

An evolution in thinking occurred in roughly 2000-1000 BC, during the transition from the Shang Dynasty to the Zhou Dynasty. The Zhou Dynasty adopted a new system of ethics education to explain the rationalization of government. They used the "Tian" concept as the principle of regulating the world, replacing the Personal image of God. Since then, "Tian" supports the throne. With the concept of Tian, Di (Earth) emerges, and becomes Tian's partner. The connection gave birth to many important dual words which constituted the ancient Chinese view of the world: heaven and earth, up and down, hard and soft, etc. Each concept has its own function. And contrary to the Western exclusive and fixed concept of God, China had opposite and complementary concepts, that constitutes "the appropriate relationship" 'Pole' (Ji 极). This is the "Yin-Yang" (阴-阳) binomial, the two aspects of mutual interaction and transform**ation.** Since then, the Chinese have continued to develop this line of thought; that exhibits the process of reality. In other words, truth is process.

What, then, is Tian? Tian is the ongoing unfolding of day and night, warm and cold, and the four seasons, resulting in world change. According to Chinese thought, Tian could be interpreted as the "regulating principle". Moreover, Tian is the source of reality, and the constant promotion and upgrade of the reality. It never deviates from its own process. It is here that the ethical and moral aspects involved in Tian emerge. They constitute the main "ideological statement" – the real regulating principle is the source of the good. In other words, the "heavenly virtue" is the constant capability of process. The beginning of human nature is the "heavenly virtue" which constitutes the fixed point of the process, and results in fundamental good. Most traditional Chinese people believe that people are basically good.

In Western philosophy, there is a separation between cosmology and ethics, and being and good. We know that Socrates turned to self-awareness and virtue by defining thinking about nature "physis." In China however, Tian, as the great principle of controlling and regulating the process of the world, is enshrined in the beginning of nature, including human nature. Therefore, the Chinese do not need to speculate on the interface between the

"being" and the good. Their thinking process already ties them together; they need not do the sewing work.

Like Spinoza**, seeing** God as nature itself, Chinese also think of Tian as nature (Ziran, 自然). The difference is that Chinese think of nature not as the concept of substance, attributes or modes. Thought is natural, it is never isolated. Tian is called natural. Heaven and earth are also known as nature. Further more, Yin and Yang are known as natural. Wang Fuzhi, a Chinese philosopher of the late Ming, early Qing dynasties, said, "Tian has not the entity of substance, playing its own function to operate the four seasons and produce a hundred things. No, the entity of substance does not play a function. Not playing a function, we can not find the entity."[5]（天无自体，尽出其用以行四时，生百物。无体不用，无用非其体). 'Entity' has meaning only when it links with function. As the absolute Tian has not its own entity, a variety of functions form its entity.

Although Chinese thought does not use the concepts of "being" and God. It can group the concepts formed in a tight semantic interface. To express the logic of the process, it has its own clarifying way, but certainly not the "infant stage" Hegel claimed. In ancient China, especially before the arrival of Buddhism, there was no concept of fate, and no concept of the soul. What was the Chinese belief? Beliefs were contextual: some people were Taoist when they faced nature; some were Confucian when they faced the monarch; and some were Buddhist when they faced death. Ancient China had a lot of sacrifice, but no theology. The reason is because the Chinese were reluctant to define. The method of definition belongs to rational discourse (*logos*), and rational discourse is decisive and exclusive. Its goal is the one God (*theos*); Chinese thought is situational and contextual.

Freedom （自由) and Nature (自然)

Both at the political level and the metaphysical level, traditional China lacked the concept of freedom in the Western sense. Political freedom itself in ancient Greece contains a double meaning. On the political level, freedom was sought as liberation when the Greek *polis* (city-state) faced the Persian Empire and its authoritarian regime. At the same time, it was also the freedom of democratic organizations within the *polis* which supported the right of equality for citizens. These are the historical basis for ancient Greek freedom. However, ancient China did not need to request independence from a foreign power. In addition, the Chinese did not imagine a non-authoritarian political order. The concept of citizenship had not taken root. There was no appreciation or demand for the legal status of

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[5] Wang Fuzhi, *Chuangshan Complete Works,*Vol.1,Yuelu Press, Changsha 1996, p58.(王夫之： 船山全书（第一册），长沙，岳麓书社，1996 年，第 58 页).

free citizens, nor strong opposition to the condition of slaves.

On the metaphysical level, because the concept of God in the West is a supernatural concept, it is beyond the world and outside our grasp of cause and phenomena. At the same time, the Platonic tradition in the West, posits a "principle-form" outside the world, which means thinking "reason." These provide the possibility for developing conditions about a theory of freedom. However, in China, nothing is outside the "process of the world." Moreover, there is no "other world" in traditional Chinese thought. The traditional Chinese did not form a concept of freedom like the Western world, Its highest ideal was to pursue 'nature' (自然, Latin "sponte sua"). Chinese people did not want to be restricted by things, nor latch on to things, instead they sought, like plants to grow naturally.

Chinese philosophy compared with Western philosophy possesses flexibility, and very little ideology. The Chinese sage advocates "Doctrine of the Mean," so he can be consistent with all kinds of possibility at all times, and not be limited or restricted in any way. This is the advantage of Chinese philosophy. But this kind philosophy is inclined to some negative outcomes; perhaps, most notably, resistance and obedience to power. When a man adapts to all kinds of relationships, he might also be inclined to too readily conform to the monarch. Therefore traditional China has lots of *literati* (文人), but lacks intellectuals like Western world. Western intellectuals seek their own philosophy and make clear their position and freedom. Perhaps because of this belief in "other world", Western people can experience the sublime ideal. Western philosophy produced in the ancient polis, in turn became the polis's foundation. But Chinese Wisdom is natural thought. It is subject to the purely secular horizon, there is no dependence on the ideal of another world. So it was difficult for the Chinese to criticize their regime or even oppose different views. Ancient China was concerned with consolidating power; it did not produce a politics like ancient Greece.

Universality (普遍性) and Totality（总体性）

Western philosophy pursues the universality of abstraction. From the time of Socrates, it has tried to achieve generality by induction, beyond the particular. One the other hand, Chinese sage's wisdom defines itself through the totality. It accommodates diverse views, but does not indulge in simply saying yes or no, or unilaterally judging true or false. Hegel's understanding of Chinese thought was mistaken but illuminating. He thought Chinese philosophy was a combination of vague abstraction and mediocre specifics. In Hegel's view, the two aspects amount to nothing because Chinese thought lacks a sense of the concept. Western traditional philosophy pursues universality. Universality is seen as a formal requirement of rationality. It concerns logic and moral laws. This principle has some basis. Traditional China did not pursue "universality," but rather the common, the concrete, here and now. For example, Mencius said, "Everyone has the feeling of

commiseration…" The depth of Chinese thought is that it can get the meaning from ordinary and mediocre things, and not only be after the logical necessity. However, from the grasp of the minute details of things, it can discern the internal foundation of things.

"The Analects" is not committed to the universal concept, even in the moral area. These conversations are not intended to build a scientific system, not even a moral system. From the theoretical point of view, the 'conversation' does not build anything. It is not intended to govern our behavior from the outside to fit into a theory or teaching, but rather to enhance our ability to adapt to the environment. Its direction is to let us enter into a situation, and maintain balance with the surrounding things.

Moreover, ancient Chinese thought belongs to another type of philosophy. It is not simply to grasp the difference or the linkage between spirit and matter, but rather, how to adapt the environment to us. Chinese thought is always concerned with Confucius' words, but his aim is really to adjust the surroundings (as an organism adapts to the environment and in the process maintains a balance). However, this is not to say that the purpose is to change the surroundings, but rather that his students understand the need to adjust to situations. Nonetheless, Confucius's different answers to different people does not mean he accepted relativism. In other words, not to care about the universality of Socrates (or Plato) must not lead to the position of Protagoras' relativism. We can avoid the dilemma between universalism and relativism through traditional Chinese wisdom. The wisdom rule is that there is no fixed rule. Namely, there is no "rule," only "regulating"（调节）.

HUMAN NATURE AND ITS FLEXIBILITY

Whether human nature is stable or changing is a very interesting fundamental philosophical question. Thus, I will explore the issue from a traditional Chinese Confucian perspective, and try to provide a train of thought for this "dilemma." Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi, the three greatest philosophical figures in the Pre-Qin Period, are the main protagonists of my analysis.

Confucius once said, "By nature, men are very alike; by practice, they get to be further apart."[6]（性相近，习相远）The Master did not give a definition of human nature as such.

The Analects mainly discuss "humanity" (Ren, 仁). However, when asked what the humanity is, Confucius often gave different answers to different people in different situations. However, there were four things that the Master abstained from entirely: "He would not speculate, he did not

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[6] *Confucian Analects*, Book 17 (《论语·阳货》).

claim or demand certainty, he was not inflexible, and he was not self-absorbed"[7]（"子绝四:毋意,毋必,毋固,毋我。"）.

