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Vivat Academia!
How Post-Modern Rhetoric
Shapes Our Understanding of
Modern and Pre-Modern Values

*The Twenty-first Ecumenical Theological
and Interdisciplinary Symposium*

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**The Romanian Institute of
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Theodor Damian, Ph.D., President

30-18 50th Street, Woodside, NY 11377, Tel.: (718) 626-6013,

E-mail: DamianTh@aol.com

Editor: Theodor Damian

Assistant to the editor and designer: Claudia Damian

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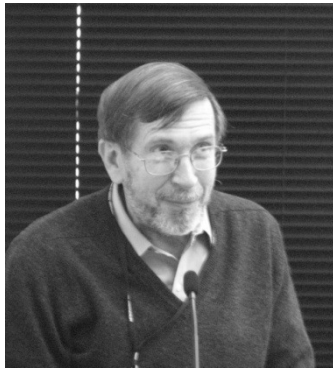
Prof. Theodor Damian at the opening address of the XXIst Symposium



Prof. Elvin Ramos (left), Louis Tietje, Steven Cresap, Doru Tsaganea, Theodor Damian



Prof. Richard Gallo (left), Bert Breiner, Paul LaChance, David Rosner



Dean Humphrey Crookendale,
Moderator of the Symposium

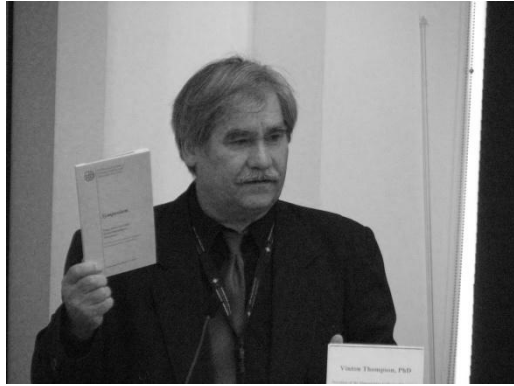
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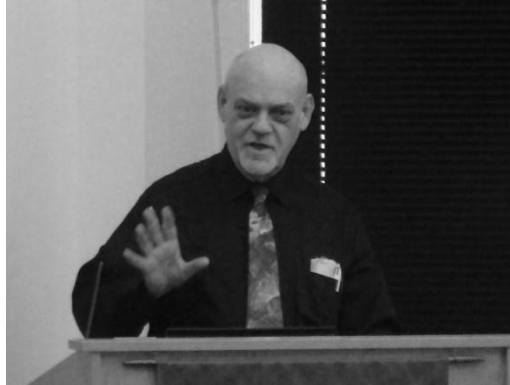
Listening to President Vinton Thomson's remarks



*Gaudeamus
igitur:*
Theodor Damian
directs the choir
as it sings the
traditional
academic hymn.



Theodor Damian



Bert Breiner



Richard Grallo

How Can Transcendence Help Reinvent Ourselves?

Definitions and Reflections

Etymologically speaking, transcendence is simply going beyond. When applied to the human condition, it is a state of being, or going beyond one's previous state of mind. Self-transcendence is a crucial element of our life because, as Victor Frankl wrote, it "is an integral part of the human ability to create meaning."¹ As an inner structure and core component of the human person, it represents in particular the moral-spiritual dimension of the self.²

In Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs self-transcendence is related to the highest stage called self-actualization. According to A. Garcia Romeu's interpretation of Maslow's theory, "transcendence refers to the highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness,"³ it is the mechanism that Maslow calls "meta-motivation," meaning man's striving for the higher, for constant improvement, for passing established limits. In that, self-transcendence has an epectatic character, that is to say, it implies a permanent desire for a higher spiritual level, possibility to reach it and endless repetition of this process. It indicates that, theologically speaking, man is capable of eternity: *Homo capax infiniti* and that man lives *sub specie aeternitatis*.

The human drive for transcendence, Mark Epstein writes, "is implicit in even the most sensual of desires."⁴ This indicates that transcendence, the longing for beyond and the ability to go beyond, permeates our whole being and it shapes fundamentally our human identity which is to be found not in the limited self, at any given stage or state, but in the next one. This is like man is in constant journey, or rather pilgrimage towards his own self, realizing that the present one does not represent him.

<p>Theodor Damian, PhD, is Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York; President of the American branch of the Academy of Romanian Scientists; President of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality</p>
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Karl Barth puts this in stronger words: Everything that is “in itself”, he writes, is dead, be it the inner self or the external self; all things in “themselves” are dead.⁵

We are running away from death, wherever that is sensed or perceived to be.

It appears that by conscientizing the need for transcendence man has a better, more profound, more nuanced and more adequate understanding of him or herself. According to Costica Bradatan that implies overcoming the classic dichotomy center-margin.⁶

However, with a self in constant transition there are still margins, and implicitly, there must be a center. The old self and the new level one aspires to are the margins in this case and the only “place” where the center can be is the transition itself, the place in between.

A more adequate understanding of the human self which implies spiritual self-exploration leads to truth, Walter Truett Anderson believes.⁷ Yet the truth one might attain could be good news and bad news at the same time. Good news in the sense that there is hope for the better and that a higher level of existence is there awaiting us, and the bad news in the sense that we might not like what we discover in ourselves. As Amitai Etzioni put it, “barbarians are not at the gates, but inside.”⁸ *Hannibal ante portas!* If they would be before the gates, there is still a chance we can defend ourselves and reject the attack. But they’re in. Does that mean that they can destroy and kill everything? Thinking of a physical event of this kind the answer could be, yes. However, if *Hannibal ante portas* is taken as a metaphor, as Etzioni intends, for the presence, penetration of evil in our lives, in our souls, then the fight can still go on, it is even required, it is the only thing one needs to do so save oneself.

This situation can be described in different terms, like, for instance, using Descartes’ ethical code presented in his *Discourse on Method*, in particular the third maxim, which can be summarized in the words: conquer thyself!

There is then need for an inner fight meant to eliminate the evil, the passions, everything that can hold the soul, the self, prisoner in the status quo.

According to A. von Heuer, this is the most valuable fight which is worthy of a human being and which gives man worth at the same time.⁹

Is this fight going to produce an inner schism and end up in split personality? The possibility is not excluded. However it is meant to be a stage in inner purification, self-passing, self-transcendence, which implies detachment from any existential ballast and a moving forward towards a higher harmony with God and the universe.

In fact, C.R. Cloninger, in his Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), an instrument he developed to measure seven personality dimensions, defines self-transcendence as “the extent to which a person identifies the self as [...] an integral part of the universe as a whole.”¹⁰

Yet, how is this integration to be imagined? Is it like moving from one smaller circle to a bigger one? Or is it like two concentric circles where by clearing the soul from passions and vices, which is making the small unit compatible with the larger one, the smaller circumference progressively disappears, and integration and harmony are achieved?

Transcendence and Detachment

Transcendence implies detachment. Whether we speak of the ego in the Freudian or Sartrean sense, or of the self-ego in the spiritual, theological sense, there are always some subterranean bizarreries in the human nature, some “barbarians” that need to be left behind.

According to the eudemonistic views of the Epicureans, the individual is supposed to exercise detachment from the earthly worries (*ataraxia*) and make that a platform for the practice of virtue, virtue meaning the fulfillment of man as human person.¹¹

The Medieval mystic Jacob Boehme believed that leaving behind all things of the world, that is the “I” that is attached to it, brings illumination,¹² and thus self-transcendence or spiritual progress.

Yet, in order to practice such a detachment one needs to be able to distinguish between real and unreal, true and false, useful and useless, temporary and eternal. This discernment, very much praised and required in particular by the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the Christian Church, brings one to the recognition of the illness and to the decision to do something for healing.

In this sense, Eckhart Tolle writes that “to recognize one’s own insanity is, of course, the arising of sanity, the beginning of healing and transcendence.”¹³

Transcendence and the Mystical Experience

Detachment from earthly things, worries and thoughts is not foreign to, and incompatible with mystical experiences. According to A. von Heuer there is a piece of eternity to decipher in everything.¹⁴

By throwing oneself into the contemplation of things one implicitly detaches his or her mind from the superficial and focusses on the essence. The great medieval mystic, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagites writes that “The ecstasis appears to be a kind of dispossession, an alienation of the *nous* (mind) in God.”¹⁵ This is alienation from the world that dominates our mind, which then makes possible the transcendence towards God.

This kind of dispossession is like becoming poor in what is of this world, in order to enrich oneself in God. In even more radical terms Meister Eckhart writes that “a poor man is one who has a will and longs for nothing.”¹⁶

This seems to be paradoxical.

Plato taught that man is a mass of conflicting desires. Yet, desire implies will. To have a will and not to desire anything is a paradox. In Eckhart’s understanding, the poor is such a paradox. He explains further: “A man is poor in his will when he wants and desires as little as he wanted and desired when he did not exist. In this way a man is poor when he wants nothing,”¹⁷ and by the same token when he knows nothing.

This is what emptying oneself means in order to receive, be filled by, dwelt by the other or the Totally Other.

This is how Plotinus describes one of his mystical experiences: “Often I have woken up out of the body to myself and have entered into myself, going out from all other things: I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance then, that most of all, I belong to the better part.”¹⁸

D.T. Suzuki presents a different type of contemplative experience: “Who would then deny that when I am sipping tea in my tearoom I am swallowing the whole universe with it and that this

very moment of my lifting the bowl to my lips is eternity itself transcending time and space?”¹⁹

The beauty of contemplation is explained by Dag Hammarskjöld as follows: “In the point of rest at the center of our being we encounter a world where all things are at rest in the same way. Then, a tree becomes a mystery, a cloud a revelation, each man a cosmos of whose riches we can only catch glimpses. The life of simplicity is simple, but it opens to us a book in which we never get beyond the first syllable.”²⁰

And that point of rest in the center of our being is the “place” where God is. That is where the most authentic self is to be found, the self as image of God, as man was originally created. It is in this sense that St. Augustine wrote that God is closer to me than my own self; and speaking of the inauthentic self and its talking to God, he said: “We set out to meet each other in my soul; You were there; I was not.”

The Other as Transcendence

Theologically speaking the trajectory of one’s self-transcendence is towards God. It has a vertical dimension. Sociologically or anthropologically speaking, the trajectory leads towards man. This has a horizontal dimension. Yet, the theological aspect is not excluded from the other one. Based on the biblical principle that one cannot pretend to love the invisible God if one does not love one’s neighbor whom one sees, in order to reach God’s heart one has to reach the heart of the neighbor.

According to Roger Garaudy, the other is my transcendence, that which calls me beyond my individual limits, and this is what makes me human.²¹ The other validates my existence, gives me the chance to be. Yet to be, as the human being is created in God’s image, means to also create, have a creative existence. In my relation with the other my creativity resides in my ability to redirect the other’s life by listening and love. This is what makes me more human.²² In other words, humanity is not a solitary existence, it is the conquest of the community, of communion.²³

Since the other is what I am missing and what calls me into being,²⁴ participation is crucially important for a fulfilled life. The opposite of participation is separation, individualism, self-sufficiency, and that, in Garaudy’s views, is death.²⁵ Self-sufficiency

means death because it is similar to the original sin that brought about death. Man wanted to be like God, the only one who can be self-sufficient. However, while having this attribute, God is not self-sufficient, in the sense that He is not using it, as far as we can understand, and consequently He created the world and man in order to be in constant dialogue of love with the other, even though as a Trinity or Trinitarian being God has been in such a dialogue from all eternities.

Separation is hell. Hell is the absence of others,²⁶ or, as Dostoevsky put it, the impossibility to love. This impossibility is well illustrated in Sartre's play *No exit*. However, for Sartre, *L'enfer c'est les autres!* "Hell is other people".

According to Johannes Gündel the human person is ontologically oriented towards the encounter²⁷ and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan writes that the human subject is constituted in the field of the other.²⁸

The authentic way in which I can meet the other is based on Christ's kenotic model. I have to empty myself of me to make room for the other. That takes sacrifice just like in Christ's case. Another way to put it is in A. von Heuer's example: when I hide something from others that tarnishes my relation to them. That which I hide blocks me from existing wholly for the other.²⁹ The experience of the Absolut begins by recognizing the other, no matter how transformed he or she might be, according to his or her own attributes. This is done by a constant face to face questioning and dialogue where you are fully involved, fully present until you recognize the other totally.³⁰ In other words, my interest for the other is the tool that operates my self-transcendence. I leave the self behind and focus on the other in an open and unconditional embrace.

Meister Eckhart has a more radical way to put this. He writes: "The real, total type of self-transcendence is when you go beyond yourself, into the other, when you know that you don't know him or her, just like when you jump into the abyss of God as you have no idea of who God is. In this case you 'sink down eternally out of *something* into *nothing*.'" ³¹

Self-Transcendence and Religion

Religion deals with transcendence par excellence. Not only theologians but psychologists too, such as A. Garcia Romeu, emphasize the strong connection between self-transcendence and religious involvement³² as long as self-transcendence is understood as one's ability to relate to dimensions beyond the typically discernable world.³³

Self-transcendence is a personality trait, many people agree, and in its essence it has to do with spirituality, where the role of faith is most often critical. From the faith perspective man's center is, has to be God, everything else is periphery.³⁴

A theocentric life is only natural since everything depends on God, and since, as immaterial self-consciousness and transcending the created order He is, in Aristotle's words, *primum movens* and *causa causarum*. Yet God transcends everything and is immanent to everything. While these two concepts seem to be in opposition to each other, they are indeed complementary to each other, as God's immanence does not mean palpability. God is invisibly present in the created order and that indicates the transcendent aspect of His immanence. God is present in the world just like the sacred is hidden in the profane whereby the profane becomes a *locus theologicus*, and hence the role of the mystical contemplation in finding it and centering one's life on it. The journey is self-transcendence just as is the mystical experience of contemplation in itself.

Jacob Boehme defines the "locus" as the place established for a specific being.³⁵ The word "established" has a special importance here. Being "established" is a gift. Adam and Eve were "established" in the Garden of Eden, they were given a place and with the place, attributions and responsibilities. Pico della Mirandola puts it beautifully:

We have given you, oh, Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center

of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine.³⁶

By establishing someone or something God gives each one the best possible place where one can thrive based on his, her or its own properties. Going away from the designated locus is what the fall is about. In Adam's case, the fall into time, as E. Cioran put it.³⁷ The longing for God, for the original place, is the tool that generates self-transcendence, the quest for the original primordial unity, communion, and reintegration, just like the quest of the prodigal son after his dramatic adventure. Plotinus speaks of going back to the original house or place as "The flight of the alone to the alone,"³⁸ as if the father of the prodigal son had only one son, the one who left and each one remained alone. Loneliness might explain the longing for "home" of the prodigal son and the hopeful waiting of the father, even if in the father's case the unconditional love is a better explanation.