When Yen Yuan asked about perfect virtue, the Master said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man is able for one day, to subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?" Yen Yuan said, "I beg to ask the steps of that process." The Master replied, "Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety." Yen Yuan then said, "Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson."[8]（颜渊问仁。子曰："克己复礼为仁。一日克己复礼，天下归仁焉。为仁由己，而由人乎哉？"颜渊曰："请问其目。"子曰："非礼勿视，非礼勿听，非礼勿言，非礼勿动。"）.The Master said, "It is the person who is able to broaden the way (Dao, 道) , not the way that broadens the person.."[9]（人能弘道，非道弘人）In the process of humanity's realization, Confucius emphasized the people's own initiative, as well as practice.

The Master went to the kingdom of Wey; Ranyou drove his carriage. The Master observed, "How numerous are the people!" Ranyou said, "Since they are so numerous, what more shall be done for them?" The Master said, "Enrich them." Ranyou said, "And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?" The Master said, "Teach them."[10]（子适卫，冉有仆。子曰：庶矣哉！冉有曰：既庶矣，又何加焉？曰：富之。曰：既富矣，又何加焉？曰：教之。）The focus of his teaching is not to teach any specific means of ready-made knowledge, but to encourage humans to become superior and conscious persons. "Teaching" is very important to people, its ultimate aim is to spur on humanity in mind and heart and let the human life penetrate the way (Dao, 道).

Confucius said, "A superior man in making his way in the world is neither bent on anything nor against anything; rather, he goes with what is appropriate (*Yi*, 义)."[11]（"君子之于天下也，无适也，无莫也，义之与比。"）Here Yi refers to proper and right conduct. The Master said, "There are some with whom we may study (*Xue*, 学) in common, but we shall find them unable to go along with us in principles. Perhaps we may go on with them to the Way（*Dao*, 道）, but we shall find them unable to get established along with us. Or if we get so established（立）along with

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[7] *Confucian Analects*, Book 9 (《论语·子罕》).

[8] *Confucian Analects*, Book 12 (《论语·颜渊》).

[9] *Confucian Analects*, Book 15 (《论语·卫灵公》).

[10] *Confucian Analects*, Book 13 (《论语·子路》).

[11] *Confucian Analects*, Book 4 (《论语·里仁》).

them, we shall find them unable to weigh occurring events (*Quan*, 权) along with us."[12]（可与共学，未可与适道；可与适道，未可与立；可与立，未可与权。）Thus, it is evident that 'to weigh' is the highest among the four human levels of knowing and acting.

Mencius is the most important Chinese philosopher on the question of human nature. Indeed, he is the father of the theory of the goodness of human nature. According to Mencius, humanity（*Ren*, 仁）, appropriate conduct（*Yi*, 义）, propriety *(Li*, 礼), and wisdom（*Zhi*, 智） are not drilled into us from outside. They come with being human. However, Mencius did not think human nature was equal to goodness. Humanity, appropriate conduct, propriety, and wisdom are only four signs of goodness. In Mencius' view, "Good Nature" is not something ready-made. He allows people flexibility to deal with difficult matters. For example, we know propriety (*Li*, 礼) is one of four good human characters. In the story "should someone rescue his drowning sister-in-law?" Mencius said, "He who would not so rescue the drowning woman is a wolf. It is a rule of propriety（*Li*, 礼） for men and women not to touch hands when giving or receiving things, but it is a expediency（"to weigh occurring events", *Quan*, 权）to rescue one's drowning sister in-law with hands."[13]（淳于髡曰："男女授受不亲，礼与？孟子曰："礼也。"曰："嫂溺，则援之以手乎？"曰："嫂溺不援，是豺狼也。男女授受不亲，礼也；嫂溺，援之以手者，权也。"）

In contrast with the views of Mencius, Xunzi thought human nature was evil. He claimed that good things are achieved only through conscious effort (*Wei*, 伪）. It is just because human nature is evil that sage-kings, propriety and appropriate conduct are necessary. At the same time, Xunzi said, "Forward or backward with the trend of the times, one person who is sometimes supple like the cattails and reeds not because of cowardice; and who sometimes is rigid, determined and straight but not because of arrogance. These are appropriate ways of acting according to circumstances; It is bending according to the appropriate time."[14]（与时屈伸，柔从若蒲苇，非慑怯也；刚强猛毅，靡所不信（伸），非骄暴也。以义变应，知当曲直故也。） Therefore, like Mencius, Xunzi required knowing or doing something, but also demanded flexibility in different situations.

Xunzi holds that human nature is evil, and Mencius holds that human nature is good. As Confucius' heirs, why are they so different in their grasp of human nature? In my opinion, they have only placed a different emphasis at the origins of human nature. On the surface, good nature and evil nature seem opposite pairs. However, in fact, there is no essential contradiction

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[12] *Confucian Analects*, Book 9 (《论语·子罕》).

[13] *The Works of Mencius*, Book 7 (《孟子·离娄上》).

[14] *The Works of Xunzi*, Book 3 (《荀子·不苟》).

between Xunzi and Mencius or their Confucian character. Concerning goodness or evil, Mencius and Xunzi both think human nature is open to change, and human nature is not everything. Human nature's goodness or evil is only the premise of two different logical approaches. Though Mencius thinks appropriate conduct (*Yi*, 义) comes from the heart-mind （*Xin*, 心), "Seek and you will find them. Neglect and you will lose them. Men differ from one another in regard to them – some as much again as others, some five times as much, and some to an incalculable amount – it is because they cannot carry out fully their natural powers." Therefore "if it receives its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not grow. If it loses its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not decay away."[15] （"求则得之，舍则失之，或相倍蓰而无算者，不能尽其才也"。"苟得其养，无物不长；苟失其养，无物不消。"）That is, although a person has innate goodness, if he / she does not pay attention and cultivate it, it will be lost.

In Xunzi's view, humanity is not innate, but it can be acquired. Xunzi said, "Thus, the sage by transforming his original nature develops his acquired nature. From this acquired nature, he creates propriety (*Li*, 礼) and moral duty. … Now, man assuredly does not possess propriety and righteousness as part of his inborn nature; therefore he must study very hard to seek them."[16] (故圣人化性而起伪，伪起而生礼义，… 今人之性，固无礼义，故强学而求有之也) So, being born with humanity and righteousness is not important, the key is to have them in life. We can conclude that Mencius and Xunzi can both use Confucian ideals of humanity and the practical principle of "seeking and learning." In reality, the two arguments about human nature are not essentially different.

Since Mencius and Xunzi share basic points, why does one advocate human nature as good and the other evil? The reason may be that the philosophers lived in different historical situations. Confucius lived in the Late Spring and Autumn Period. Mencius lived in the early Warring States Period when the social and political climate was worsening. Xunzi lived in the late Warring States and felt that the social conditions were in a very dangerous state. So his sense of responsibility for the Confucian system and psychological pressures were more severe than with Confucius and Mencius. Xunzi thought that it was easy for humans to do evil. He stated:

> Now, the nature of man is such that he is born with a love of profit. Following this nature will cause aggressiveness and greedy tendencies to grow and courtesy and deference to disappear. Humans are born with feelings of envy and hatred. Indulging these feelings causes violence and crime to develop and loyalty and trustworthiness to perish. Man is born

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[15] *The Works of Mencius*, Book 11 （《孟子·告子上》).

[16] *The Works of Xunzi,* Book 23 (《荀子·性恶》).

possessing the desires of his ears and eyes (which are fond of sounds and colors). Indulging these desires causes dissolute and wanton behavior to result and [diminishes] ritual and moral principles, precepts of good form, and lessons the natural order of reason.. This being the case, when each person follows his inborn nature and indulges his natural inclinations, aggressiveness and greed are certain to develop. This is accompanied by violation of social class distinctions and throws the natural order into anarchy, resulting in a cruel tyranny. Thus it is necessary that man's nature undergo the transforming influence of a teacher and the model and that he be guided by ritual and moral principles. Only after this has been accomplished do courtesy and deference develop. Unite these qualities with precepts of good form and reason, and the result is an age of orderly government. If we consider the implications of these facts, it is plain that human nature is evil and that any good in humans is acquired by conscious exertion."[17] ("今人之性，生而有好利焉，顺是，故争生而辞让亡焉。生而有疾恶焉，顺是，故残贼生而忠信亡焉。生而有耳目之欲，有好声色焉，顺是，故淫乱生而礼义文理亡焉。然则从人之性，顺人之情，必出乎争夺，合于犯分乱理而归于暴。故必将有师法之化、礼义之道，然后出于辞让，合于文理，而归于治。用此观之，然则人之性恶明矣，其善者伪也。")

Mencius talked about humanity and appropriate conduct which is built on the human's heart-mind analysis. In order to emphasize humanity, he thought that there was the bud of noble action in the human's heart-mind. Mencius' purpose is to encourage people to act in the world with their original 'heart-mind.' On the surface, Mencius adhered to the idea that human nature is good. In fact, He focused on the human's actions in the world. Xunzi also believed in humanity, but he lived in the late Warring States Period when the social situation was dire and most people competed with bad will. Both the superior man (Junzi, 君子) and the mean man (*Xiaoren*, 小人) were evil. Thus the philosophers should not promote the view that the heart-mind is simply good. On the contrary, it is appropriate to fully show human nature's bad disposition as well. Doing this can be conducive to make people reflect on themselves and seek the needed transformation in their own lives.