"The flight of the alone to the alone" is the reverse of the fall, the way to the restoration of the original unity, after the painful experience of separation, of experiencing evil. In A. von Heuer's view, with a Plotinian echo, evil is not to be one; it is division. Evil is a relative deprivation of being.³⁹

Considering the gift of the "locus" that man receives from God and what man does with what he receives Karl Barth believes that the most important of all ethical problems "consists in this mystery: that man, the way we know him, is impossible. This man, in the presence of God, cannot but die."⁴⁰

By leaving the parents' house, the prodigal son alienated himself not only from the parents, but from himself as well. That is why, after experiencing the depth of suffering, when coming back to his mind, to his nature, he was transcending himself every step back home until he ended up in the father's wide open, warm and loving arms. He journeyed from the periphery to the center, to his real "locus".

Conclusion

Transcendence is a divine gift in man. Being created as a free person in the image of God man was given the possibility to transgress and the ability to transcend. Transgression led to death. But as the Latin poet Horace said, *Non omnis moriar*. One does not die totally. Self-transcendence is there in man like a candle illuminating his or her return to God who keeps the candle lit.

Every experience of self-transcendence is an experience of one's reinvention of oneself. There is no need to wait until one reaches the depth of suffering like the prodigal son. It is self-transcendence that is waiting for man to use it to reinvent him or herself and to work with God at the restoration of his or her authentic existential condition. These few simple steps are at hand: conscientization, discernment, contemplation. Contemplation that repatriates the soul into being.⁴¹

NOTES:

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- ¹⁷ *Ibidem*.
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- ²² *Ibidem*, p. 54.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.
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- ³¹ Meister Eckhart, *op. cit.* p. 208.
- ³² A. Garcia Romeu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

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³⁸ See: Stephen R. L. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 776.

³⁹ A. von Heuer, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁴⁰ Karl Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

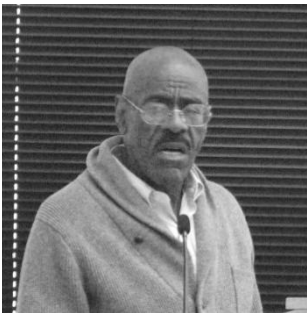
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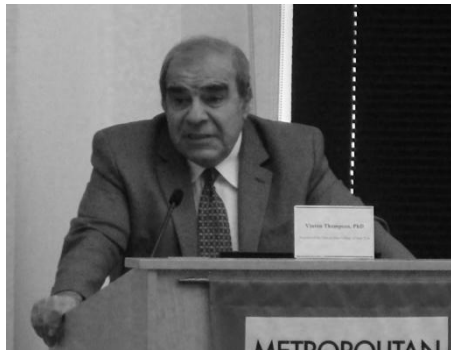
Paul LaChance



Elvin Ramos



Clyde Griffin



Doru Tsaganea

On Seeking Understanding

I have six faithful serving men.
They taught me all I knew.
What? and Why? and When?
and Where? and How? and Who?

R. Kipling

Imagine that you are returning home after a long at work only to find that things seem different there, but you can't quite "put your finger on it." What does it mean to "understand" what happened?to really *understand* it?

The aims of this paper are three: (1) to set a context for understanding and to do so concretely, (2) to promote an understanding of our own capability to understand anything, and (3) to identify some practical steps that can be taken to solidify this knowledge and make it part of an habitual approach to learning and problem solving. To address these aims we will regard *understanding* as a specific *area of consciousness* that consists of definite acts, operations and processes that can be verified in one's personal thought experience.

Let us begin by clarifying what is not being done here. In setting a context for understanding no mention will be made of understanding in terms of abstractions as is done in many of the taxonomies of learning objectives and goals. For example there is Bloom's taxonomy which discusses human capabilities largely in terms of abstractions such as "comprehension", "knowledge" or "evaluation."¹ Since its introduction in the 1950's, this scheme has enjoyed wide application, especially in American education. Largely in response to the "cognitive revolution" of the 1970's and 80's, Anderson and his associates offered a revision of Bloom's taxonomy

Richard Gallo, PhD, is Professor of Applied Psychology, Metropolitan College of New York

which moves from abstract nouns to abstract gerunds in an attempt to capture the dynamic reality of cognitive process, something that has come to be highly emphasized.²

Also, there will be no discussion of understanding in terms of hypothetical constructs such as “learning styles”³ or “locus of control”. Hypothetical constructs have been defined as “processes that are inferred to have real existence and to give rise to measurable phenomena.”⁴ Such processes are not directly observed. As such they not only have all of the limitations of abstractions but they can be verified only indirectly through their effects.

Finally, we will not be discussing understanding in terms of neuroscience. Typically neuroscience descriptions and explanations of psychological events take the following form: “Conscious event X, which we know from our own experience or from the self-reports of others seems to be related to brain activity Y as determined by special means (e.g. PET scan, CT scan, MRI or fMRI). Therefore, conscious event X is identical with brain event Y, or at least, conscious event X must be caused by brain event Y.” Once statements of this kind are asserted, alternative descriptions and explanations are frequently excluded. In addition, these types of statements are rarely put to the test. Hence the offered descriptions and explanations and accompanying narrative are simply put forward along with some vague extra-scientific hope about what will be demonstrated someday.

We will however discuss understanding in terms of specific psychological acts, operations and processes that can be verified in one’s own experience. In fact, if the reader is unwilling, not ready or unable to verify them, then much of what follows will have no clear meaning.

The facts of consciousness referred to here have already been identified by Canadian philosopher Bernard Lonergan in his work on *cognitional structure, intentionality analysis and generalized empirical method*.⁵ In this work, Lonergan identified four “levels of consciousness” specified as *experience, understanding, judging* and *deciding*. For example, *experience* is the sum total of all that we have lived through. It provides the data or raw materials for our use in understanding, knowing and acting in the world. *Understanding* is the search to grasp meaning in various situations. *Judging* aims for factual or moral knowledge by subjecting our insights to criteria of truth and worth. *Deciding* orients us towards reasoned action

based what we experience, understand and know. Each of these areas of consciousness has different specific functions, different products and different guiding intentions. In addition, each area has different specific acts, operations and processes associated with it.

In my own work I have reframed these four “levels of consciousness” as five “areas of consciousness”. More specifically the area of judging has been further refined to include two distinct areas, with two different guiding intentions and two distinct end products. Hence I emphasize a distinction, made by Lonergan, between “*judging facts*” and “*judging values*.” The two guiding intentions are: (1) the *reflective question of fact* (“Is this idea true?”) and (2) the *reflective question of value* (Is this worthwhile?). The first terminates in a judgment of fact which affirms or denies something about the world or some aspect of it. The second terminates in a judgment of value which approves or disapproves of something that is or might be in the world.

In all of this work, whether one speaks of four “levels of consciousness” or five “areas of consciousness” all are related through “sublation”: according to which the activity of one area of consciousness takes up where previous activity leaves off, and adds a new dimension to that work. In addition, there is no automatic proceeding from one area of consciousness to another, but in individual cases progress may be made by moving back and forth from one area to another.

This paper will focus primarily on the second the area of consciousness, named “*understanding*”. Our focus will proceed in three steps. First, *understanding* will be placed in a general context. Second, the specific acts, operations and processes associated with this area of consciousness will be identified, described and then related functionally to one another. Finally, some implications and applications of this analysis will be presented.

1 - Setting a Context for Understanding

Whatever understanding is it does not operate in a vacuum. It operates in wider social and psychological contexts. There are the wide social contexts of culture and history which set the background. In addition, there is the narrower context of the individual person’s cognitive-emotional-behavioral life. Both contexts affect and can be affected by what we come to understand.

Understanding can be situated within the context of a shared language and its history. This context is inherently social. Several points can be made regarding the etymology of words such as ‘understanding’ and the related terms ‘apprehension’ and ‘comprehension.’ In English, both are related to the act of “prehension” (or grasping) done automatically by infants, without any training. Educational psychologist Jean Piaget traced the roots of this physical grasping forward to a much later “grasping with the mind” (i.e. apprehension or comprehension). This mental grasping was recognized in ancient times by Aristotle in his description of insight as “mind grasping form in images.”⁶

Understanding can also be situated within a psychological context of other types of consciousness. As noted above, understanding and the mental events associated with understanding comprise only one area of consciousness. There are four others that can be differentiated from it: an area of *basic experiencing* and three areas of critical thinking (*factual critical thinking*, *values-oriented critical thinking* and *deliberative critical thinking*).⁷ The first area of *basic experience* and the area of *understanding* may be regarded as “pre-critical thinking”. The last three areas can be regarded as explicit attempts to get things right according to some criterion (as in factual and value-oriented critical thinking) or to set things right through intended action (as in deliberative critical thinking).

There are some commonalities among all five areas of consciousness, including understanding. First, some people will become more adept in one area of consciousness than in others. This is what might be named “response style” and it is a form of individual differences in psychology.⁸ (Adams reference etc.) Second, attempts to manage one's thinking amounts to the same thing as regulating these five areas of consciousness, insofar as they can be regulated. Third, each area is distinguished from the others in terms of its *end products*. For example, end-products of experience are often images and memories. End-products of understanding are possibly true ideas. End-products of judging facts are affirmations or denials about putative facts about the world. End-products of judging values are approvals or disapprovals about what is or might be. End-products of deliberating are engagement or refusals in proffered courses of action. Fourth, each area is distinguished as well as in terms of its *guiding aims*. A *guiding aim* is the central

purpose toward which the conscious activity works: it can usually be expressed as a question. Answering the guiding question constitutes fulfillment of the guiding aim. Guiding aims may be distinguished from auxiliary aims. *Auxiliary aims* may be minor goals which, if achieved, further the guiding aim.

2 - Exploring Understanding

With these two wide contexts in mind, we can now focus our attention on the specific area of consciousness labeled as *understanding*. In exploring our understanding it is well to keep in mind the following three questions: (1) What are the acts, operations and processes that make up this area of consciousness? (2) Can I verify their presence in my own conscious life? and (3) What is the function of each act, operation and process?

As a first act in this area, consider what we will call the *unformulated question*. Did you ever have the experience of recognizing that there was a gap in your understanding but, at the same time being unable to even put into words a question that expresses that gap? The experience mentioned above of arriving home to a changed situation could be an example. Let us call this event the *unformulated question*. Another example of this is offered in the 2011 film *Moneyball*.⁹ The protagonist in the film is a baseball team manager who is addressing his senior staff and trying to determine what the main problem is with their losing team. The senior staff demonstrates a persistent inability in figuring out what they do not know. The manager works to make clear to them that there is a gap in their understanding, and that they cannot even express that gap in words.

A second mental event occurs when the question can be formulated, usually in words. Sometimes we can create our own formulations. Sometimes prefabricated formulations already exist. For example, Kipling offers a list of six recurring questions in his poem "Six Serving Men": what, why, when, where, how and who. In addition to the questions specified in that poem there are more quantitative questions such as: How much? How many? How often? How long? How far? The entire list offers a limited list of recurring questions that can be posed regarding any topic whatever.

Consider an example to see how the events described so far might operate in sequence. Suppose that one hears a report of a

railroad crash. Images may come to mind or may flash on a screen. Consider brainstorming questions regarding this example in order to gain a preliminary but comprehensive understanding of the event. What happened? Where did it happen? Who was involved? How did it happen? When did it occur? Why did it happen? In addition, there are all the quantitative questions that could be asked. Through such a brainstorming of questions and pursuing them we begin to expand our search for understanding in terms of its *breadth*.¹⁰

In addition there is what might be termed an “echo exercise” of repeating the same question in order to determine greater *depth* in our search. For example, if we begin with the train leaving the station, we could repeatedly ask: “.....and what happened then?and then?and then?”

So when we first hear the news of the crash we have the original *unformulated question* wherein we know that there is some gap in our understanding but we do not have it yet formulated into words. This can be followed by what might be called a series of *formulated questions*. Such questions may come from our list of questions or it may be specially formulated for this occasion. Some authors offer pre-formulated lists of questions that may be useful in specific instances.¹¹ In any case it may take a while to move from the *unformulated question* to the *formulated questions*.

Third in this series would be the appearance of an *insight*, which has been defined as “the sudden appearance of a potential solution to a problem or answer to a question.”¹² Since a comprehensive understanding would require the answers to a number of questions, there would be needed a corresponding series of insights. The occurrence of such insights is not guaranteed and it is not under our control. The correctness of these insights is also not guaranteed and would have to be subjected to another area of consciousness that deals specifically with factual critical thinking.

Fourth in the series would be the *formulation of the insight*. Insights themselves are fleeting events and it is well-known that if they had not written down they may very well be lost. Therefore following up an insight with formulating it in some encoding system has the function of “freeze drying” the thought for future use. The encoding system could be any natural language, or mathematics, or visual or acoustic symbols etc.

This entire sequence of events from an unformulated question to formulated questions to insight to formulated insight maybe he

regarded as a cognitive process. This process is motivated by what Lonergan describes as “the desire to know” and what others have called “preserving the intention to learn”. As a process is it extended over time, and as such it is subject to disruptions from within the thinking person and interferences from the environment.

3 – Implications and Applications

If these are some of the key facts associated with understanding, how can one come to live effectively with them? Stated another way, how can we use knowledge of these facts to propel our search for understanding of any topic? There should also be considered a contrasting question: What factors tend to disrupt the search for understanding? Elsewhere, I have presented rules for addressing any problem whatever under the title *Interrogative Problem Representation*.¹³ What does this mean? In effect it consists of the injunction to NOT proceed in investigating any problem whatever without first reframing the problem in terms of clear, researchable questions. While this advice may seem simple enough, it is frequently overlooked in many discussions of politics, economics, psychology, sociology and public policy. In contrast, in the hard sciences, this approach is generally observed.

Specifically this approach involves the following steps: (1) Identify a problem area and attempt to formulate it. (2) Within the formulation, identify all abstractions. (3) Identify sub-categories within the abstractions. (4) Reverse engineer from the sub-categories to questions for understanding. (5) Identify conditions for answering these questions. As we increase the number of relevant questions we also increase the breadth and depth of the understanding we seek. Conversely, if relevant questions are excluded, (whether through fatigue, oversight or bias), we narrow the comprehensiveness of our understanding.

Consider an example. Suppose we are concerned with the topic of human happiness. (1) *Identify a problem area and attempt to formulate it.* We may begin to formulate this in a question such as “What causes happiness?” (2) *Within the formulation, identify all abstractions.* Within this question a major abstraction is the abstract noun *happiness*. (3) *Identify sub-categories within the abstraction.* Within the extensive literature on happiness, different authors have used the term to refer to different phenomena. For some, happiness

is equated with pleasure or elevated mood¹⁴, for others it is a sustained focus of attention or “flow”¹⁵, and for still others it is life satisfaction.¹⁶ (4) *Reverse engineer to questions for understanding.* The original question “What causes happiness?” morphs into three questions: “What causes pleasure?”, “What causes flow?” and “What causes life satisfaction?” (5) *Identify conditions for answering these questions.* Given appropriate definitions of “pleasure”, “flow” and “life satisfaction” one would be in a position to specify the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to answer these questions.

Consider another example. Suppose that we are concerned about climate change. (1) *Identify a problem area and attempt to formulate it.* We may start our formulations by asking “What is climate change?” (2) *Within the formulation, identify all abstractions.* The phrase “climate change” is the key abstraction here. (3) *Identify sub-categories within the abstraction.* This phrase could refer to warming or cooling, change of oceanic currents, changes in ice mass, changes in average temperature. (4) *Reverse engineer to questions for understanding.* Questions can be formulated for any of these specific, observable and measurable events over a specified time span. (5) *Identify conditions for answering these questions.* By focusing on a limited time span, specific phenomena such as ice or temperature, and the observability and measurability of these phenomena we identify conditions for answering the new questions posed.

Some implications follow immediately from a consideration of the facts of consciousness pertaining to understanding and the rules for seeking it. Addressing each of these implications in practical terms would constitute applications for advancing inquiry.

First, it is clear that the initial entry into a field of investigation is accompanied by and guided by an explosion of questions. Only as these questions are satisfactorily answered does understanding grow and knowledge (or tested understanding) make their appearance. More specifically, to handle the explosion of questions it is well to chart the course of progress with each question.

Second, the explosion of questions may increase the probability of recognizing both the vastness of the universe and our own ignorance about it. To address the fact of our ignorance we can chart its nature for mapping the remaining unanswered questions.

Third, seeking comprehensive understanding requires a serious consideration of the finite set of recurrent questions. The fact that the list is finite, suggests that learning may be manageable. The fact that the list is recurrent suggests that the acquisition of understanding will likely not proceed in some linear fashion but in a spiraling surrounding of a topic.¹⁷ To address the recurrent set of questions we can take steps to insure that all questions in the recurring list are being considered.

Fourth, excluding questions reduces the quality of understanding and may be biased. Bias involves systematic exclusion of further relevant questions and the insights associated with them. This systematic exclusion routinely occurs in most print and electronic media due to limitations of space and time and unstated agendas. To address the operation of bias, we can insist that all recurrent further relevant questions be addressed.

Fifth, seeking understanding requires perseverance in the desire to know and keeping track of one's efforts. We are not exempted from the extended interactions of questions and insights over time. To address the requirement of perseverance in the desire to know requires no less than the development of an intellectual habit in the inquiring person. Promoting the occurrence of questions and insights and taking them seriously will require habits that reinforce these realities: a set time and place for study, elimination of distractions, a method for recording questions and insights, etc.

Taking these implications seriously by implementing related applications not only increases the probability of learning but also results in deep-seated changes in the learner.

NOTES:

¹ Benjamin Bloom et al. (Eds.), *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Book I – cognitive domain*, Addison-Wesley, Boston, MA, 1984.

² Anderson, L.W. (Ed.), Krathwohl, D.R. (Ed.), Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E., Pintrich, P.R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M.C., *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Longman, New York, 2001.

- ³ Pashler, H.; McDaniel, M.; Rohrer, D.; Bjork, R., “Learning styles: Concepts and evidence,” in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 9, 2008, pp. 105–119.
- ⁴ J. P. Chaplin, *Dictionary of psychology*, Laurel, New York, 1985.
- ⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A study of human understanding*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON, 1992.
- ⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA.
- ⁷ Richard Grallo, “Thinking Carefully about Critical Thinking,” in *Lonergan Review*, 2013, IV(1), pp. 154-180.
- ⁸ James Adams, *The care and feeding of ideas: A guide to encouraging creativity*, Addison-Wesley, Boston, 1986.
- ⁹ *Moneyball* - This film presents the successful baseball strategies of Oakland A’s manager Billy Beane.
- ¹⁰ Osborn, A.F., *Applied imagination*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1963. Osborn is credited with popularizing the strategy of brainstorming of ideas. In this procedure potential “solutions” to problems are offered without any initial editing or censoring. The focus is mainly on potential solutions. More recently, M. Adams (2009) has explored the strategy of brainstorming questions.
- ¹¹ Marilee Adams, *Change your questions – Change your life*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 2009; Dorothy Leeds, *Smart questions: A new strategy for successful managers*, Berkley Books, New York, 1987; A. Sobol. and J. Panas, *Power questions: Build relationships, win new business and influence others*, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2012.
- ¹² Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A study of human understanding*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON, 1992.
- ¹³ Richard Grallo, “Principle of Interrogative Problem Representation (IPR) – A preliminary sketch,” in *Symposium*, 2012, XIX(1), pp. 21-31.
- ¹⁴ Daniel Kahneman, Edward Diener and Norbert Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-Being: Foundations of hedonic psychology*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2003.
- ¹⁵ Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*, Harper and Row, New York, 1990.
- ¹⁶ Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, “Work motivation and satisfaction,” in *Psychological science*, 1990, 1(4), pp. 240-246.
- ¹⁷ Jerome Bruner, *The process of education*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1976.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard in Matthew 20: 1-16:

A Story about Justice or Mercy?

Introduction

Since the term emerged in the 19th century, “social justice,” which is now also called “distributive justice,” refers to just distributions of income and wealth. Philosophers have been on a quest for the single best interpretation of the term. They have been no more successful than those who have quested for the Holy Grail. According to W. B. Gallie, the reason is that social justice is an essentially contested concept: There is no true or core meaning, only several conflicting interpretations.

Based on the work of Joel Feinberg, we propose that the plurality of interpretations can be understood as differences between a basic set of norms: equal shares, need, merit, contribution, effort, and choice. Karl Marx is famous for the formula, from each according to _____, to each according to _____. Filling in the second blank with one of the norms is a useful way to differentiate political philosophies, theories and ideologies. For example, to each according to “need” yields the communist norm. We will illustrate each of the norms in a series of cartoons.

We will then apply this analytical framework to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard in Matthew 20: 1-16. One interpretation is that the parable prioritizes mercy over justice. Against this interpretation, we argue that the parable reconciles justice and mercy. In terms of social justice, it presents us with a universal pattern of conflicts: The equality norms of equal shares and need conflict with the desert norms of merit, achievement, contribution

<p>Louis Tietje, PhD, is Professor of Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York Steven Cresap, PhD, is Associate Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Metropolitan College of New York</p>

and effort, and the norm of choice conflicts with both equality and desert norms. We conclude that the landowner in the parable resolves the conflict between equality and desert in favor of choice, which makes the reconciliation of justice and mercy possible.

Historical Origins

The idea of justice as fitting reward for desert is found in the three major Western religions. As expressed in the Christian version, “Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). At judgment day, each one of us will be rewarded or punished according to our good or bad works. The first philosophical definition is found in Book I of Plato’s *Republic*: “justice consists in rendering to each his due.” According to Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics*, rewards and punishments should be distributed in proportion to merit.¹ In early understandings, desert is a matter of individual responsibility and distributive justice mainly applies to the distribution of benefits and burdens by political authorities.²

Aristotle’s organization of the subject matter of justice and the classical concept of justice as desert remained unchanged until the nineteenth century. In *Utilitarianism*, published in 1861, John Stuart Mill linked social and distributive justice but only implied that society itself is ultimately responsible for the distribution of goods.³ Karl Marx did not say anything about social justice, and he identified justice only as part of bourgeois ideology which he argued would disappear with the end of capitalism. He is famous for the communist slogan, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” which appeared in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* published in 1875. In the same letter, he also articulated a lesser known socialist slogan, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution.”⁴ These slogans should be understood as descriptive, not normative, propositions. They introduced contribution, which will later be understood as a basis of desert, and need into discussions of the meaning of social justice.

In his 1931 encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, Pope Pius XI shifted the focus from individual to social responsibility and from political to economic distribution. He also introduced equality as the norm of social justice.⁵ Pius’s concept of social justice was widely disseminated as official Catholic social teaching. This is one reason

for the association of social justice with the left. Another reason is the dominance of the views of philosopher John Rawls in intellectual circles in the twentieth century. Rawls argued that income and wealth should be distributed equally unless economic inequalities are “to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged,” which is his well-known Difference Principle.⁶ He also accepted the attribution of injustice to impersonal states of affairs and offered a critique of desert as an acceptable principle of social justice that persuaded many philosophers. Equality became the assumed norm of social justice for progressives and welfare liberals.

Robert Nozick, who was critical of Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* of three years earlier, introduced choice as an alternative norm of social justice.⁷ Choice became the assumed norm of social justice for classical liberals and libertarians. Since the nineteenth century, philosophers have argued for the liberal and libertarian norms of equality and choice, but desert norms continue to be part of the popular imagination.

Ideological Formulations of Social Justice

Historically, as we have seen, social justice became associated with liberalism in which equality is the ideal, but, in principle, any norm can be the ideal of social justice. Depending on the norm, social justice can be a libertarian, liberal, conservative, socialist, or communist concept. Using Marx’s formula, the norms and political ideologies are related in the following way:

Libertarian: from each as they choose, to each as they are chosen

Liberal: from each as they choose, to each an equal share

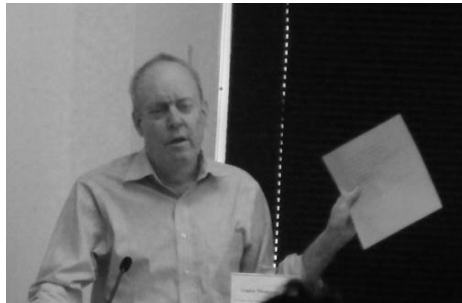
Conservative: from each according to ability, to each according to desert (merit, contribution, effort)

Socialist: from each according to ability, to each according to contribution

Communist: from each according to ability, to each according to need

The libertarian formulation is taken from Nozick; the socialist and communist formulations are from Marx. The liberal and conservative formulations are the author’s. Contrary to popular opinion, Marx was not opposed to the classical notion of justice. In fact, he thought that in the absence of economic abundance a

socialist society would be regulated by contribution, which is a desert norm. Libertarians and liberals share the first part of the formula, from each as they choose, because they belong to the same family. Their common ancestor is classical liberalism, represented by such historical figures as John Locke and Adam Smith. Libertarianism is the twentieth century child of classical liberalism. What is today called “liberalism” is a reformed version of classical liberalism and sometimes known as modern or welfare liberalism.⁸ Liberals have usually not insisted upon absolute equality, that is, exactly the same share of economic goods for everyone, but they believe that wide disparities in income and wealth can lead to economic instability and stagnation.⁹ For liberals, equal shares is an ideal toward which we should strive. Liberals also support distribution according to basic needs.



Steven Cresap



Louis Tietje

Social Justice as an Essentially Contested Concept

Which of the norms of social justice is correct? The majority of philosophers favor equality as the norm and assume that society, not individuals, is responsible for distributive outcomes. Some philosophers, however, have recently begun to reconsider the merits of desert.¹⁰ Aside from philosophers, there is significant popular support for the desert norms and individual responsibility. Based on cross-cultural research, moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt offers an explanation for the popularity of desert norms: Our evolved moral intuition is that justice is a matter of proportionality and individual responsibility. “People should reap what they sow. People who work hard should get to keep the fruits of their labor. People who are lazy and irresponsible should suffer the consequences.”¹¹

W. B. Gallie says that concepts like social justice are “essentially contested.” This means that “there is no one use of any of them which can be set up as its generally accepted and therefore correct or standard use.”¹² It is not as if there are no arguments for each of the interpretations or that the endless disputes between adherents are not genuine. Rather, the disputes are “not resolvable by argument of any kind.”¹³

Gallie claims that social justice seems to be involved in only a single rivalry between an “individualist” and a “collectivist” conception.¹⁴ This rivalry developed historically. Almost everyone in the West before the nineteenth century supported the individualist conception with its desert norms and assumption of individual responsibility. Since the nineteenth century, the collectivist conception of equality norms and social responsibility has been dominant. The individualist conception focuses on individual transactions, but the collectivist conception focuses on results, de facto states of affairs, or overall pattern of distribution in society.

Theoretically, these conceptions do not necessarily conflict, but in practice they routinely do. Economic actors may distribute benefits according to any norm they choose. If most of them distribute benefits equally then the overall result in society will be a relatively equal distribution. Individualist and collectivist conceptions do not conflict. In practice, most economic actors distribute benefits according to one or a combination of the desert norms, intentionally or not, in order to ensure the motivation of workers and succeed in business. The overall result is some degree of social inequality. Individualist and collectivist conceptions do

conflict. Liberals who condemn the unequal distribution of income and wealth in society imply that producers act immorally by distributing individual benefits according to desert or choice. This implication seems to be obscured by the assumption that individual decisions about distribution are not morally relevant and society as a whole, not individuals, is responsible for the result. If society is responsible, it is also a collective responsibility to correct the maldistribution through governmental redistribution.