Liang Qichao, a famous thinker in the late Qing dynasty, said, "Xunzi and Mencius are both Confucian masters. Their thought, in the end, is the same but different in the beginning. Mencius believed human nature was good, so he focused on the expansion of heart-mind. But Xunzi

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[17] *Ibid*. (《荀子·性恶》).

believed human nature was evil, so he emphasized constraints on material things."[18] Mencius and Xunzi both agreed with the judgment that everyone can become a sage. "All men can become *Yao* and *Shun* (尧, 舜)." However, Xunzi also admitted, "Ordinary people can become Yu (禹)." That is, they can embody the Confucian principles of humanity and practice.

CONCLUSION

In short, the arguments about human nature of Mencius and Xunzi are seemingly contradictory. However, in fact they are not in opposition in any basic aspect. Neither of them put human nature in a rigid perspective. Both stressed the importance of external enlightenment, inner cultivation and demonstration in practice. Moreover, Mencius and Xunzi both thought that we should pay attention to the importance of contingency and learning to do reasonable things according to actual situations. That achieves "appropriate conduct" (*Yi*, 义). Some people may then ask: What is "appropriate conduct"? It is similar to traditional Western-style definitions, i.e. a step-by-step process to achieve a general or universal theory (or behavior). However, traditional Chinese philosophers would not pursue this definition in terms of 'being' but rather would explore the root of things back to life itself. A Chinese thinker might try to reply to questions about "appropriate conduct" (*Yi*, 义) in the following way. Based on 'humanity' (*Ren*, 仁), in accordance with specific circumstances, doing the proper thing means to realize the value of the individual from a personal point of view. Nonetheless, we only gain access to the growth and prosperity of humankind from a social point of view.

In response to Mencius' development of the Confucian concept of humanity, Xunzi developed the Confucian concept of propriety (*Li*, 礼). Mencius focused on development of the good in the human nature, while Xunzi emphasized the malevolent desire to control. As noted above, the starting point for their thinking was different, but both thinkers concentrated on the role of enlightenment and cultivation, and believed that everyone can eventually become a sage. Although the two had stubborn and divergent tendencies compared with their predecessor Confucius, they both emphasized expediency and change depending on actual situations. In short, the ultimate goal of Confucian thought is to build a world where everyone can become a "sage" and everything runs along the proper way (*Dao*, 道). In other words, it is "wisdom" to cultivate people to the ability that provides them with diverse 'ways' of relating to people and nature. Thus is formed a good society and a good world. The early Confucians were not limited to the question framework, whether human nature is stable or changing. They

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[18] Liang Qichao, *Politic History in the Pre-Qin*, Chapter 7, Ancient Books Press, Tianjin 2004. (梁启超：《先秦政治思想史》第七章《儒家思想（其五）（荀子）》，天津古籍出版社，2004 年).

stressed, rather, the importance of dealing with problems that arise in practice and the wisdom that is needed according to circumstances. Philosophy makes people more intelligent and moves them to become wise people.

As such there is no concept of "essence" in traditional Chinese philosophy, and thus no discussion of human nature on whether it is stable or changing. In western philosophy essence or nature refers to the 'constant' in changing things. According to the early Confucians however, human nature is just the starting point for change, and can not be separated from human practices. Nature and practice together constitute the human being. We know Confucius once directly expressed this view. However, we should not let Mencius and Xunzi's opposing viewpoints confuse us. While Mencius and Xunzi are very different on the surface of their propositions, they have a common goal for becoming a sage. Mencius focused on cultivating the seed of good nature in every person, while Xunzi stressed the importance of propriety to restrict people's excessive desires. Most importantly, both have inherited the thought of Confucius who as a sage acted with wisdom, but always, according to circumstances.

There is no fixed human nature in Confucian philosophy. Does this mean that we Chinese live in state of uncertainty? Is it possible that people may lose their rights and dignity? My answer would be no. *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) states that, "Sincerity（*Cheng*, 诚）is the Way of *Tian* (*Tiandao*, 天道). To think how to be sincere is the way of man (Rendao, 人道)."[19]（诚者，天之道也；诚之者，人之道也）Cherishing a sincere heart is what counts. The human being can achieve a force that can transform and complete things, and even draw the human and *Tian* (Sky, 天) together in the same current. As a result, the system of life on Earth will be able to survive and prosper well. In this process however, the human must also become a more sensitive and self-conscious human. In sum, according to early Confucian philosophy, there is no fixed human nature. Going with the flow of time to maximize the value of life and human prosperity should be our goal in the world.

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[19] *The Doctrine of the Mean.* (《中庸》).

CHAPTER XIII

NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE: ANCIENT CHINESE AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

LI XIAODONG

The meaning of Nature and Human Nature are examined differently in Western Philosophy and Ancient Chinese Philosophy. Indeed, there are enormous differences. In this paper, I will concentrate on Ancient Chinese Philosophy (ACP) and try to articulate the differences with Western philosophy.

MAIN CONCEPTS IN ANCIENT CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

As far as Nature and Human Nature are concerned, there are several different speculations in ACP. Among them, are important concepts that can help us to understand Nature and Human Nature, in any context.

Dao（道）

The first philosopher in Ancient Chinese Philosophy to talk about Dao (Tao) is Lao-tze. He was a philosopher in the Spring and Autumn Period of China, more than 500 years B.C. In the book *Dao De Jing (Moral Bible)*, he described the main characteristics of Dao. Firstly, Dao is the fundamental element of the world. Lao-tze said: *Ren Fa Di, Di Fa Tian, Tian Fa Dao, Dao Fa Ziran*. (Human being follows after the earth, the earth follows the heaven, the heaven follows the Dao, and the Dao follows the Nature.) He used the word Nature here to express that the Dao comes from itself. *Ziran* (Nature) can be understood as "something appears as it should be". In other words, Dao is the original source of all other things in nature and in the human being. He said: *Dao Sheng Yi, Yi Sheng Er, Er Sheng San, San Sheng Wanwu.* (The Dao produces One, One produces Two, the Two produce the three and the three produce all things.) Here, one means the whole, and two means the main identity of the whole, *Yin* and *Yang*. The three means the whole within *Yin* and *Yang*. All the things in the world come from the three. Secondly, the development of the world is the movement of Dao, which is the inter-change between *Yin* and *Yang*. Lao-tze further said: *Fan Zhe DaoZhi Dong, Ruo Zhe Dao Zhi Yong. Tianxia Wanwu Sheng Yu You, You Sheng Yu Wu* (Returning is the motion of the Dao, and softening is its function. All things in the cosmos arise from being, and being arises from non-being). Thirdly, Dao can not be known by the

human being. We cannot be directly acquainted with Dao. The Dao that can be named is not the eternal Dao. It is something beyond the understanding of the human being, so we just give it a name, Dao. In this way, Lao-tze closed the way to understanding nature by the human being, and puts a limitation on human understanding.

Ren（仁）

Ren – which can be translated as humanity, kindness, compassion, quality of being humane, benevolence, or generosity – is the core concept in the philosophy of Confucius. Confucius, the famous philosopher in the Spring and Autumn Period of China, lived almost at the same time as Lao-tze. As a great educator and thinker, he was the first teacher to educate students in private classes. There are many distinguished ideas in his teaching but he did not write them down in a book. We only know his opinions by the notebook of his student(s) called *Lun Yu* (*The Analects of Confucius*). From this book, we find that Confucius also kept nature beyond human thinking. He said: *Jing Gui Shen Er Yuan Zhi, Shi Wei Zhi.*(Respect spirits while keeping aloof from them, that may be called wisdom) *Zi Bu Yu, Guai Li Luan Shen.*(the Master dismissed the discussion of extraordinary forces and disturbing spirits) When he was asked what was his main point about the world, he answered that the core of his ideas is *Ren*. Ren has many characteristics. Firstly, *Ren* can be understood as Human being. He said: *Ren Zhe, Ren Ye.* (*Ren* means human being). Secondly, the main feature of Ren is to love people, but not all in the same way. Confucius said: *Ren Zhe Ai Ren.*(Ren is benevolent love others). Thirdly, *Ren* is a special moral standard for rulers. It presents a doctrine of magnanimity. Ren requires that the ruler restrain himself and carrying out ceremonial rites and regulations. Lastly, Ren is the highest moral seeking for everyone, even more important than one's life. *Bu Ren Zhe, Bu Ke Yi Jiu Chu Yue, Bu Ke Yi Chang Chu Le. Ren Zhe An Ren, Zhi Zhe Li Ren.* (If you lack humaneness you can't handle long periods of difficulty or long periods of comfort. Humane men are comfortable in humaneness, and the wise take advantage of humaneness.)