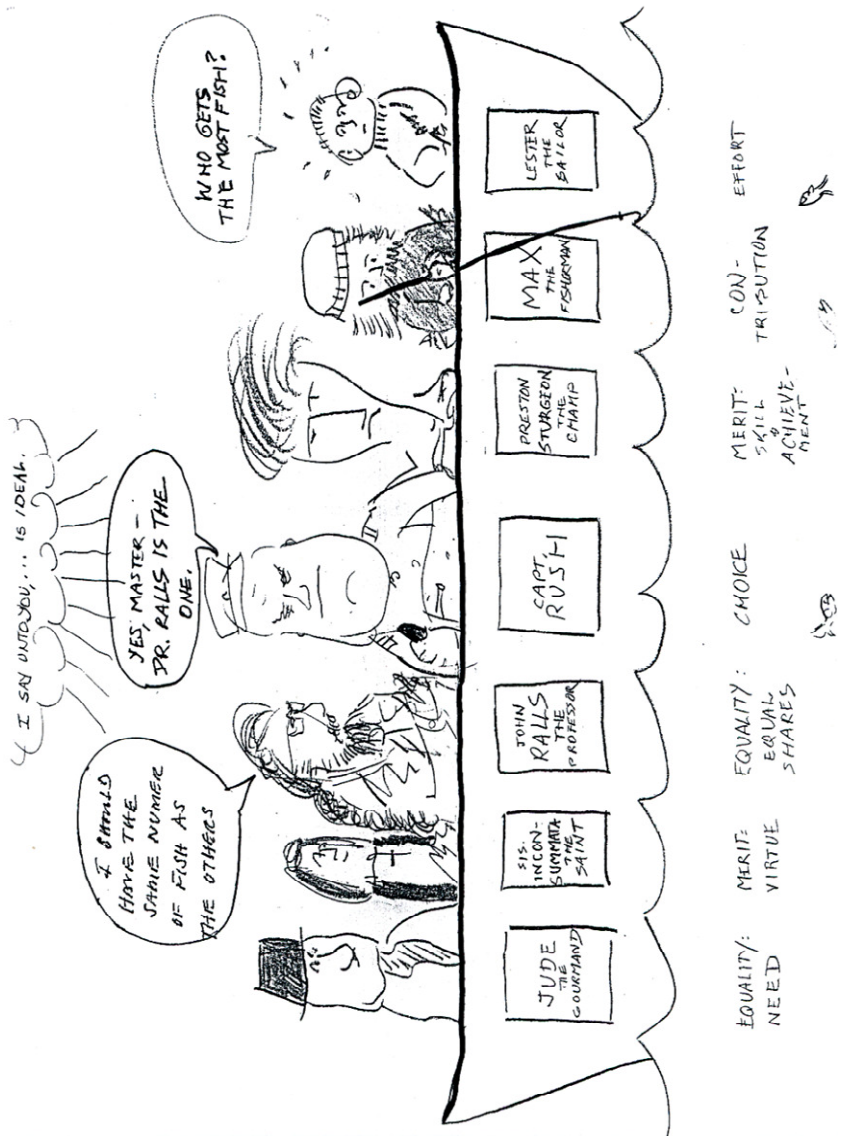
Illustrating the Norms of Social Justice

The following cartoons represent concrete scenarios that are designed to help us understand the abstract meanings of social justice. We imagine a situation where the problem of distribution is paramount: shipwreck survivors in a lifeboat with a limited supply of food.

Personifying the norms as individuals combined with visual representation (in this case, cartoons) seems a promising approach to stimulating practical understanding of admittedly rather abstract and complicated concepts. Following Joel Feinberg, we divide desert and equality into their component parts or facets (or, as Feinberg would put it, “bases”), leaving us with seven identifiable core beliefs: equality as equal shares, equality based on need, merit as virtue, merit as skill and achievement, contribution, effort and choice.¹⁵ In our cartoons, each norm is illustrated by a character: equality as equal shares is Professor John Ralls’s idea; equality based on need is a plea from Jude the Gourmand; merit as virtue is embodied, if that is the right word, in Sister Inconsummata the Saint; merit as skill and achievement is the claim that the Olympic Champion Eel Wranger Preston Sturgeon makes; Max the Fisherman argues for contribution; and Lester the Sailor pleads for effort. In reality, of course, everyone is moved by all the norms, just in different proportions.

Of course there are other distribution issues brought up by such a situation, such as who gets on the lifeboat, whether or not there are enough life preservers, and what happens if the lifeboat springs a leak or is attacked by sharks. But such pressing emergencies do not allow for much reflection and are usually addressed by the application of a single norm, either equal shares in case of who gets to be on the lifeboat, who gets a life preserver, who

fixes the leak and who gets to fend off the sharks. Such emergency situations are reflected in famous maxims: “Women and children first” would today be considered a gross violation of the equal shares norm, but it is imposed by scarcity, not principle. Only up to the Titanic era could this particular maxim be construed as an expression of ethical norms, such as merit as virtue (women’s purity) or equality based on need (women as the weaker sex). It is the same with “Every man for himself”: This is simply an admission of complete normlessness where none of the norms work because of *force majeure*. “The captain is the last to leave the ship” or even “goes down with his ship,” on the other hand, does seem to express ethical rather than pragmatic considerations: Merit as skill and achievement combined with contribution are probably uppermost in this particular tradition, which when looked at from a purely utilitarian point of view does not necessarily make any sense. In order to facilitate understanding the distinctions between the characters’ various norms, and their reactions to each other’s norms, our lifeboat situation represents a pressing but not dire situation (food supply).



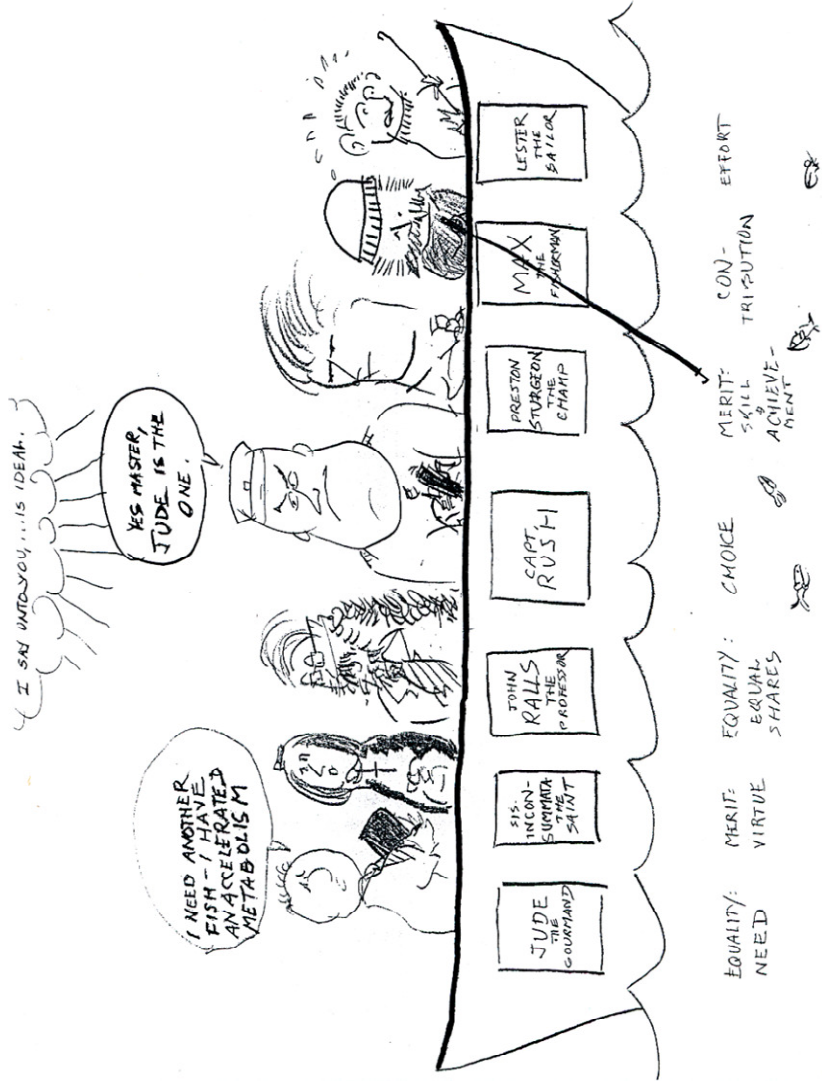
(1) Equality as Equal Shares

As you can see, fish are scarce in this part of the ocean, although the seas are calm. Note that we let Captain Rush on board and continue with his leadership role, because we need an embodiment of a resource distributor. But we make him unappealing, as if he unconsciously knows he violated a long-standing tradition of seamanship or, even worse, was responsible for the sinking. Any resemblance to a well-known right-ring talk show host is completely intentional. Captain Rush grudgingly listens to the appeals of each of the survivors, but thinks that each norm somehow comes from . . . what? We put in the sky and a godlike voice to suggest the way most people think they receive their norms; but we also placed them in the water, to satisfy those who prefer an evolutionary tack, which begins in the sea.

The first of two equality norms is equal shares of the economic pie. To embody this norm, we have chosen the combination of a left-wing political activist and Ivy-League professor, John Rawls, in a character named *John Ralls*. Ralls is pronounced “Rolls”, suggesting both his physical situation – rolling with the waves – and his academic training – rolling with the opinions of the others by considering, as he was trained to do, the pros and cons of their statements from a purely objective point of view.

In Professor *Ralls*'s view, individuals are not required to have any particular trait, moral or otherwise, or do anything. The assumption is that they should receive equal shares because they are all equally human. This assumption seems to be intuitively correct in many contexts: We should all have equal protection of the laws, the same number of votes in democratic elections, and equal rights as citizens.

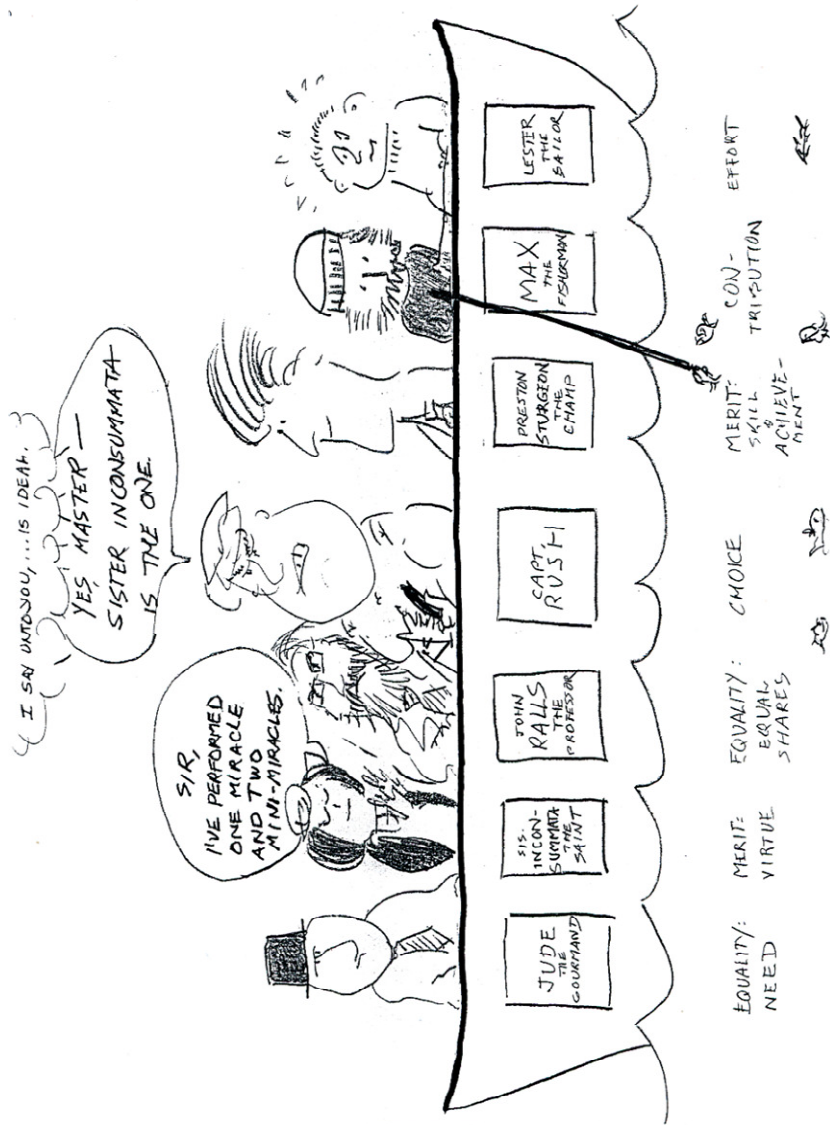
Sister Inconsummata seems pleased by the idea of equal shares, as we would expect from a saint; Jude the Gourmand is obviously disappointed and seems to be losing weight; Preston Sturgeon the Champion is clearly unhappy; while Max and Lester are oblivious, too busy trying to solve the distribution problem directly by catching some fish to reflect on ethical issues. They will have their say later on in the sequence.



(2) Equality as Need

To embody equality as need we chose a gourmand (as opposed to a gourmet) named *Jude*. He is a character who loves to eat just about anything, which is due to a pathological condition, a metabolic abnormality beyond his control. The apparent sympathy of Sister Inconsummata and the obvious surprise of Professor Ralls indicates how others with other norms – virtue and equal shares – might plausibly react to the argument from need. Need is a profound equality norm. It represents burdens or deficiencies that differ among individuals. Individuals become equals when their needs are met. Our illustration shows how unobvious this principle is to many people: While the Sister seems sympathetic to *Jude's* supposed need (having been trained to respond similarly to any need), Professor Ralls seems alarmed, perhaps because need complicates the ideal of simple equality, or perhaps because he realizes that it would be very difficult under the circumstances to medically verify *Jude's* metabolism. The Olympic Champion, being a model of health and good looks, is typically dismissive of any physical abnormality. But what would it matter if *Jude* were lying, or misinformed? What if he were a gourmet rather than a gourmand? Would the norm of equality based on need be in any sense compromised? If the issue were lifesavers, and he were obese, it would be obvious that he would deserve more than one. But here the case of need is not so easy to decide.

Meeting each individual's needs seems like an impossible task. This is the reason that philosophers argue that it is more plausible to meet basic needs for such goods as food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. This is the practice, for the most part, in social democracies: Governments use existing standards to define the needs they will meet (Miller, 1991, p. 262).



(3) *Merit as Virtue*

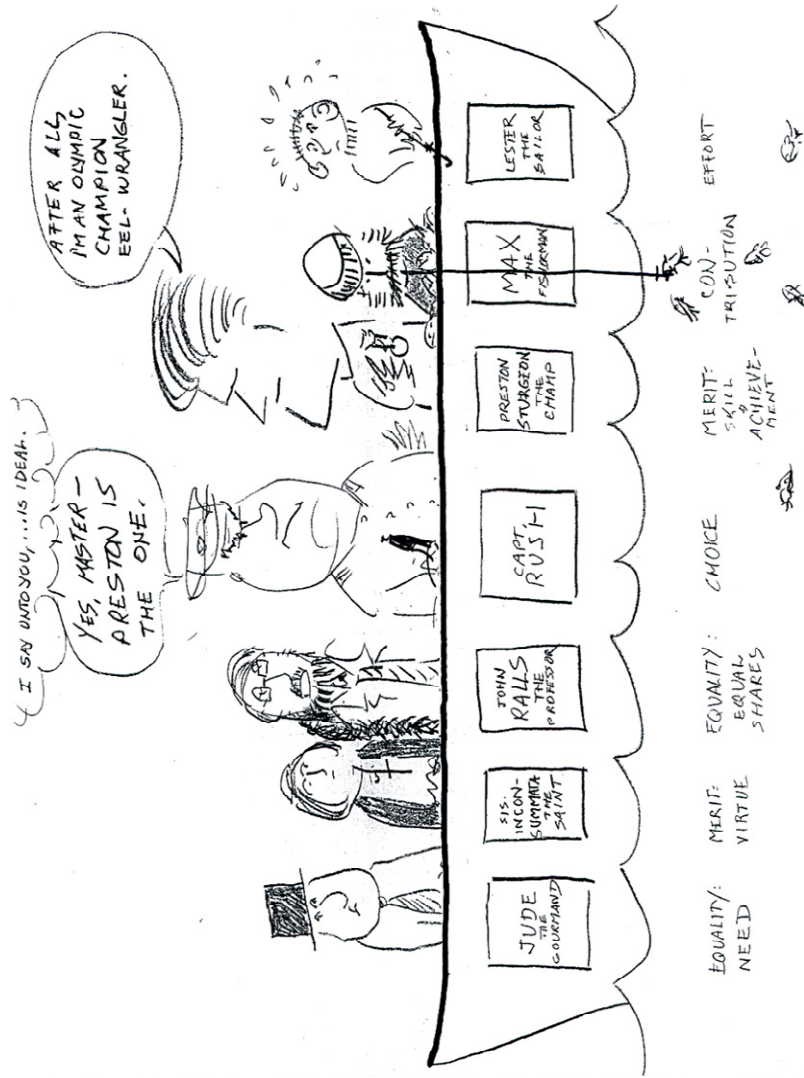
Divinely designated saintliness is probably the most obvious example of virtue, although

the term can also refer to the classical virtues of faith, hope, love, courage, or wisdom. It

might also include more contemporary virtues such as generosity and conscientiousness. For pedagogical purposes, we have gone for the obvious: *Sister Inconsummata* with her churchly honorific. Her name reflects her appearance and attitude, both of which are not wholly of this world.

Basing economic distributions on virtue probably does not hold much appeal in the twenty-first century. There are also the practical problems of deciding upon the “correct” virtues and measuring them in order to make the distributions. Such qualms are expressed in various ways by our cast and crew: Professor Ralls is starting to get angry, partly because he is being overshadowed by an ideology he would consider a mere shadow: theology. Captain Rush is none too happy either, but it is not clear due to his apparent direct conduit to God. Perhaps in addition to being a coward and a cigar-smoker, he is a womanizer who is repelled by the Sister’s desiccated appearance. But after all, she is unconsummated. On the other hand, Preston the Champ seems pleased – recognizing a related form of merit, and perhaps secretly envious of a life devoted not to competition but to self-abnegation.

One perhaps fanciful interpretation: Perhaps *Sister Inconsummata* the Saint is promising another “mini-miracle,” this time on the model of Jesus’s feeding the multitudes. This possibly would probably carry the day in the pre-modern era, but today most professionals at least discount the possibility of miracles.

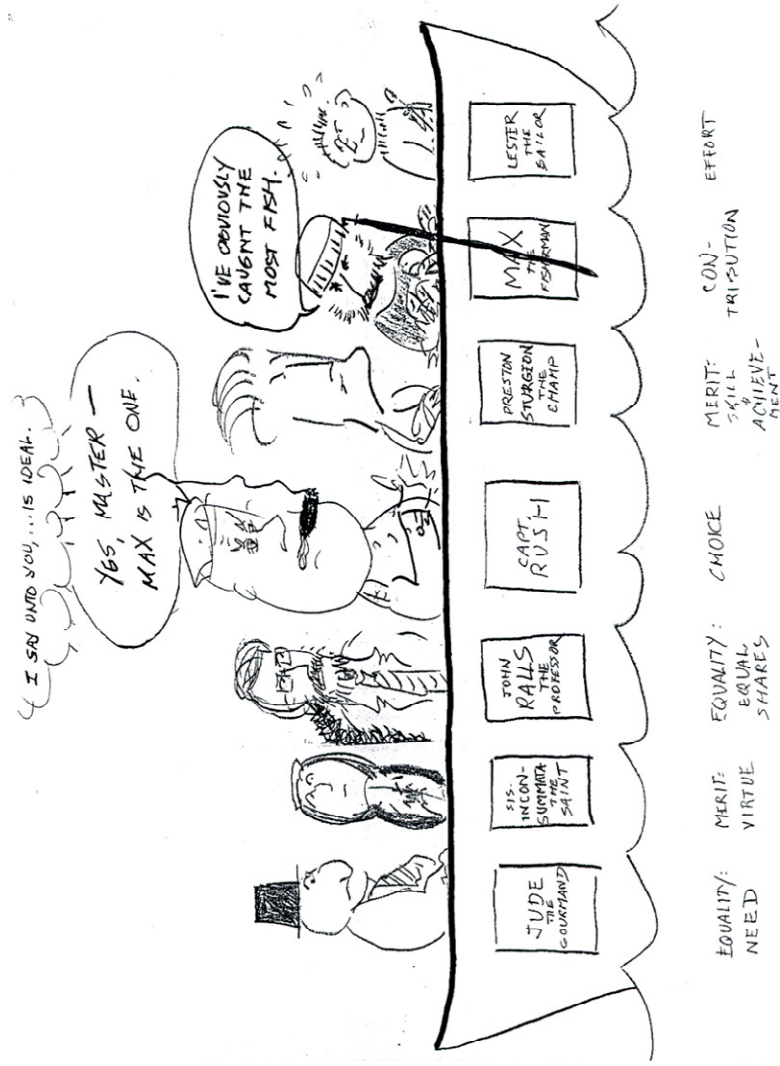


(4) Merit as Skill and Achievement

Our choice for the embodiment of this variety of merit is a handsome, confident Olympic

Eel-wrangler, *Preston Sturgeon*. His position is more plausible as a principle for distribution than virtue alone, because of the element of skill. In fact, every time we present a resume for employment, we are asking a potential employer to give us a job based at least in part on the skill we have developed in the past to do the current job. Merit as achievement is a familiar basis of desert. In this case, the focus is not on a person's character traits or skills but on what the person has done. People gain merit through sports contests, such as competing for a medal in the Olympics, or achievement in some other area of human activity, such as winning a Nobel Prize in science or Pulitzer Prize in journalism. We all recognize many kinds of academic achievement, such as getting a good grade on an exam or a degree.

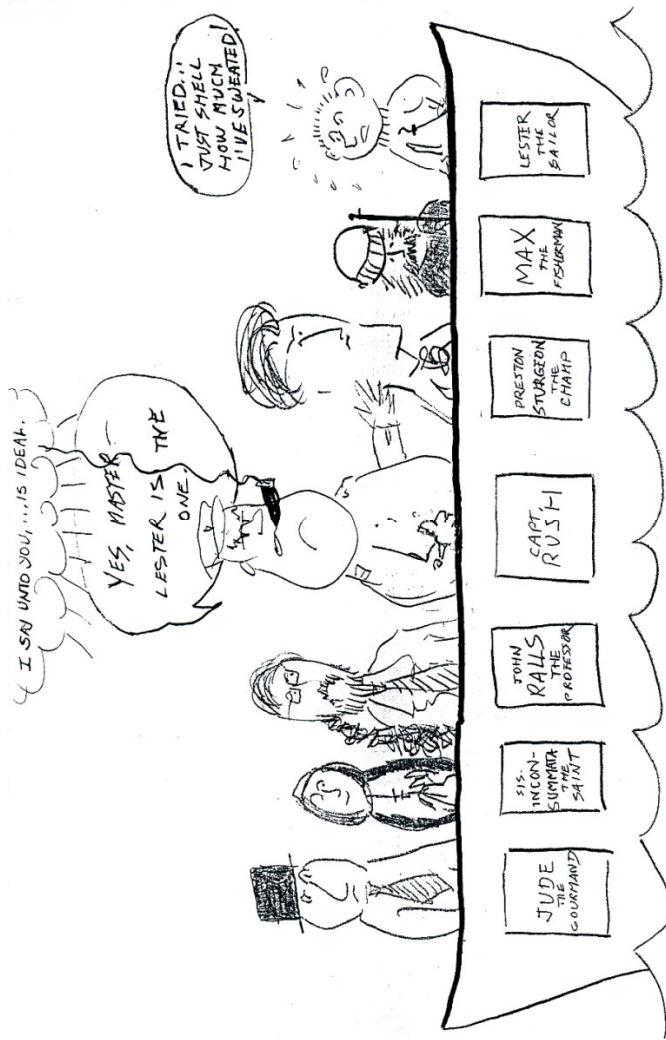
Of course not all the people on the boat are happy with this norm. Jude seems indifferent (low blood sugar?) and Sister Inconsummata seems blasé, but Professor Ralls seems especially perturbed. Is this personal, a case of one accomplished individual envying the superior accomplishments of another? Or does he simply think sports are superficial compared to scholarship? Max as usual is not impressed, perhaps because he understands the difference between catching fish and wrangling eels. Besides, he is very busy doing what he does best.



(5) Contribution

One basis of desert that is especially relevant to the workplace is contribution. To illustrate contribution in our imagined situation, we use *Max* the Fisherman, who, although he is not especially saintly, meritorious or attractive on any other grounds, nevertheless seems to be getting the fish. Significantly, he refers to his norm as “obvious,” which could be due to a number of causes: his unsophisticated command of ethical issues, his selfish personality, or his instinctive embrace of mainstream American values. Whatever it may be, he is clearly making an attempt to hoard his fish. Perhaps as a reaction to Professor Ralls’s request for equal shares. What does a professor, or a gourmand, or a saint, or even a captain or ordinary sailor know about fishing? And who has *Max*’s kind of luck? The fish seem to love him. We know that individuals are keenly aware of what they have contributed to a product or service, even if the contribution is not tangible. For example, a person might believe that sales would not be very high without his or her idea for marketing a product. We are also aware of the part we played in producing a tangible product or service: I added a significant part on the assembly line, I developed the annual budget for the company, I sold more shoes than anyone else in the store, I wrote a report, or I developed the curriculum for a college program.

Again, note the reactions of the others: While the Captain seems fairly satisfied (perhaps his training is kicking in here), the Sister seems to be having a brief moment of realism, the Professor is considering the merits as he always does, and the Champion is disturbed by his perception of the unfairness of the comparison between his past record and *Max*’s present accomplishment.



EQUALITY: NEED

MERIT: VIRTUE

EQUALITY: EQUAL SHARES

CHOICE

MERIT: SKILL ACHIEVEMENT

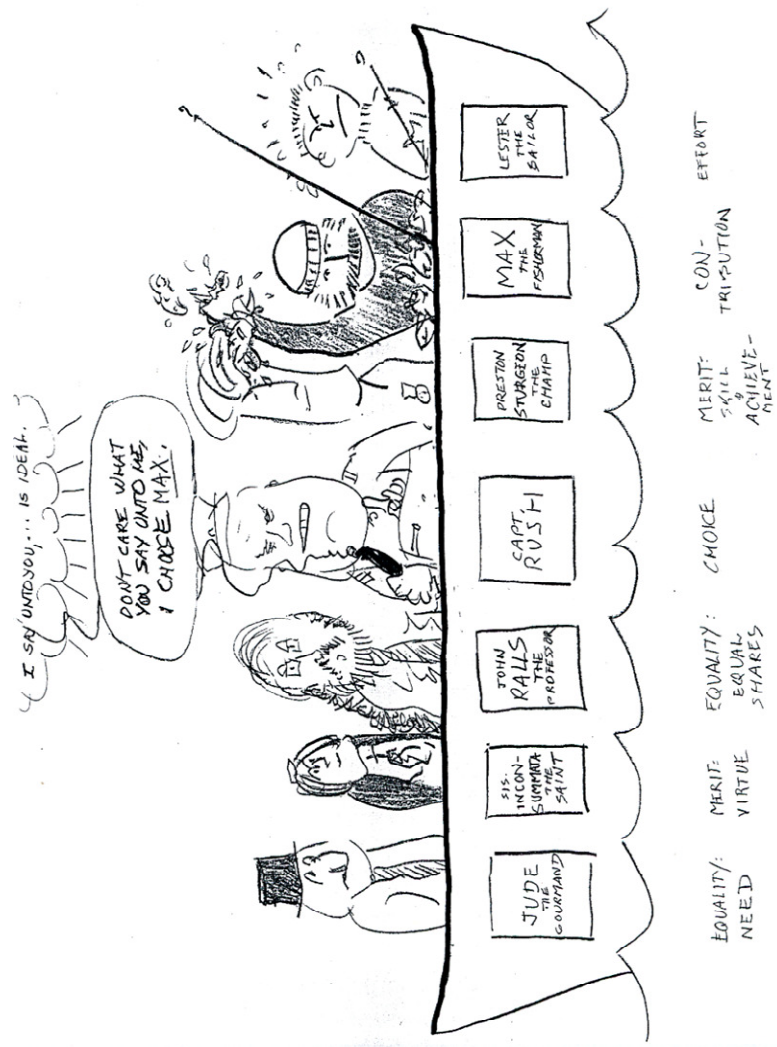
CON-TRIBUTION

EFFORT

(6) *Effort*

Effort is the other basis relevant to the workplace. For effort without obvious contribution we've chosen a common sailor, *Lester*, who is plainly inferior to Max in catching fish and yet is genuinely devoted to doing his personal best. In fact, his concern for the distribution problem has been evident from the beginning: He was the one who posed the problem, and he has been "sweating it" from the beginning. In this case, effort refers to the time and energy devoted to work. At least one criterion of salary increases or promotion should be how hard one works, and we are resentful, despite contributions, if someone who tries to do as little as possible receives more money or a promotion. Effort, however, is not exclusive to the workplace. Teachers are repeatedly confronted by students who say they should receive a better grade because they tried very hard. When it comes to allowances, parents are likely to hear the same plea from children. There are many places in our daily lives where effort and contribution are invoked in the distribution of some good, benefit, or reward.