Others（人）*and Self* （己）

In ACP, the relationship of Nature and Human Nature was discussed under the relationship of Others and Self. Others mean all the things outside the self: nature and other persons. The ancients looked at human nature from inside, then applied that approach to other persons, then to the whole of nature, because, in the final analysis, nature and human beings come from the same source. Nonetheless, the philosophers found different kinds of human nature, and thus presented various doctrines of good and evil human nature. Mencius proposed a well-known view. According to his theory, all people have four senses – the sense of compassion, the sense of shyness, the sense of reverence, and the sense of right and wrong. These

senses help persons keep their true nature. He gives us an example: When a person saw a little boy near a deep well, the first passion he would have was pull him away from the dangerous place, although the boy was the son of a mortal enemy. In Mencius opinion, the human being loses his real heart in society, so it is very important for us to find it again, in his own words, *Qiu Qi Fang Xin* (Seeking the lost heart). Xun Zi offers a second theory. He said: *Ren Zhi Chu, Xing Ben E, Qi Shan Zhe, Wei Ye*. (Human nature at birth is evil, and goodness comes from human acts), According to this opinion, the relationships between the self and others are restricted by rules and laws, so it is necessary to obey the laws of society. Other teachings fall between the theories of Mencius and Xun Zi.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING

Compared with Western Philosophy, we can find that Chinese Ancient Philosophy's understanding on nature and human nature are different. The differences include:

Nature: Veiling/Unveiling

In Western Philosophy, the most important task of philosophy is finding what nature is in essence. From Greek to contemporary philosophy, philosophers are seeking to find the eternal reasons of the world; they want to take down the veil of nature. With the analysis of Pierre Hadot, we find this seeking in mythology, technology, discourse, poetry, art, and so on. These explorations allow us to discover the true colors of nature from different aspects. We can say that that it is our goal to find the essence of nature at a deeper and deeper level.

In ACP, on the contrary, the main point is knowing there's nature behind things, but not unveiling them. So, the philosophers tell us we and all the things around us are come from Dao, and Dao is from Nature. But this nature can not be understood by human intelligence. It is out of the region of our knowledge. What we can do is just know we come from it. So, the important task for philosophy is find the way we following and pay more attention on the things from Nature.

Human Nature: Inside/Outside

As far as human nature concerned, we can find that in Western Philosophy it is the special part of Nature, or comes from Nature. When we are talking about human nature, we are talking about the nature in human being. So we can say the human nature is inside the thinking of nature.

But in Chinese Ancient Philosophy, the human nature is away from nature. From the different ways of thinking about human nature, we can find different kinds of humanity, but it is thing of human being instead of nature. Human nature is something outside of the thinking of nature. In this

way, we can find the essence of human nature even if we can not do the same thing to nature.

Relationship: Following/Distingushing

In Western Philosophy, when the relationship between self and others is discussed, the most important thing is to distinguish individuals from others. Each person is equal, free, independent, and so on. Western society was established on the basis of a contract – the agreement between individuals to deliver original human rights and submit to public power. In this meaning, we can say the Western Philosophy is finding common charaacteristics from differences, in a sense seeking unity in diversity.

In comparison with this approach, the most important thing for ACP is to find common things that individuals have with others. Human nature can be good or evil, but good human nature can be lost and evil human nature can be changed by human beings. The basic reason for this is the presupposition that I share the same characteristics with others. We must follow the examples of others, human beings, and nature, but not so individualistically. In this meaning, we can also say that ACP is finding differences but from common characteristics, allowing diversity in unity.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES?

It is very interesting that there are so many differences in the understanding of nature and human nature. With the development of globalization, the dialogue among different cultures are deeper than ever. In this context, how might we think about the differences? This question can be broken down into three more componentss:

Are There Different Natures?

One of the great developments for human being is that we have the consciousness of thinking about nature. With this ability, we can construct different understandings of nature. And also nature itself and nature as we conceptualize it have different appearances. Nature itself is always spontaneous, while nature, in our thinking, is diversified, and appears multiple. In this way, we might say there one nature, but many different understandings of nature. And because of this, we should try our best to find the tolerance needed for different understandings. In the context of a different culture, nature might look different.

What is the Horizon?

Charles Taylor wants to give us an "inescapable horizon" for authenticity. According to his position, "Reasoning in moral matters is always reasoning with somebody."(p.31) We can understand the differences

in this way. So, what is the horizon for the differences? Taylor introduces "the general feature of human life", that is, "its fundamentally dialogical character" (pp. 32-33). Accordingly, we can find an answer to our problem on "the general feature of understanding." For this author, the existence of nature can be understood. The difference between East and West is that Western Philosophy is focused on the origin of nature, while ACP is focused on the flowing process of nature. Here lies the difference.

What Kind of One World?

"There is only one earth." Many people have heard this slogan recently, usually in concern for environmental issues. Many philosophers are trying to find the best explanation for the cultural meaning of "one earth." East and West use different terms to express this.The key words are different, for example, "harmony" in China is the primary term for this idea, while Derrida would use "tolerance." Nonetheless, we can regard "one earth" or "one world" as including different understandings, and with more serious dialogue and integration, cultural conflicts can be overcome

According to Etienne Gilson, "the facts that Aristotle's biology wished to explain are still there."(p.118) The understanding of nature and human nature is also still there. Indeed, there are so many things we need to do in our contemporary context. It is not important to find the eternal final solution of the problem, but rather to find new answers based on the development of reason and our respective traditions. A deeper understanding of the East's "harmony" and the West's "tolerance" might open the way to appreciate a deeper meaning of nature and human nature and thus open possibilities of living together in "one world."

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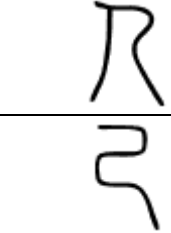
Main Concepts in Chinese Ancient Philosophy – Symbols/Characters

Ancient writing	English Meaning	Recent writing	Pin Yin
道	Dao	道	dào
仁	Ren	仁	rén
尺	Others	人	rén
己	Self	己	jǐ

Yin & Yang
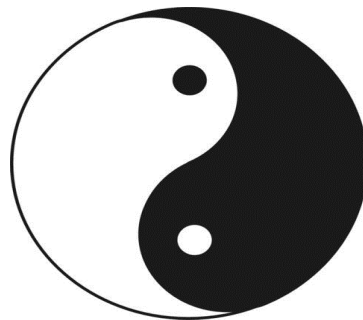
CHAPTER XIV

HUMAN NATURE IN VISHISHTA-ADVAITA-VEDANTA: YAMUNA'S DIVINE VERSES

RUZANA PSKHU

The common ground of the different histories of Indian Philosophy and Vedanta is a thesis about the dependence of the philosophical ideas of Ramanauja (1017-1137) on his predecessor and spiritual teacher Yamunacarya (918-1038).[1] It is supposed that Ramanuja only developed Yamuna's ideas, contained in his few works.[2] It means that Ramanuja cannot be considered as an original philosopher, because his originality is reduced to his capability to popularize and to develop Yamuna's religious and philosophical patterns of argumentation for the sake of Vaishnava needs. This thesis about relationship of the philosophical couple "Ramanuja-Yamunacarya" is not corroborated by any reasonable arguments of historians of Vedanta philosophy. Meanwhile the comparison of some concrete aspects of philosophical systems of Yamuna and Ramanuja shows that this thesis is a sort of prejudice, not of scientific argument.

For example the investigation of two commentaries, "Gitarthasamgraha" of Yamunacarya and "Gitabhashya" of Ramanuja, showed that both thinkers had similar positions concerning the way of salvation.[3] But the very short commentary of Yamunacarya, which sometimes is unclear, can be understood only on the base of Ramanuja's commentary. In other words we can understand Yamuna's idea only by means its Ramanujian interpretation. That is why the Vaishnava tradition and the scientific tradition[4] of investigation of Yamunacarya's philosophy are based on its interpretation by Ramanuja. But it is clear that the use of

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[1] See: S.A. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. III (New Delhi, 1975), *passim*; Радхакришнан С. Индийская философия. Т.II (Moscow, 1993), C. 602-603; Костюченко В.С. Классическая веданта и неоведантизм (Moscow, 1983), c. 128, etc.

[2] Only few works of Yamuna are survived, and some of them are survived in fragments like "Atmasiddhi" (devoted to the nature of human soul), "Ishvarasiddhi" (devoted to the nature of God), "Samvitsiddhi" (devoted to the nature of true knowledge). Other works are survived in whole like "Gitarthasamgraha" (Commentary on "Bhagavadgita"), "Catuhshloki" ("Divine Verses"), etc.

[3] See the article: Р.В. Псху, Сравнительный текстологический анализ «Гитартхасамграхи» Ямуначарьи и «Ведартхасамграхи» Рамануджи/ ВЕСТНИК НГУ (2007), № 4, Серия: Философия, с. 146-150.

[4] J.A.B.Van Buitenen, *Ramanuja on the Bhagavadgita*. A Condensed Rendering of his Gitabhasya with Copies Notes and Introduction (Hague, 1953).

such an interpretation of Ramanuja for analysis of Yamuna's ideas will bring the known result: Ramanuja only developed what was hidden in Yamuna's works.

Another very important question, which concerns Ramanuja's dependence on Yamunacarya, is a question of the nature of the human soul (*jivatman*). This problem has been discussed in studiess, devoted to Vishishtadvaita Philosophy over the last 40 year. One can draw on two different accounts of the originality of Ramanuja. The first estimate is represented in the work of the American researcher, Walter Neevel, "Yamuna's Vedanta and Pancaratra",[5] that reconstructed and translated from Sanskrit the surviving fragments of Yamuna's "Atmasiddhi", his major work, which is devoted to clarifying the true nature of the individual self. The second approach is represented by the Austrian school of Indian studies, whose main representative is Gerhard Oberhammer. One of his colleagues, Roque Mesquita, translated Yamuna's treatise "Samvitsiddhi"[6] and wrote an article, devoted to the problem of understanding nature and the human soul in Yamuna's system.[7]

The disagreement of the two positions was highlighted by Mesquita in the following dilemma: 1) Atman is endlessly small by nature (*anu*); 2) Atman is omnipresent by nature (*vibhu*). Shankara, the Advaita philosopher, holds the last position. But Ramanuja holds that Atman has endless size. As usual, Ramanuja's views are attributed to Yamuna, in spite of the fact that the key fragment of "Atmasiddhi" concerning this question is lost. The method of reconstruction of the lost fragment of Yamuna's "Atmasiddhi", which is based on its interpretation by Ramanuja, has a very doubtful character. The investigation of Neevel showed that Yamuna's views were quite different from Ramanuja's. According to Yamuna, Atman is atomistic by nature (*anu*). Neevel considers that Yamuna's ideas about the human soul nature are very similar to the Jaina position, according which Atman has the size of the body that it animates (*shariraparimanah*). Contrary to this researcher's assumption, Mesquita supposes that Yamunacarya and Ramanuja have a direct relationship, but Ramanuja evolves Yamuna's idea about human nature. The reason for this assumption is based on the terminology, used by Yamuna.

As we can see, the question of the human soul/nature in the early Vishishta-advaita system of philosophy can be resolved by different ways in dependence of our initial assumption. But if we take the text of

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[5] W. Neevel, *Yamuna's Vedanta and Pancaratra* (Montana, 1977).

[6] Y. Mesquita, Yamunacaryas Samvitsiddhi. Kritische Edition, Ubersetzung und Anmerkungen Mit einem Rekonstruktionsversuch der verlorenen Abschnitte (Wien, 1988).

[7] R. Mesquita, Yamunacaryas Lehre von der Grosse des Atman // Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde Sudasiens und Archiv fur Indische Philosophie. Band XXXIII (Wien, 1989), s. 129-150.

"Atmasiddhi," reconstructed by Neevel,[8] as one of the earliest treatise of this school, on this question, then, unexpected answers on this question emerge.

In the introduction of his work, Yamuna presents his main goal as the investigation of the true nature of the individual soul, based on a critical examination of different views of other schools of Indian philosophy. The common and universal position of all these systems is that the knowledge of the true nature of human soul can bring true and immortal bliss and the means of salvation. After a short examination of all the possible ideas, Yamuna begins a discussion with his virtual opponents. The result of this detailed discussion was the following conception of human soul/nature. The *atma* is that which is:

1. Other then the body, the external sense-organs, the internal sense-organ or mind, the breath or vital force, and consciousness;
2. Not dependent on any means other than itself for its revelation or manifestation;
3. Eternal;
4. Pervasive;
5. Different in each body, and
6. Innately blessed with "happiness."[9]

Another very important question arises in relation with the question of the true nature of the human soul; that is the question of relationship between Brahman, or the Absolute, and the numerous individual souls. There is a very sharp difference between the two thinkers: according Yamunacarya, the true nature of Brahman is devoid of any possible features – it is *nirguna*-Brahman, according Ramanuja, Brahman does not have any negative characteristics and in this sense one can name Him as *nirguna*-Brahman, but there is eternal difference between Brahman and the individual souls, which cannot be reduced to pure Brahman, and in this sense it is *saguna*-Brahman. Yamuna insists, as Shankara does, that Brahman has the nature of pure knowledge, but he also insists, as Ramanuja does that there are numerous souls, which cannot be reduced to Brahman. This significant contradiction of Yamuna's views of the relationship between Brahman and various souls is hidden because of applying Ramanuja's ideas to Yamunacarya's system. On one hand, we have one true Reality, or Brahman, which is deprived of any quality, but on the other hand, we also have many various souls, whose true nature is different from Brahman and the real in this aspect of its difference. So it is a real problem to conjoin these contradictory definitions in one system of thought: how can one correlate the true nature of Brahman, which is *nirguna*, i.e. without any quality, and the true nature of soul, which is a unique reality different from

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[8] See: W. Neevel, *Op.cit.*, pp. 97-168.
[9] W. Neevel, *Op.cit.*, p.168.

Brahman? To answer this question one needs a terminological analysis of some of Yamuna's notions used by him in the context of the nature of human souls or beings and one needs to philosophize with Yamuna, trying to understand his ideas, which can help us to realize our own human nature.

According to Yamuna the true nature (in Sanskrit *svarupa*, that is translated as an "own form") of human being is its consciousness. This must be differentiated from another Sanskrit term *svabhava* that means "own existence". In fact consciousness is human substance that is rooted in God. And all other attributes are only imposed on this substance. It is very interesting, because we should then define the relation between human nature and human attributes, and also between human nature and God's nature. And then we might solve the problem of our specific features existence. If human nature is the same in every human being and it is consciousness, then why are we so different? What is the reason for these differences? And should we try, on our way to God, to cast out our originality as illusory features which are not from our nature, or, perhaps, should we keep them? If we keep them, we should understand, why. For religious consciousness it is very important to know what I must do on my way to God – the meaning of saving my soul.

In the Vishishta-advaita-vedanta system God is knowledge and bliss, which possesses all positive attributes that we can imagine. And there is only one way that leads to Him. It is a way of love to Him (*bhakti*), but the love that can be compared with Spinosa's *amor Dei intellectualis*. The nature of the human soul is also knowledge, but only because every human soul is an attribute of God. We can then conclude that in every human nature the divine essence is expressed through (or by means or in) its own unique and inimitable form. Thus, we should agree with importance and necessity to keep the specific features of every human being and at the same time the equality of all human beings in the sight of God. Because each and every human being expresses by his own existence one of the attributes of God, which no single person, alone can express. We are so different and we must be different because by this difference God can keep His essence. One can ask: "why should I think about God, if I have no faith, if I'm not a religious person: this Vedanta idea doesn't concern me!" But if we cast away the word Vedanta, Brahman, *svarupa* and all religious notions and take into consideration only the abstract idea, then it can be explained by means of a simple example. If you love or had ever loved anyone in this world, you can understand that a relationship of love between two human beings is possible only if each of them respects and maintains his own individuality and the individuality of his beloved. And each of them is conscious about this individuality and understands its inimitability. There is a direct relationship between understanding and feelings in relation to love. Our beloved is the highest value for us, and his every feature is dear to us. Here, even unreligious people can activate their imaginations, because the matter concerns not God, but other people, other human beings. If God is dearest to you, every other human being will be dear to you, because

everyone manifests the love of God. Thus by means of intellectual love we can keep the plurality of the world and diversity of all human beings. Thus we have a world of different human beings, where nobody can be annihilated, where everybody is valued, because each of us can give to the world something that no one else can give.

We can use Hadot's interpretation of Goethe's method of discovering the simple and fundamental form, or *Urform*, from which the series of transformations develops: "… we will discover that the formation of colors is a metamorphosis of light as it enters into relation with darkness through the intermediary of an opaque medium."[10] In our case God would be taken as a light and human being – as an opaque medium that gives different colors to this light. Thus our nature has no veil, but it is mystery. And here we can use Goethe's critique of symbolists and experimenters with regard to human nature. "They think the form is veiled, and they must find something else behind the veil. Yet the reason they seek something that they think is a veil is that they do not understand that everything is right before their eyes, and that the natural or mythical form they see has its reason within itself, and that we ought not to try to understand by means of anything other than itself; the veil is over their eyes, not over the eyes of Isis. To see Isis, all we have to do is look."[11] In other words to see human nature, all we have to do is look at concrete human beings as they are in present reality.

Hadot's interpretation of Goethe's declaration that Isis has no veil must be understood in a metaphorical sense. This point is very interesting, "… if Isis is without veils, it is because she is entirely form, that is, entirely veil; she is inseparable from her veils and her forms. Form is a veil, veil is a form, for Nature is the genesis of forms".[12] "Goethe rejects a formless God, not because he attributes to him a particular form, but because for him, God is inseparable from Nature; that is, he is inseparable from the forms, both visible and mysterious, that God/Nature constantly engenders."[13]

It is very interesting that in Vaishnava tradition we can find the similar mythological manifestation of nature which can be correlated with Goethe's understanding of nature and its forms. I mean one famous Vishnu hymn, composed by Yamuna and devoted to the goddess Lakshmi which is the goddess of prosperity, beauty and happiness. She is a wife of god Vishnu. Yamuna praised in this hymn her and her power. For us it is interesting to see his description of this Goddess in *"Divine verses."*[14]

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[10] P. Hadot, *The Veil of Isis. An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature* (London, 2006), p. 254.