Jude, the Sister and the Professor seem to be in a reflective mood, considering the merit of his particular kind of merit. Even Champion Sturgeon does not seem especially upset. Effort is one of the merit norms that is *prima facie* conclusive to a great many people, as anyone who has had to deal with students' tearful requests for an "A" for effort knows.



(7) Choice

Choice is the final norm for consideration. Here we've imagined Captain *Rush* breaking away from all the other traditional norms, including their apparent origin from on high, to proclaim his own power of choice (otherwise known as "free will"). In this libertarian perspective, owners, managers, and any economic actors who are in a position to make decisions about the distribution of economic resources and benefits are free to decide based on any criteria they choose. This means that an employer might decide to hire only the sexiest applicants. As a practical matter, employers probably would not use sexiness as the sole criterion because they would go broke if employees were sexy but unable to do the job. The employer most likely will try to base hiring decisions on merit.

We note that while Jude the Gourmand is simply depressed, the Sister seems pleased, perhaps because of her training to tolerate the irrational. Professor Ralls seems surprised and a bit discombobulated, perhaps because of his training not to tolerate the irrational. Captain *Rush's* choice might be motivated by his individualism, but the most interesting detail is the interaction between Preston Sturgeon and Max the Fisherman. Max is slapping his fish in Preston's face, but Preston doesn't seem offended. Perhaps this is because Max didn't do it on purpose, but if he did do it on purpose, we can assume that it can be put down to a combination of victorious enthusiasm and well-earned envy.

*Analyzing the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard
(Matthew 20: 1-16)*

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard is found only in Matthew's gospel. It reads as follows:

¹For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; ⁴and to them he said, "You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. ⁵Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" ⁷They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You go into the vineyard too." ⁸And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first." ⁹And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, ¹²saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." ¹³But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?" ¹⁴Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last. (*Revised Standard Version*)

One interpretation is that Jesus tells this parable to illustrate His answer to Peter's question in Matthew 19: 27: "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" In verse 29, He says, "And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." Chapter 19 concludes with this verse: "But many that are first will be last, and the last first." Jesus illustrates His answer with a familiar scene in which a landowner hires workers who must perform hard physical labor to maintain vineyards in first-century Israel. The landowner

goes out early in the morning to hire workers and agrees to pay them a denarius, which is a generous wage, for the day's work. Throughout the day, he hires workers four different times. He hires the last group one hour before the end of the workday. When it is time to pay the workers, the landowner asks his steward to pay all the workers a denarius. The first workers hired complain and suggest that they should be paid more because they "have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." There is no mention of contribution, but they certainly put forth greater effort. Should suffering in the scorching heat also merit greater wages?

The landowner's response can be understood as an example of commutative justice, that is, the justice of contracts: He did them no wrong or injury (Greek *adiko*) because he abided by the terms of their agreement.¹⁶ For the laborers, distributive justice seems to trump commutative justice. The usual interpretation, however, is that the parable prioritizes mercy over justice as suggested by the landowner's question in verse 15, "Do you begrudge my generosity" or goodness (Greek *agathos*)? The parable concludes with a reversal of the order in Chapter 19: "So the last will be first, and the first last" (verse 16). Usually, these verses are said to mean that everyone equally will receive eternal life no matter how long he or she has worked or lived.

In our alternative reading, the parable reconciles justice and mercy. In terms of social justice, it presents us with a universal pattern of conflicts: The liberal equality norms of equal shares and need conflict with the conservative desert norms of merit, contribution, and effort. The libertarian norm of choice conflicts with both the equality and desert norms. In the parable, at first it seems that the landowner advocates an equality norm by paying all the workers the same wage. The norm of equal pay conflicts with a desert norm, which is based on effort under harsh working conditions, advocated by the workers. As it turns out, the actual norm advocated by the landowner is choice.

Recognizing that the landowner advocates choice does not require a deep reading of the text. If choice is the norm, the landowner's first question in verse 15, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?," makes sense. The landowner may choose to be merciful or generous by giving each worker an equal share regardless of desert. Once the landowner's norm of

social justice is recognized, we do not have to prioritize either justice or mercy. Generosity is a matter of justice.

What can we say about God's position on social justice? In Romans 9: 15-16 we read, "For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy" It is God's choice to be merciful—or not. God is a libertarian.

NOTES:

- ¹ Louis P. Pojman, *Justice*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2006, p. 17.
- ² Joel Feinberg, *Social Philosophy*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1973, p. 107.
- ³ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, George Sher, ed., Hackett, Indianapolis, IN, 1861/1979.
- ⁴ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker, ed., W. W. Norton, New York, NY, 1875/1972, pp. 382-398.
- ⁵ Thomas Patrick Burke, *The Concept of Justice: Is Social Justice Just?*, Bloomsbury, London, England, 2011, p. 72.
- ⁶ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., Belnap Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999, p. 266. The original edition was published in 1971.
- ⁷ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, New York, NY, 1974.
- ⁸ Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal*, 8th ed., Longman, Boston, MA, 2011.
- ⁹ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, W. W. Norton, New York, NY, 2013.
- ¹⁰ Serena Olsaretti, ed., *Desert and Justice*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2003.
- ¹¹ Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 2012, p. 169.
- ¹² W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, Chatto & Windus, London, England, 1964, p. 157.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 158.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 181.
- ¹⁵ Joel Feinberg, *op cit*.
- ¹⁶ Louis P. Pojman, *op cit.*, pp. 11-12.

Advocacy in the Mission Statement: What Academics Should Do about Institutional Partisanship

Stanley Fish, in *Save the World on Your Own Time* (2008), gives the perennial debate over political advocacy in the classroom a novel twist by suggesting that certain kinds of academic partisanship may be as much a danger to professors as to students. The situation he describes is in stark contrast to the situation of one of Fish's precursors, Max Weber, whose addresses given in the aftermath of World War I, "Science as a Vocation" (1919/1968) and "Politics as a Vocation" (1919/1978), are widely considered canonical in making the case for banning partisanship from the classroom. My focus here is not on the details of the ban itself in the context of classroom practice and research, about which Weber and Fish are largely in agreement, but rather on how the ban can be extended to counter hidden advocacy in elements of official academic culture.

What we find when we compare the two thinkers are two distinct ways of defending the ban on partisanship: Fish's is a neo-pragmatist argument from scholarly craft, whereas Weber's is a retro-idealist defense on the basis of the traditional academic mission. I will argue that Weber's approach, in spite of its now apparently antiquated modernist assumptions, is superior to that of his postmodernist ally. Fish calls for a return to the requirements of the disciplinary craft of scholarly work, but it is unclear to me whether it is possible to extend the ban effectively on the basis of the disciplinary craft alone. I support Weber's more inclusive view of academic work as a stronger defense of the role of the professoriate when confronted with the pressures of institutional partisanship.

For Weber, the main threat to academic freedom came from professors abusing their authority by indoctrinating students. For Fish, professors scarcely have any such authority to abuse. Nor is it

Steven Cresap, PhD, is Associate Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Metropolitan College of New York
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the case, as some conservatives claim, that the main threat now comes from students indoctrinating professors. Rather, Fish suggests that the truly worrisome development is professors indoctrinating other professors (and themselves) in the attempt to better serve their students. To counter this development he offers what he calls a “deflationary” view of higher education.

Unfortunately for philosophical clarity, Fish often intertwines this view with another, deeper pessimistic view, that rational instruction is incapable of producing significant long-term moral or political effects on students. Logically, the latter view renders professorial partisanship effectively impotent, thus making the issue of the ban on partisanship moot. This contradiction is particularly troublesome for my specific topic: if professors cannot significantly influence their students, even after holding them captive for a semester or more, how can they hope to have any effect on their colleagues? Nevertheless, this contradiction does not seem to impede Fish’s own rather forceful advocacy of the ban.

One of Fish’s most effective rhetorical strategies is simply to list claims made by various academic institutions in mission statements, publications, and curricular rationales. The following is a summary, except to avoid partisanship I refer to the institutions responsible as “We”:

We “create an environment for meaningful contemplation.”

We “foster appreciation for a diversity of experiences.”

We “develop students’ moral, civic and creative capacities.”

We “incline you to respect the voices of others.”

We “equip you to live in a world where moral decisions must be made.”

We “benefit the economy.”

We “fashion an informed citizenry.”

We “advance the cause of justice.”

We “design transformative experiences.”

We “form citizens for a more deliberative democracy.”

We “produce thoughtful and potentially creative world citizens.”

We “shape ethical judgment and a capacity for insight and concern for others.”

We are “agents of change.” (Fish, 2010)

What strikes the reader first is that such claims are obvious, bland, unexceptionable. The rhetorical point of such an exercise of

course lies in the repetition: the problem is not so much the biases contained in each claim, although each claim does contain a bias, as in their aggregation throughout the vast majority of academic institutions. One would have to go far outside the mainstream of higher education to find significantly different claims.

Faced with the proliferation of such statements and principles, which really amount to norms within the academic community, Fish offers his “deflationary” view, rejecting all claims of the kind in the above list. When positions that are linked to political or moral positions are embedded in mission statements, book lists in core curricula, academic texts, pedagogical approaches and other expressions of the supposed common values of the academic community, it is often very difficult to see how they may be connected with the issues of non-partisanship and academic freedom. But in fact they represent a version of what liberals fear most: the tyranny of the majority. Regardless of the pedagogical efficacy of experiential education, for example, or the multicultural curriculum, or exercises in personal empowerment, or writing across the curriculum, or community projects for social justice, when such pedagogies are presented as the official and self-evident mission of higher education, they inevitably distort scholarship and the practice of teaching. If they are to be meaningful, they will invariably push out alternatives, usually ones that are perceived as retrograde. This mainly unconscious tendency on the part of teachers and administrators is, therefore, a serious threat to academic freedom.

Fish’s practical solution to the problem of partisanship is to “academicize” any partisan position, which means to detach it from its real-world context in order to analyze it rather than decide on it. He describes what he does in the classroom, and it appears from his description that he is thoroughly in control of the discussion, admitting moral topics only as objects of study rather than as alternatives you and your students might take a stand on. That is, instead of asking questions like “What should be done?” or “Who is in the right?” you ask “What are the origins of this controversy?” or “What is the structure of argument on both sides?” (2006)

More recently Fish added some other questions to ask of a political idea or policy: what is its history? How has it changed over time? Who are its prominent proponents? What are the arguments for and against it? With what other policies is it usually packaged? .

To academicize a topic is to detach it from the context of its real world urgency . . . and insert it into a context of academic urgency, where there is an account to be offered or an analysis to be performed. (2010)

It might seem that restricting the discussion to such meta-questions would be an effective response to the politicization of the classroom. But academicizing alone is clearly not sufficient to guarantee non-partisanship. Academicizing is precisely what many social reconstructionists, to cite just one example, have been trained to be proficient at. They have no problem offering well-researched accounts intertwined with analysis. The way to produce academic work that is also political is to simply embed one's political opinions into a metadiscourse, whether it be taken from postmodern theory, social history, or social ethics. Postmodernists are notorious for relying on theory to buttress their advocacy. On the basis of these kinds of demonstration, academicizing alone cannot insulate academia from partisanship. Academicizing a mission statement does little to affect its authority.

Many limits on freedom are unanticipated and unrecognized. Ironically, attempts to promote diversity, like attempts to enforce uniformity, can restrict the diversity of ideas and pedagogical approaches. The problem is when mission statements and other institutional claims are taken seriously enough to impact on classroom instruction in the form of required or recommended book lists, preferred pedagogies, and politically motivated service. Of course most academics, especially postmodernist ones, have honed the interpretive skills to ferret out the value judgments in the "hidden curriculum." The craft of postmodernism is politicization: exposing ideological biases practically defines the trade. But the sorts of statements and claims we are dealing with here present a special difficulty insofar as they seem to most of us to follow self-evidently from the democratic point of view. They do not read as ideological. They represent not so much a hidden curriculum as a too-obvious one.

Another case of the imposition of partisan values can be found in the embrace of new educational technologies. Well-meaning progressives, in their eagerness to reach students, have embraced visual media, for example, because visual media are now a ubiquitous part of our culture. These innovations are usually rationalized in terms of pedagogical craft, for their efficiency, ease

and supposedly democratic tendencies. The result is that those who doubt the pedagogical advantages of visual media are often cast as reactionaries or elitists or both. Its advocates do not seem to appreciate that, given visual media's predominance in our culture and the references, attitudes and expectations brought to them by audiences, they should never be considered a neutral educational methodology. The very act of engaging in concrete rather than abstract thinking, as well as the reverse, has unavoidable cultural and political implications.

Many kinds of oppression are unanticipated and unrecognized. Educators uncritically impose their partially defined reality on students and other educators. Ironically, attempts to appreciate diversity can threaten the diversity of ideas and pedagogical approaches. As Fish's concept of academicization indicates, craftsmanship alone cannot prevent the kinds of overt and covert partisanship we have been describing. To defend ourselves, we need something more robust than the requirements of the craft.

Deriving academic freedom from the requirements of the craft, intended as an antidote to rote optimism and political partisanship, has too narrow a focus. It ignores an important social function of liberal arts and sciences, one with a precedent in history and a good claim to be a requirement of living in a democratic system: the function of functionlessness.

This is where a comparison with Max Weber is pertinent. Fish thinks the distinctions he wants to draw are easy; for Weber they were agonizing. In "Science as a Vocation" from 1919 Weber addresses the issue of how to explain the academic enterprise in other than academic terms. To answer the unanswerable question, What is the value of science?, Weber invokes – with a profound sense of nostalgia – Plato's cave allegory from the *Republic*. Weber's attention is on the one "caveman" who escapes the cave of representations: "He is the philosopher; the sun, however, is the truth of science, which alone seizes not upon illusions and shadows but upon true being."

. . . for the first time the *concept*, one of the great tools of all scientific knowledge, had been consciously discovered. . . . From this it seemed to follow that if one only found the right concept of the beautiful, the good, or, for instance, of bravery, of the soul – or whatever – then one could also grasp its true being.

The pertinent point about Weber's invocation of Plato is his take on the reception of this venerable allegory among his students. Well, who today views science in such a manner? Today youth feels rather the reverse: the intellectual constructions of science constitute an unreal realm of artificial abstractions (Weber, 1968)

For Weber, the idols of youth are "personality and personal experience," about which he notes that "the notion prevails that the latter constitutes the former and belongs to it." (This is an apt description, actually, not only of present-day students but also of many postmodernist academics, including Stanley Fish).