[11] P. Hadot, *Op.cit.*, p. 251.

[12] P. Hadot, *Op.cit.*, p. 259.

[13] P. Hadot, *Op.cit.*, p. 260.

[14] Translation from Sanskrit by Mariasusai Dhavamony. See: Mariasusai Dhavamony. Yamuna's Catussloki: an analysis and interpretation // Indologica Tauinensia (Torino), 3-4, 1975-76, 197-208.

The Supreme Person is your husband; your seat and bed is the Serpent-Lord; your seat and vehicle is the Lord of birds, the soul of the Veda; your veil is Maya, the enticer of the world; the host of Brahma, Isa and other gods and their divine spouses are your troop of servants and maids. Your name too is Sri, O Lakshmi! How can we designate you?

1. Although your omnipotent husband cannot measure [and know] your unlimited and naturally ever blissful greatness, even as he cannot his own [greatness], I praise you fearlessly as your servant, as one surrendered to you, O Sovereign of the universe, the Beloved of the Lord of the universe, knowing your mercy towards the self-controlled [or «restrained»].

2. By the kindling of a particle of the nectar of your merciful glances the three worlds are saved: before [that] because of not gaining it they vanished, and now they come to limitless prosperity. Without the grace of the beloved of the lotus-eyed, never will salvation be realized for mankind, whether in works of the cycle of rebirths or in the [yogic] concentration or in the Vaisnava path.

3. That supreme form of unending peace and great power, known as Brahman, that form which is the bodily manifestation of Hari, called Brahman, extremely dear to him and most wonderful, and the other forms which he assumes [at his will] for delight: all these forms, they (Scriptures) declare, are inseparably united with your own form and manifestations, suited to his own."

In the first verses of this hymn the author declares that Lakshmi possesses all divine attributes of Vishnu, which is her beloved (*kàntas*). Here the Sanskrit term *yavanikà* (that means veil, cover) arouses associations with woman's dress. By the way, here we can remember Hadot's citation of Diderot about nature "She is a woman who loves to dress up."[15] But as we see the author says that *yavanika*, a veil of the Goddess, is *maya*, a great illusion and the enticer of the world. Here we should remember that in the Advaita system all form and names of this world as well as human beings and their natures are only illusion, *maya*, because only Brahman possesses true reality. However, the author of this hymn rejects this interpretation of *maya*, but he preserves the attractive character of the world, which is like to this veiled woman. In some sense we can say that under the veil of the world and its forms there is the beautiful face of Lakshmi.

And in the last verses the author declares the existence of two forms of the highest reality – Brahman, the first form is the spiritual virtues of Brahman like peace (*shanta*), eternity (*ananta*), splendid power (*mahavibhuti*), and the second form is the embodied form (*murta*), with a bodily appearance. It is interesting that the second form is esteemed by the author as a highest form. The last sentence declares inseparability of Vishnu

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[15] P. Hadot, *Op.cit.*, p. 260.

and Lakshmi and all visible manifestations of Vishnu, which are the visible forms of our world and suppose corresponding implicit manifestations or forms of Lakshmi.[16]

Returning to the question about human nature we can say that every human being is one of the innumerable attributes of the highest Bliss and Power, – the Beloved! The last word "Beloved" means something that is ultimate – the dearest to us. This is understood in a spiritual sense but, nonetheless, can be embodied in a concrete person or God's hypostasis.

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[16] Now we can say with Goethe:
"You may hide beneath a thousand forms.
And yet, Oh beloved! I recognize you right away.
You can cover yourself with magic veils, all-present One!
I recognize you right away".

CHAPTER XV

THE LION AND SHEEP IN MAN:
A SIKH RESPONSE TO NIETZSCHE

SANDEEP SINGH DHILLON

People are different. No two human beings are the same, in fact every one is different. Nietzsche rejected the concept of equality and with it the concept of "common good," too. Some are masters and some are slaves. Some are supermen while some are part of the herd. Some are lion-hearted men while others are like sheep.

Men are differentiated into ranks, and it is, Nietzsche says, "quanta of power, and nothing else, which determine and distinguishes ranks." For this reason such ideals as equality among men are nonsensical. There can be no equality where there are in fact different quanta of power. Equality can only mean the leveling downward of everyone to the mediocrity of the herd.

The goodness of the lion comes from within, he is the creator and the determiner of values. He does not look outside of himself for any approval of his acts. He passes judgment upon himself. His morality is one of self glorification. This noble individual acts out of a feeling of power, which seeks to overflow. He may help the unfortunate, but not out of pity, rather from an impulse generated by an abundance of power. He honors power in all its forms and takes pleasure in subjecting himself to rigor and toughness and has reverence for all that is severe and hard.

While for the sheep or the slave the "good" is in rule following, while they may not even know why a rule is to be followed, they do it almost blindly. For sheep, "good" is the symbol for all those qualities that serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers, such as "sympathy, the kind helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility and friendliness. …" Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility, where goodness refers to whatever is beneficial to those who are weak and powerless. The good of the sheep is not at all virtuous, the sheep's truth is disguised selfishness and weakness.

Increasing belief in the Darwinian notion of a relentless evolution of the species could result in the destruction of any basic distinction between man and animal. While Darwin laid great stress upon the external circumstances when describing the evolution of the species, Nietzsche focused upon the internal power within man, which is capable of shaping and creating events, "a power which uses and exploits the environment."

Moral values must be built upon the true nature of man and his environment. But the question is what is the nature of man, is he an evil brute, like the beasts of the wild or is he good? Thomas Hobbes describes the life of man as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short…" Hobbes said

that "man is a wolf to man." John Locke sees men as neither good nor bad but as being governed "according to reason." He perceives men to be thinking, capable individuals that can coexist peacefully. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke have different views about not just the nature of man but also about natural law. Thomas Hobbes views natural law as a state of war while Locke sees natural law as a state of equality and freedom, however, both agree that all men are equal in nature, but for different reasons. Human nature is naturally competitive and violent according to Hobbes while Rousseau considers man as one living in harmony with nature. Hobbes claimed that we are all selfish and concerned only with our own self-preservation even if it comes at the cost of others. Hobbes views materialistic desire as the motivation for all actions while reason provides the best possible way to fulfill these desires. Rousseau's view of human nature is very positive. Rousseau considered that human nature is largely good. Society is the corrupting force that transforms 'natural man' into the self-obsessed beast as illustrated by Hobbes. But it must be noted here that society too is made of man, and blaming society for man's ill deeds is running away from taking responsibility for one's deeds.

Nietzsche's views about human nature are somewhat similar to that of Hobbes. Nietzsche considers that man's nature is such that he naturally hates one's enemy and the recommendations or prescriptions of Christianity asking men to love their enemies is totally contradictory to human nature. Moreover, in Christianity, the natural origin of morality is denied by requiring that before man can love anything, he must first love God, this is again contradictory to human nature as man when born as a child first loves his mother and the immediate family members and then other people and animals even. Man can't love anybody about whom one does not know, one must know at least partly if not fully. Man comes to know about God when he is brought up in a particular religious-cultural environment and is told about God at least partly if not fully by the senior members of the community or society. To inject God into men's affections, according to Nietzsche, is to subvert the immediate, natural moral standard of utility.

Since people are different, to conceive of morality in universal terms is to disregard basic differences between individuals, there is no such universal and absolute system of morality that everyone must equally obey, according to Nietzsche. It is unrealistic to assume that there is only one kind of human nature whose direction can be prescribed by one set of rules. There are different kinds of human natures, some are lions while some others are sheep. There is, however, one thing that does characterize all human beings, says Nietzsche, and that is the drive to dominate the environment. This drive, so central to human nature, is the *Will to Power*. It is an inner drive to express a vigorous affirmation of all of man's powers. It is a sort of remote control of man, which drives the man, which makes man do actions; just like the unconscious of Sigmund Freud.

Though Nietzsche is regarded mostly as a nonbeliever, it must be noted that he made the statement "God is dead" not because God is dead but

because during his time he had seen that the belief in the Christian God had drastically declined. The reasons for this decline may have been many, like the advances made in science and technology and the means of production, increasing belief in the Darwin's theory of evolution and/or the manner in which the Christianity was practiced by people and imposed by the church in the previous centuries. There was no freedom and control by the church whereby even right and sane voices were crushed and people were burnt or stoned to death for hearsay or even claiming that the earth moves around the sun (eg. Giordano Bruno). The lack of freedom and excessive control by the church resulted in a degeneration of the people. People did not know what was good and what was bad; belief in the Christian God drastically declined during Nietzsche's life time. He observed that Christian religious faith was unable to provide a compelling vision of man's destiny. He held this view for many resaons: a lack of faith, his own internal flaws and especially because of, what he considered, the life-denying negativeness of the Christian ethics. These are big issues. What disqualified religious faith in Nietzsche's mind was the essentially this life-denying negativeness of Christian ethics. Judeo-Christian ethics is so contrary to man's basic nature, according to Nietzsche, that its anti-natural morality debilitates man and produces only "botched and bungled" lives.

But the question arises, how did human beings ever produce such unnatural systems of morality? There is, says Nietzsche, a "twofold early history of good and evil," which shows the development of two primary types of morality, namely, the *master morality* and the *slave morality*. The fact is, says Nietzsche, that "men with a still natural nature, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey, still in possession of unbroken strength of will and desire for power, threw themselves upon weaker, more moral, more peaceful races. … At the beginning, the noble caste was always the barbarian caste. Their superiority did not consist, first of all, in their physical power, but in their psychical power – they were *complete* men. …" But the power of the master race was broken by the undermining of its psychic strength. Against the natural impulse to exert aggressive strength, the weak races had erected elaborate psychic defenses. New values, new ideas, such as peace and equality were put forward under the guise of "the fundamental principle of society." This, said Nietzsche, was a not-so-subtle desire on the part of the weak to undermine the power of the strong. The weak have created a negative psychic attitude toward the most natural drives of man. This slave morality is, says Nietzsche, "a Will to the *denial* of life, a principle of dissolution and decay." The challenge to the master morality resulted from a deep-seated *resentment* on the part of the "slaves," a resentment, says Nietzsche, "experienced by creatures who, deprived as they are of the proper outlet of action, are forced to find their compensation in an imaginary revenge." This revenge took the form of translating the virtues of the noble aristocrat into evils. Incredibly, the "herd mentality" in time overcame the master morality by succeeding in making all the noble qualities appear to be vices and all the weak qualities appear to be virtues.

The positive affirmation of life in the master morality was made to seem "bad" and something for which one should have a sense of "guilt."

For the slave morality the man who arouses fear is "evil," while according to the master morality it is precisely the "good" man who is able to arouse fear. In the *master morality* "good" has always meant "noble" in the sense of "with a soul of high caliber," and "evil" meant "vulgar" or "plebeian." The slave morality originates within the lowest elements of society, the abused, the oppressed, the slaves, and those who are uncertain of themselves, while the master morality originated within the barbarians, the oppressors, the nobles.

But another question arises, were the nobles really the nobles or did they just appropriate the title of nobility to themselves since they were the rulers, the masters, and they could do such an appropriation, they could even define or codify what nobility is. When the sheep or the slave comes to power he too appropriates the so called nobility to himself, practices the same type of barbaric acts upon the earlier nobles, the earlier masters, but while preaching, he preaches to others that one must be peace loving and not barbaric, he goes to the extent of asking the lions to eat grass just like the sheep, he tries to make the sheep out of lions. He tries to condition the lions by subjugating them and also by educating them with his own slave morality. He tries to ensure that the lions are never free to practice their master morality and get accustomed to practice slave morality and consider it as their own morality, their own human nature forgetting their natural barbaric nature. The sheep starts making rules for the lions and asks them to follow the ruler, the sheep. A character of the sheep when they are the rulers is that they practice something, while they preach something totally different and opposite to what they practice. The state is such that it can be understood by the phrase, "the Sheep wears the skin of the Lion."

Nietzsche was willing for the weak and the herd of sheep to have their own morality, provided that they did not impose it upon the higher ranks of men, the lions. That is, the sheep could live separately in a separate society, while the lions live separate in a separate society,[1] or the lions rule over the sheep, but it should never happen that sheep come to rule over the lions. For if the herd of sheep comes to rule over the lions then it would lead to the destruction of what is most noble in the society, it would lead to the destruction of good, the new good would be defined as rule following, the rules being made by the sheep. It would finally result in the society coming to such a pass that people would not know the difference between good and bad, even the bad would go by the name of good. The people of such a society would become so much dejected, degraded, demoralized, depressed, without any inspiration to reach the high ideals, they would become counter revolutionaries instead of becoming revolutionaries, thus resulting in society

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[1] Though here a question arises, whether such total separation or compartmentalization is really possible, for the herd of sheep does help in the emergence of a lion.

degrading even further. People would loose faith in God and openly say, who has seen God?, have you seen God? They would assert that nobody has seen God, and say that God sees nothing i.e. God does not see the bad deeds done by man. Then, the cultural death of God would become a reality. The moral standards of the sheep would be of no use to keep society good, to inspire the people to do good acts. For the morality of the sheep is really not a good morality though it goes by the name of the good. The sheep rulers themselves do many bad acts.

Although Nietzsche was by temperament an atheist, he was appalled at the consequences that would follow once everyone had become fully aware of all the implications of the death of God, a cultural event that he said had not yet become apparent to modern man. But he was optimistic too that once the death of God becomes clear to people the life-denying ethics of Christianity could be replaced by a life-affirming philosophy. Nietzsche's search for a new foundation for values in a day when God could no longer be the goal and sanction of human conduct turned to the atheistic dimension of human nature as the most promising alternative to religion. Only as atheistic phenomenon are existence and the world eternally justified. However, Nietzsche was wrong, as religiously/theistically, existence and the world can be eternally justified.

One can know (indirectly) that which is unknown only on the basis of what one already knows. However, by direct experience one can know directly, without any need of knowing anything previously, though one may not be able to grasp it fully without some linguistic and cultural background. Nietzsche being a non-believer does not know fully what Christianity is and passes a wrong judgement on it on the basis of what he already knows. He wrongly criticizes Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie, as the greatest and most impious lie. According to Nietzsche in the New Testament "the least qualified people … have their say in its pages in regard to the greatest problems of existence." "The most unwieldy problems are spoken of here (life, the world, God, the purpose of life) as if they were not problems at all, but the most simple things which these bigots know all about!!!" For Nietzsche the problems of life, the world, God, the purpose of life, may be very difficult to solve, but for a religious person, a believer, these problems may not more remain problems and the most basic things can be understood by faith and explained to others.

Nonetheless, he considered Christian morality to be the morality of the sheep. In Nietzsche's view, by denying the primacy of the will to power, European morality (or Christian morality or sheep morality) was basically dishonest. He assigned primary responsibility for this dishonesty to Judaism and Christianity. Nietzsche was willing to admit that the "spiritual men" of Christianity had rendered invaluable services to Europe by offering comfort and courage to the "dejective, diseased, degenerating, infirm, and necessarily suffering individuals", the "failures" whom they have tried to keep alive and preserve. But at what price was Christian charity achieved, asked Nietzsche. The price, he said, was "the deterioration of the European

race." Here Nietzsche does appear to be racist, but he is basically under the influence of Darwin and wants natural selection and the survival of the fittest unaided by any charity and/or morality of religion.

Those who are part of the herd of sheep will not be able to reach the heights of the free spirits even after revaluation of all values, according to Nietzsche. Great things according to Nietzsche remain for the great, "everything rare for the rare." The superman will be rare, but he is the next stage in human evolution. History is moving not toward some abstract developed "humanity" but toward the emergence of some exceptional men; i.e. supermen. But the superman will not be the product of a mechanical process of evolution. The next stage in human evolution will be reached only when superior individuals have the courage to reevaluate all values and respond with freedom to their internal will to power. The superman will be the truly free man for whom nothing is forbidden except what obstructs the Will to Power. He will be the very embodiment of the spontaneous affirmation of life. He will be the complete man.

Nietzsche did not contemplate that his superman would be a tyrant, a totalitarian bully. His ideal man was, the passionate man who has his passions under control and his animal nature harmonized with his intellect, giving style to his behavior. He had thought about a good superman, "the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul." But, in the next glaring example, Hitler wrongly modified Nietzsche's concept of superman to that of super-race. The concept of race brings with it the concept of hereditary characteristics, the belief that the son would be like the father, which may in fact not always be true. While Nietzsche does accept that some people are superior and others are inferior, he says that superior individuals will be able to reach the stage of superman only when they have the courage to revalue all values and respond with freedom to their internal Will to Power. Thus he indirectly does imply that the inferior, the slave, the sheep like people who are part of the herd cannot reach upto the level of superman, that the sheep cannot become a lion and that the superman is a rare being.

It is true, and Nietzsche was right in claiming that superman, the next stage in human evolution, comes into being with a revaluation of values, and morality. He envisioned a new day, when once again the truly complete man would achieve new levels of creative activity and thereby become a higher type of man. This new man or superman or lion will not reject morality; he will reject only the negative morality of the herd. A higher culture will always require as its basis a strongly consolidated mediocre herd, but only to make possible the development and emergence of the higher type of man, the "superman." This is just like saying that darkness is required to know the importance of light, evil is required to know the importance of good, but it is always better that there is a lesser evil and not a greater one. If the superman is to emerge, he must go beyond good and evil as conceived by the lower ranks of men. He must rise above the "beyond good and evil" of the dominant herd morality.

Nietzsche argued that the morality based upon the will to power is only an honest version of what the slave morality has carefully disguised. If the superman is "cruel," said Nietzsche, one must recognize that, actually, almost everything that we now call "higher culture" is simply a spiritualized intensification of cruelty. He said that "the 'wild beast' has not been slain at all, it lives, it flourishes, it has only been – transfigured." Looked at from the vantage point of the master morality, the word *cruelty* refers simply to the basic will to power, which is a natural expression of strength. But here one must remember that those who are in power often try to hide their cruel acts or try to interpret them in such a manner that they appear humane and good; the ruler tries to write history from his perspective in an appropriate manner and even educate or mis-educate the masses.