Weber was a "strong" relativist. He believed that our impulse to be objective and just concerned with the facts and our impulse to make interpretations of the facts and judgments about their value are different activities that are irreconcilable in a deep sense, because both are part of a multiplicity of worlds of value-orientation, none of which are susceptible to rational reconciliation. All ultimate value-orientations are in conflict with each other. There is an irreconcilable tension between "worldly virtues," for example, and the religious "ethics of ultimate ends," between the inner determination of charisma and rational economic or bureaucratic conduct, between politics as a vocation and science as a vocation, between intellectualism and religion, between religion and culture. The conflicts are irreconcilable in the sense that human reason cannot choose between the alternatives.

The conflicts Weber cites are not only interpersonal and intergroup but also intrapersonal as well. For Weber it is not evaluations of reality but rather the basic apprehension of reality that support evaluations that come into conflict with each other. For Weber the irrationality of value-orientation rests on the irrationality of cognitive apprehension of reality and not, as most relativists assume, on moral or aesthetic interpretations of reality. Both value-orientation and scientific inquiry are arbitrary impositions of order upon chaos. This is the true limit of scientific knowledge: because values presuppose worldviews and all worldviews are arbitrary impositions upon chaos, there can be no non-arbitrary solution to any value conflict.

Thus the reason that science cannot decide upon a hierarchy of values is that science cannot justify *any* view of reality. It is reason's inability to acquaint us with reality that makes it necessary to be non-partisan. The only dictate of rationality, then, is

consistency: once you have chosen (or have had chosen for you) a particular ordering of the world, reason dictates only that you be consistent.

Weber's strong relativism seems all too relative to his own historical situation, when Germany was going through political factionalism and cultural disorientation after its defeat in World War I. But one need not be any sort of relativist to find some truths in his take on the issue. Weber's "polytheism" indicates a healthy appreciation for the difference between academic work and what goes on in the rest of society. In "Politics as a Vocation" (1919/1978) he draws an absolute distinction between the ethics of intention (that of fanatics and saints) and the ethics of responsibility (that of politicians). Whether or not this distinction is as absolute as he thinks it is, it is a distinction that has gained a renewed utility for teachers who might find themselves confronting the various fundamentalisms emerging in our increasingly diverse classrooms. More important, Weber's invocation of what he calls the "concept" – really a term for abstract thinking that took on a great deal of philosophical baggage in German Idealism – points up a general distinction between theoretical or generalizing studies, which are the mainstay of academic work, and the body of concrete, visual, and culturally-specific thought processes that are given priority in progressive and experiential approaches.

Our society is impoverished, and the academic craft fettered, without alternative discourses about reality that might inform us of oppression and provide sources of emancipation. In short, doing our jobs benefits from the idea (faith or myth) that the point of education is to emancipate people from their own culture by acquainting them with realities behind appearances. And if this means that we will be largely incomprehensible to the world at large, and only fitfully comprehensible to most of our students, then so be it. Academia has to treasure its contrarians, eccentrics, the recalcitrant and the retrograde.

I argue that the modern conception of the academy, such as portrayed by Max Weber, can have a positive, if indirect, effect on the rest of society in so far as it represents a microcosm of the liberal system: an always more or less ideal space where intellectual work could be free of the assumptions and biases of ordinary life, where individuals could engage with each other on the basis of their ability to contribute to the discussion.

So to faculty committees and other interested parties, I suggest mission statements more along the lines of:

We create an environment for contemplation of any kind, meaningful or not.

We provide a chance to listen to incomprehensible voices.

We advance the cause of recalcitrance, overthinking and self-doubt.

We design transformative experiences with unforeseen consequences.

We produce the social equivalent of negative capability.

We complicate the economy.

We are agents of the strange.

We will give you pause.

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The Rhetoric of Hope: Illuminating the Reality of the World's Poor and the Role of Religious Charities.

The Rhetoric of Hope

Religious charities around the world whether they serve in local, national, or international capacity, are committed to do extraordinary service to the people who are in need. Poverty is a “discovered challenge” in many areas around the world. Unfortunately we haven’t found the cure for world poverty, so what happens?

Years after years governments around the world commit on helping poverty in their countries or elsewhere by allocating relief funds or making in kind contributions to the poor in such forms as welfare systems, disaster relief efforts, or some sort of monetary break for their citizens. Bretton Wood’s institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank (WB) are also dedicating their mission to sponsor poverty-related programs around the world whether target specific as, for example, women’s empowerment, education, creating access to clean water, disease awareness and prevention, or addressing hunger-related issues in vulnerable communities. These two sectors (government and large institutions) are often the biggest providers due to the amount of resources and financial assets they have readily available to support the work that they do.

On a smaller scale, thousands of religious organizations around the world are also getting more and more involved with humanitarian work. We have seen at a local level, but also at the international level, that these organizations are getting involved in helping the poor to the best of their abilities. Even though it is unjust to compare the scale of effort of local religious charities to any large institution, which is far more capable to provide financial assistance to humanitarian aid, the work of international religious charities is

Elvin T. Ramos, PhD, is Assistant Dean, School for Human Services and Education, Metropolitan College of New York

essential to overall daunting task of helping the world's poor.

Understanding the core of where and when poverty started is a “phantom theory.” Social scientists, religious leaders, and historians will similarly argue that the “poor” were those individuals who were left behind (The Bottom Billion) suffering from the economic growth as wealth brought about major transformations in emerging societies.

Poverty as a global inequality is “a condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency”¹, according to former World Bank President Robert McNamara. Poverty also defines the individuals themselves. The condition defines their character, their needs, the environment they live in, their entire life. It can even influence the worst acts of desperation where if they lose all hope, “the desperateness of their circumstances can lead to theft, prostitution, and even murder.”² But poverty can also be defined based on biblical concepts and evangelical writings. For instance, it has been noted that “most of the time, it is an obvious deficit of material goods, lack of adequate nutrition, housing, school uniforms, and other necessities of life. A more sophisticated version of this approach to poverty concerns a deficit of knowledge: the poor do not have the knowledge necessary to move themselves out of poverty.”³

Though this definition is quite true, it has been proven in today's world that through empowerment and education and the results of world development missions, people in poverty become more aware of their condition than ever before.

Yet the Rhetoric of Hope is embedded in the life of those who are living in poverty. People who live in poverty are often the greatest believers, no matter what religion and no matter where they are in the world. With this, they become dependent on “hope” – the hope that their lives will get better. They depend on the words of wisdom, stories of redemption, and, of course, God's promise as guidance to make their lives a little easier.

Research in poverty has proven that most individuals who identify themselves in these situations often do see that faith is part of their hope for a way out of their situation. This is somewhat the ultimate promise that whatever situation they may be in, things will always get better if they hang on to believing that God will save

them. Thus churches have become the voice of the poor as they are called to respond to the poor and to work with them.

Because of their involvement with the church in their local communities, the poor are more likely to depend on God than the “rich.” However, as E. Clapses writes, the church works with both rich and poor: “In Christian tradition, wealth and poverty are mostly embodied notions. The Church in its biblical and patristic tradition, addresses rich people, who often in their avarice have accumulated excessive wealth at the expense of the poor, and also poor people, who in their poverty are homeless, starving, sick, illiterate, and suffering”⁴

Even though poor communities are known to have high rates of crime as it was stated above, it is apparent that churches and religious charities are those that ultimately help people in the community to become more civilized and to live a life according to the teaching of God. These religious organizations have become the custodian of ethics and morals in poor communities. Aware of their mission they have become effective and credible as they do their humanitarian work globally.

Natural Disasters and the Challenges of Religious Charities and Churches

In the past ten years, we have seen a tremendous sequence of natural disasters striking the most vulnerable areas around the world. For example, the August 2005 Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans; the January 2010 earthquake in Port Au Prince, Haiti; the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan; the December 2004 Tsunami at the Sumatra Coast; the May 2008 earthquake in Sichuan Province, China; the Tsunami in Indonesia, the March 2011 earthquake off the coast of eastern Japan which triggered a major tsunami; Hurricane Sandy in United States east coast, the November 2013 Super Typhoon in the Philippines and many more.

When national disasters happen, governments are often the frontline in providing safety and security to the people, but in the aftermath, religious charities are also taking leads in how to reach the poor and those affected more directly. However they do not have the means to produce radical reforms that would eliminate poverty. As Y. Tandon notices, “the challenge to the churches is to offer to

the people alternative to Neoliberalism. They do not have to go far. People everywhere are engaged in working out their own partial solutions out of their experiments in survival strategies. These have to be acknowledged, made more systematic, and given support, but in a different environment. For example, credit institutions for people's self help projects have been tried by the thousands all over the third world. But they have failed to lift people out of poverty. Why? Because the environment was not conducive. Within the reigning capitalist framework, these self-help projects simply got absorbed in the dominant patterns of production and finance."⁵

Tandon also writes that churches have to work at three different levels: the global political stage, the national and regional, and the ground level where more members or affiliated individuals are seen taking matters in their own hands because they feel that that's the best way for them to see immediate results.

When participating in humanitarian work after a major disaster, our assumption is that organizations are working cohesively with each other. However, this is not always the case. One of the biggest criticisms heard in such situations relates to the lack of coordination among institutions supposed to offer humanitarian help, and the inability to use the people's power, in particular during the 48 hours after a disaster strikes. This can be proven with the situation of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, when people were mandated to evacuate their homes to gather at the safe zone (the Dome) and when, because of the lack of communication and mastery of how to execute the plans for those who survived the hurricane, the dome itself became "the ground zero".

Such lack of coordination and other barriers are considered by political and social critics as a sort of prison that only keeps the poor in captivity: "If the poor are to get the chance to lift themselves out of poverty, it's up to us to remove the institutional barriers we've created around them. We must remove the absurd rules and laws we have made that treat the poor as nonentities. And we must come up with new ways to recognize a person by his or her own worth, not by artificial measuring sticks imposed by a biased system."⁶

It is easier to think that if governments can provide all the resources and religious charities can provide the man power on the ground there might be a better and more effective systematic flow of the effort, but unfortunately this does not happen at all. It is because everyone wants to be the face of a hero and institutions want full

credit for what they do, from the idea to the plan of action until the very last stage of its implementation. Politics and religion have been a keen yet sensitive topic in our society in a relation seen mostly as negative. Governments often have long and complicated regulations when it comes down to direct and indirect distribution of goods and resources, while local churches and religious charities only have human power to provide. There are instances where churches and governments disagree on many policies or regulations being forced on communities living in poverty. The Catholic Church for example has long been involved in many of these discussions regarding how aid given to the poor is ultimately humanizing or dehumanizing them.

An issue such as workers' rights has long been on the churches' agenda. The churches argue that if the government wants to help people in poverty by employing them then they should be able to be compensated based on living wages.

The ethical aspect of the relation between rich and poor has been the topic of even papal letters: "It has been stated in numerous papal encyclicals that it is the duty of the rich nations to help the poor. There are two ways in which this can be accomplished: investment and aid. Of the two, it is obvious from a free market perspective that it is important to efficiently allocate resources, while aid, being a political process, is neither necessarily efficient nor, in the libertarian view, just."⁷

It is evident that capitalism, with its secular ideology, is opposed to the Church's view of the material things as having a symbolic meaning⁸ and of the spiritual as having priority over everything else.

When it comes to offering concrete aid to people affected by national disasters it is important to understand that geographical location is key to the availability of goods and recourses for distribution. For example, in the Philippines, *Time Magazine World* published an online article describing the lives of Filipinos affected by supertyphoon Haiyan as the Christmas season approached the city of Tacloban. Though early recovery was happening and resources from all over the world were being collected and distributed to the locals, the biggest issue was shelter. *Time World* provided a detailed outlook on how relief efforts are usually implemented on ground as soon after a disaster strikes:⁹ making sure local airports are up and running with functioning lights and

cleared runways and that high security is in place, since most aids are stored at the airport, providing ground transportations, which means to clean the roads from debris, securing fuels, and of course providing tools to fix other vehicles, and organizing the work of volunteers.

The type of aid is not based on geographical location; the “type of disaster” is the deciding factor of what kind of aid will be provided to the affected areas.

Food and hygiene are also priorities in relief efforts. Soaps, shampoos, toiletries, laundry soaps must be provided to prevent major spread of diseases.

All this requires coordinated help and the participation of as many volunteers as possible, besides professional employees.

Nowadays, a successful organization whether small or large, understands that volunteers are key to its humanitarian relief efforts around the world. Not only that volunteers brings credibility to the work they do, but, because of their diverse backgrounds, they can be placed in variety of areas where they are needed. They bring focus, constructive feedback, and are more willing to share new ideas if certain aid efforts are not working on the ground. Nevertheless, the best practice to maintain a cohort of committed, A-list, loyal, and hard working volunteers is training. “A volunteer can be just as highly trained and experienced as can any employee.”¹⁰

The Moral Obligations

Religious charities in addition to their commitment in local assistance, education, and empowerment, have been actively involved in humanitarian service around the world. This new characteristic of their mission is becoming more apparent due to the need of people. Religious charities have also been the ones who have unlocked the “grassroots” efforts in mainland Haiti, Philippines, Japan, and Indonesia. They recruit volunteers who tirelessly work long hours at affected areas. Although some religious charities have international locations, there are also those who have maintained their relationships and bridges in many local towns which makes it easier for the organization to gather human assistance as necessary. This situation gives government officials the opportunity to work closer with the locals and the volunteers.

Volunteerism also plays a huge part in the needs of governments to create effective ways to distribute materials and resources fairly and justly.

Churches around the world are also acknowledging the different needs to work with governments and international agencies. In fact “church groups and alliances around the world are working with governments and international agencies to fight the scourge of global poverty.”¹¹ But governments also need to do their part, which is to acknowledge that they have a major responsibility for promoting national and international economic justice, including the moderation of radical economic inequalities.¹²

Conclusion

The notion that wealth is a private property whereas the owners are seen as the keepers of the wealth of God and that wealth shall be distributed to the poor is an Orthodox way to see material wealth, as it shall benefit all people.¹³

Generations to come will need to address poverty carefully. The new generation will need to pay special attention to the value of social justice. We cannot see the same situation that had happened in Malawi where people who are in poverty were asking: “Is there a God in heaven? Why did God create me? Why was I born? Doesn’t God hear my prayers? Does God see me as an unrepentant sinner?”¹⁴

Religious charities and churches will always have an obligation to the poor and they will continue to provide opportunities to overcome poverty around the world.