Nietzsche wanted to preserve the natural distinction between the two ranks or types of men, namely, between that "type which represents the ascending life and a type which represents decadence, decomposition, and weakness." He did not consider that it is possible that even a sheep could become a lion, that it could rise above the sheep morality, review sheep morality, reject it and adopt the lion morality. He wrongly considered that the superman will come only from the superior class of people and not from an inferior.

After the revaluation and rejection of slave morality, and traditional morality, which was decadent and dying, the new morality which takes its place according to Nietzsche, is not something new, but, rather, what was there in antiquity before Christian morality took over. This morality expresses man's original and deepest nature. Here Nietzsche again appears to be under the influence of Darwin. He did not create any new moral values; he did not consider it necessary to legislate new values; a reversal of values was enough. As Nietzsche's revaluation implies, all the "stronger motives are still extant, but now they appear under false names and false valuations, and have not yet become conscious of themselves." By revaluation he meant to declare war upon the presently accepted values, as Socrates, "applying the knife vivisectionally to the very virtues of the time…." Since traditional morality is a perversion of original natural morality, revaluation must consist in rejecting traditional morality in the name of honesty and accuracy. He showed that what modern man called "good" was not at all virtuous, that his so-called truth was disguised selfishness and weakness, and that his religion (Christianity) was a skillful creation of psychological weapons with which moral pygmies domesticated natural giants. Here again he appears to be under the influence of Darwin while talking about natural giants.

Nonetheless, one must observe that considering religion to be wholly the result of some psychological phenomenon is wrong. Religion comes by God's grace. Once the disguise is removed from modern morality, Nietzsche thought that true values will emerge. He fails to see that the removal of disguise is not enough, an active effort needs to be made, to challenge, the decadent herd/sheep morality.

The tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji very well showed the world way back in 1699 when he created the "*Khalsa*," the pure, complete and perfect man, the superman, that even a sheep could become a lion. When he asked for five heads, he asked for people who were willing to give their lives, who did not fear death. Only one who does not fear death really affirms life. Sheep fear death while the lion does not know any fear of death. The moment sheep-like people lose the fear of death they become lions; they become supermen, no matter from which ethnic or racial background they come. While one who fears death is just like sheep. Guru Gobind Singh showed that even the lowest of the lowly could become lions. The Khalsa or the superman of Guru Gobind Singh is religious and has come into being by the grace of God, which too brings with it a change and revaluation of traditional morality which was decadent. It is not like the atheistic superman of Nietzsche which comes into being after revaluation of the existing Christian morality which had become decadent. Guru Gobind Singh with his Khalsa not just revalues traditional morality and rejects it, but he and the Gurus since Guru Nanak have put in its place a new morality, new values. They create new values by their actions and not just by proposing or recommending. They don't ask man to go back to his primitive nature; they help others by their example in the evolution of man. If man had to go back to his primitive nature to become a superman, as Nietzsche thought, this process could not be considered a true evolution of man.

No two human beings are the same and no two human beings are equal. There are differences between men. Yet human nature is the same, it is one and not different. Man has the qualities of both the lion and the sheep in him, and it is not the case as Nietzsche considered that some are endowed with higher qualities, the qualities of lions while others have inferior qualities, the qualities of sheep. The fact is man has both the qualities in him. Some are living like lions while some others are living like sheep. Some adhere to lion morality or master morality while others adhere to sheep morality or slave morality. Most are living in cultures that foster one or the other mentality and morality. With time the cultural boundaries have become so strong and entrenched that one begins to consider oneself a lion or a sheep based upon the culture in which one is raised. Though man is essentially a person possessing the qualities of both a lion and a sheep, depending upon what values they hold dear and important, depending upon the morality to which they adhere they are either Lions or Sheep. Though cultural, ethnic and racial upbringing also influence the morality which a person chooses to practice, that does not mean that one can't review and alter one's values. Man is always free to do so.

One normally does not pause for even a moment in his lifetime to reconsider and rethink the values which one has been following, practicing and adhering to. When Guru Gobind Singh asked for five heads, he also asked his listeners, both then and now, to think and reevaluate their values. A man, after reviewing values, may become either a lion from a sheep. The process is open both ways. The change from sheep to lion and back to sheep

may be a change of convenience, of profit, or pragmatic reason. But since in the case of making the change from sheep to be the lion of Guru Gobind Singh one is willing to give his head, one is willing to die, this change is irreversible, such a lion never becomes sheep again. For the change was never a change of convenience or profit. The change was a real transformation. After such a change, the Khalsa, the lion of Guru Gobind Singh, goes about to bring a change in society, to effect such a change that by his actions, he makes others also review their morality, and follow him. Hence, they become lions and bring about good, and oppose evil.

The will of the Khalsa, the pure, is the will of God, it is not separate from God. Khalsa considers himself to be an agent of God on earth. It is the agency of God, God acts through his actions. When one is with God, one considers and comes to know that one is under God's command, one really feels the power of God in him, one does his actions under God's command fearlessly. This will is not to usurp power but to do justice. Though power does get accumulated the source of all power is considered to be God, thus justice is maintained and there is no chance of injustice. All power is in the will of man, if he wills he can be a lion, if he wills he can continue to remain a sheep. It is by man's will that morality is reviewed, it is by man's will that man decides to give his head at the command of his Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The will to live and the will to die are not separate, they are one and the same, though they appear to be different because different words are used. When one is willing to die one is really willing to live at that very moment. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "A man who won't die for something is not fit to live".

The war that the Khalsa fights is on the evil doer. The Khalsa, the Lion of Guru Gobind Singh, is a soldier-saint. He is both a saint and a soldier, he is a combination of both and has the qualities of both. Being a soldier, he fights for truth and righteousness; he fights against evil, injustice, oppression, and works to do justice and bring equality to this earth. Being a saint he remembers God; being a good soldier no injustices are committed by him. A soldier-saint can never be a tyrant or a bully. He is somewhat like what Nietzsche had envisioned in a Roman Caesar with the soul of Jesus Christ. However, he is a believer and not a non-believer like Nietzsche had envisioned. Moreover, once a person becomes a Khalsa, a lion, a soldier-saint by being willing to die, the process is irreversible, he can never be a sheep again. While according to Nietzsche, only the superior can become the superman, the inferior cannot. However, according to the Sikh Religion anybody willing to die who accepts the commands and teachings of the gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh and the Bhagats and accepts Sri Guru Granth Sahib as his Guru can become a Khalsa, the real superman, the next stage of human evolution.

Nietzsche, while saying that man has the will to power which is not just a will to survive but a vigorous affirmation of all of man's powers, says that it is not just a will to life but a will to war, a will to "overpower." This overpowering, however, is of the weak by the strong. Nietzsche does not

consider that there is anything wrong in this overpowering, subjugation, suppression and exploitation. He does not consider it to be unjust but considers it to be a most natural thing. He does not consider it wrong to take away someone's freedom. He overlooks the fact that even the so called weak have a will to power. He considers that there is a certain class of people who are strong or superior and considers that this class should rule. He does not consider that superman can come out of the weaker downtrodden suppressed lower strata of society. While he asserts that superman will be the truly free man and will represent the highest level of development and expression of physical, intellectual, and emotional strength. But the question arises, how can the one who exploits and subdues others be considered good? He considered that a herd (of sheep) is required for a superman (a lion) to develop and emerge. He believed that human society was divided into a herd of sheep and a herd of supermen – each with a different set of qualities. He overlooked the fact that the qualities of both the lion and the sheep are there in every man and every man is free to be a lion or a sheep.

The Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh have/had accepted that there are differences in people but have still maintained that they must be treated equally for they all have been created by God. Man has the freedom to be good or to be bad, the bad do injustices and usurp others rights and take their freedom. The Khalsa, the pure, the supermen, do justice, bring equality and restore freedom to those who have been suppressed. He brings the wrong doer to justice while he himself does not do injustice. He has to live in the world without any worldly materialistic desires. However, he has to maintain his own freedom. He has neither to fear anybody nor make anybody fear him. He has to create such a social and political atmosphere in this world so that every one can live in freedom and come to know God.

Human evolution from man to superman or from sheep to lion is a conscious human effort involving a decision made by humans to live a particular sort of life. This lifestyle of a lion includes the will to act on decisions taken against all odds, and to act in the real life world. This decision to act and to act on decisions taken involves a leap, a leap of faith, faith in God, faith in Guru. It is the decision taken to live the lifestyle of a lion. The decision to give one's head, to give one's life (a mental phenomenon) is taken in faith. Faith is involuntary – a given/a gift – while one's decision is voluntary, but they are intimately related. The decision to live the life of a lion is the decision of the faithful. Sheep-like people, do not make any decisions, rather decisions are made for them by the masters, the lions. The sheep follow the rules made for them; they don't have any faith (God is dead for them). Slaves, who are not free to do their actions, let others decide and loose their faith. While those who act according to their free will, are truly free, they come to have faith even if they had no faith earlier. Thus freedom is most important for humans. Freedom and faith go together and are interdependent.

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH
IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

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A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

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The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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