However there is need to speak more. They need to articulate their plans better to get better support from governments and bigger institutions. One example is KAIROS, an alliance of Canadian churches urging and working with their finance minister to lead the G7, a group of wealthy Western nations, to agree on cancelling debt of poor countries; another example is the work of South African finance minister Trevor Manuel who is leading conversations with the World Bank about justice and human rights.¹⁵

We may never know how we can eradicate poverty in the world, but we have to be sure that when we proceed to implement a system of charity, we have to be knowledgeable, determined, organized and perseverant.

NOTES:

- ¹ Barbara Stark, "Theories of Poverty/The Poverty of Theory," in *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Vol. 2009, Issue 2, 2009, p. 382.
- ² B. J. De Klerk, "Worship, Prayers, and Poverty," *The Ecumenical Review*, 57, (2005, 2007), pp. 345.
- ³ Connie H. Ostwald, "A Deeper Look at Poverty. Challenge for Evangelical Development Workers," in *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, Volume 26, April 2009, pp. 131.
- ⁴ Emmanuel Clapsis, "Wealth and Poverty in Christian Tradition," in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol. 54, Issue 1-4, Spring-Winter 2009, p.169.
- ⁵ Yashpal Tandon, "Wealth and Poverty: Challenge To Churches," in *The Ecumenical Review*, Volume 58, Issue 1-2, January-April 2006, pp. 109.
- ⁶ Muhammed Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty. Social Business and the Future of Capitalism*, Public Affairs, New York, 2007, p. 49.
- ⁷ Walter E. Block, Jennifer Dirmeyer, Paolo Revelo, "Poverty, Dignity, Economic Development, and the Catholic Church," in *Journal of Markets & Morality*, Volume 12, Number 1, Spring 2009, p. 69.
- ⁸ Adrian Pabst, "Susan R. Holman, ed., *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*," book review in *Political Theology*. Volume 11, Issue 5, November 2010, p. 680.
- ⁹ *Time Magazine World. The Philippines*, December 13, 2009 (<http://world.time.com/2013/12/24/christmas-in-tacloban-filipinos-celebrate-amid-the-wreckage/>).
- ¹⁰ Susan J. Ellis, *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*, Energize, Philadelphia, 1986, p.3.
- ¹¹ "Churches Fight Poverty Around the World," in *Presbyterian Record*, December 2004 (<http://www.presbyterian.ca/record>).
- ¹² Mark R. Amstutz, "The Churches and Third World Poverty," in *Missiology: An International Review*, Sage Journals, October 1989, p.455.
- ¹³ Nicu Dumitrascu, "Poverty and Wealth in the Orthodox Spirituality," in *Dialog. A Journal of Theology*, Winter 2010, Volume 49, Issue 4, p. 304.
- ¹⁴ G. R. Doss, "A Malawian Christian Theology of Wealth and Poverty," in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 35, Nr. 3, 2011, p. 150.
- ¹⁵ Presbyterian Record. "Churches Fight Poverty Around the World". December 2004. <http://www.presbyterian.ca/record>.

Focusing in Aid of Psychic Conversion

For the past couple of years I have been engaged informally and now formally in the practice of focusing: a method developed by Eugene Gendlin to promote heightened awareness and acceptance of operations and processes at the level of psyche disposing them to higher integration within the broader context of one's conscious living. I am convinced that focusing has the potential to promote authenticity in the dramatic pattern. As such it provides a key to correcting what Lonergan referred to as a process in sensitive living that is analogous to the flight from insight. However, my enthusiasm is tempered by unresolved questions related to what appear to be counter-positional tendencies in Gendlin's writings. The limitation seems to be that Gendlin does not have a genetic method and sometimes suggests a de-differentiation of psychic and higher processes. If these tendencies could be corrected, I believe focusing will deeply enrich a methodical theology and go a long way to clarifying initial questions related to a methodical psychology. In this paper, I will begin by recounting key aspects of insight in the dramatic pattern. In the second part, I offer a summary of Gendlin's method and theory. And in the last part, I make some provisional dialectical observations.

Insight

I will begin with a description of insight in the context of the dramatic pattern of experience. Lonergan began his book *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* with a series of very ordinary experiences in order to help the reader “attain familiarity with what is meant by insight.”¹ An invitation is issued to the reader to attend to “the thing itself” to which the word refers. Here we see the first similarity between our authors. Both Lonergan and Gendlin invite their readers to attend to a referent in the domain of human consciousness, which referent is and has been already a vital

Paul J. LaChance, PhD, is Associate Professor, Philosophy/Theology Department, College of St. Elisabeth, New Jersey

element of one's conscious living, even if it has gone unnoticed. And, both hope that readers will follow their texts by checking what is said there against their own inner processes.

As Lonergan directs the reader through a series of “five finger exercises,” he points out characteristics of insight as they emerge. It is important that these characteristics be understood to be verifiable and that they be verified by each individual. Here I will simply summarize each one. First, insight comes as a release of the tension of inquiry. That release witnesses to an antecedent desire and effort, which may be called the desire to know, the pure question, or the question behind every question. Still, the arrival of an insight to meet a question is best explained not by classical laws, in which linear causes produce their effects, but by the statistical laws that govern emergent entities out of a lower manifold. Second, the new entity is also a novelty that cannot be anticipated or predicted; and insight, likewise, comes suddenly and unexpectedly. It comes as gift. Third, insight is a function of inner, rather than external, conditions. Those conditions include whatever is meant by intelligence or stupidity, as the trait that accounts for the frequent or infrequent occurrence of insight in different people or at different times. Insight also depends upon habitual orientation. The genuinely curious habitually return to the question “Why?”, not merely as a verbal tick or dodge, but as an expression of the tension of inquiry. In order to be free for curiosity, consciousness must also be free from other demands, for example, the biological needs or the exigencies of other concerns. Further, insight “depends on the accurate presentation of definite problems.”² Though there is a pure question beneath every question, “no one just wonders. We wonder about something.”³ Curiosity is intentional, and the question sets the standard that the insight must meet. Until the imperious question is answered to its own satisfaction, any insight will be deemed inadequate. Fourth, because insights arise from concrete problems, they are “into the concrete world of sense and imagination”. Nevertheless, they have relevance beyond the particular and may be expressed in formulas and abstract conceptualizations. Thus, insight “pivots between the concrete and the abstract.”⁴ Fifth, insights pass into the fabric of the mind and are cumulative. Once an insight has occurred, as it were by inspiration or gift, no further inspiration is needed to recall or make use of the insight. The formerly unknown and unanticipated is now obvious and quite familiar. New insights complement and combine

with old insights yielding a process of learning. Only after discussing oversights and other aberrations, will Lonergan add the corrective function of insight. Learning is, in effect, a self-correcting process. Sixth, insight is distinct from conceptualization. Concepts are constituted by activities of thinking, supposing, formulating, and defining. More importantly, insights are the pivot between images and concepts. Thus Lonergan observes, "Definitions do not emerge in a private vacuum of their own. They emerge in solidarity with experiences, images, questions, and insights."⁵ For this reason, Lonergan goes on to argue that the problem of primitive terms is not really a problem: "Let us say, then, that for every basic insight there is a circle of terms and relations, such that the terms fix the relations, the relations fix the terms, and the insight fixes both."⁶ On the one hand, the coherence of a system of terms means that the terms hang together from a single insight. On the other hand, a system may generate operations and questions for which the system alone cannot account because they are not simply an expansion or deduction of the first set of basic terms and relations. The move to a higher system is affected when an insight arises with regard to the need for new concepts: "It consists in an insight that (1) arises upon the operations performed according to the old rules, and (2) is expressed in the formulation of new rules."⁷

The third point above was that insights emerge as a function of internal rather than external conditions. Notably, finding an answer to a concrete question requires setting aside other concerns. Concern characterizes the directionality of the flow of consciousness. Thus, insights occur within a stream of consciousness that involves both succession and direction. The flow of consciousness is also patterned. Lonergan distinguished among the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patterns, each with its own directionality, that constitute the diverse dynamic contexts within which sensing, thinking, imagining, questioning, etc. take place. Thus insights are into images presented to consciousness, and "the relevant presentations are simply the various elements in the experience that is organized by the pattern."⁸ Finally, images, series of images, and patterns of experiencing are all laced with affect. Insights, then, depend not upon simply benign images and patterns, but upon images that have, as it were, a personal history and that are variously experienced as exciting, frightening, hateful, beautiful, depressing, anxiety provoking, etc.

The pattern that concerns us most here is the dramatic pattern of experience. This is the pattern of ordinary human living. It is named dramatic, because it concerns an artistic self-making in the presence of others, who are also engaged in their own artistic self-making. The coordination and accumulation of these efforts constitutes the network of one's social relationships;

Still, the network of man's social relations has not the fixity of organization of the hive or the anthill; nor again is it the product of pure intelligence devising blueprints for human behavior. Its ground is aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, where the artistry is limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection.⁹

Artistic self-constitution is governed not simply by the imperious question, which determines the criterion of adequacy, but primordially by the mechanisms of inspiration, confirmation, and support. Fr. Robert Doran observes,

The dramatic pattern of experience is sensitive consciousness sublated by the fourth level of intentionality: it is that organization of the sequence of sensations, memories, images, emotions, conations, associations, bodily movements, and spontaneous intersubjective responses whose cohesive principle is the intentionality of dramatic artistry, the desire to make of one's life with others a work of art.¹⁰

Insight certainly plays a role in this process. Insights emerge within the drama by the exercise of rational consciousness, deliberation and choice that govern imaginative projects and possible roles and are developed and promulgated as individuals and communities learn from the tested insights of others. But the tasks of personal and communal self-constitution have been going on all along prior to deliberation: "there is no deliberation or choice about becoming stamped with some character; there is no deliberation about the fact that our past behavior determines our present habitual attitude; nor is there any appreciable effect from our present good resolutions upon our future spontaneity." Further, the fourth point above observes that insights are into the concrete world of imagination and sense, and the flow of images and sensations in one's conscious life are patterned.

Before there can be reflection or criticism, evaluation or deliberation, our imaginations and intelligence must collaborate in representing the projected course of action that is to be submitted to reflection and criticism, to evaluation and decision. Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence, the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of more elementary aggressivity and affectivity.¹¹

For both of these reasons, some patterned flow and directionality of conscious living with other people profoundly conditions everything else the individual undertakes in the other patterns of experience. Fr. Doran has observed that it is also in the dramatic pattern of experience that one negotiates one's transition in and out of the other patterns of experience:

The dramatic pattern of experience, as the psychological concomitant of existential intentionality, must integrate at the level of sensations, images, memories, emotions, conations, associations, bodily movements, and spontaneous intersubjective responses the interplay of all other patterns of experience, including the intellectual.¹²

We have seen that insights come not automatically, and as it were by classical laws, but emerge on a statistical basis given the right internal conditions. As such, insights may be unwelcome and avoided. The avoidance of insight, Lonergan calls, oversight or the flight from insight. The effect of oversight is the presence of a blind spot that impacts the course of one's intellectual development, for insights are cumulative and learning is a self-correcting process. This effect Lonergan calls a scotoma. To explain of the facts of oversight and scotoma, Lonergan introduces the concept of bias. Bias operates more or less pre-consciously. A simple example of how a bias might operate is selective attention. Insights are into images related to concrete realities and require a stream of images, conditioned by the pattern and direction of consciousness. The individual who selectively attends to concrete realities and their images effectively avoids understanding them. This avoidance need not be deliberate or even conscious in order to function in human conscious living. For, the subject has been engaged in the artistry of self-making all along. The solution to the problem of bias is a matter of insight and re-integration. There is, then, as Lonergan might have said, a joker in the deck. Becoming aware of a pattern

of selective attention is, first of all, a matter of personal insight which is, itself, subject to oversight. Finally, as if successively higher orders of blindness were not enough of a hurdle, personal insight alone may not suffice to alter the pattern. New meanings or even a new patterning of experience is required if the insight is to become effective. In other words, new habits of attending and a new style of life are required.

These new meanings and patterns must give fresh shape to one's effective integration of lower bodily elements within the drama of conscious living. The artistry of human living is limited by biological exigencies, which possess a certain plasticity and demand to be integrated. The dynamic unity of body and spirit means, in part, that neurological processes are ordered to meaningful integration and intentional meanings reach down into the neurological level. As an example of this, Lonergan cited the hands of the concert pianist. Similarly, "wanting an insight penetrates below the surface to bring forth schematic images that give rise to the insight."¹³ In virtue of the pure question that structures not only the mind but the body as well, neurological processes follow a logic of their own in response to the possibility of higher integration in further insights. On the one hand, consciousness is not absolutely free to make of itself what it will. Neurological processes make their own demands in virtue of their participation in the pure question. On the other hand, these demands are not absolute, and consciousness selects and excludes biological or neurological demands in the context of the dynamic patterns of experience. The body can make its demands, and, though it cannot force consciousness to attend to them, it does find an outlet in dreams or social taboos and can make conscious living uncomfortable when its own requirements are not met or its own processes are resisted.

At this point Lonergan introduces a question that concerns us directly. He assembles evidence suggestive of a correlation between his account of insight and the flight from understanding, on the one hand, and psychic trouble and psychotherapy, on the other. An understanding of the mechanisms of therapeutic change is suggestive of causal origins of psychic disorder. Within many therapeutic orientations, notably depth psychology, psychic healing occurs in virtue of insight. Lonergan does not claim that all psychological trouble is the direct result of oversight but notes that the suggestion is "the existence, on the level of the sensitive psyche,

of an initiating factor that operates in a parallel fashion to the flight from understanding.”¹⁴ The initiating factor has its home in the stream of consciousness that organizes elements available for integration. Lonergan highlights the relative freedom of the psyche to organize and direct lower bodily operations and patterns and of rational consciousness to organize and direct lower psychic processes. In each case, the lower levels are constituted by systematic and non-systematic features and are susceptible to systematization by higher levels. Consequently,

it is possible to conceive (1) psychic health as a harmonious unfolding of a process that moves at once on distinct yet related levels, (2) psychic aberration as an orientation of the stream of consciousness in conflict with its function of systematizing underlying manifolds, and (3) analytic treatment as an effort to reorientate an aberrant stream of consciousness and to effect a release from unconscious obstructions with a psychic origin.¹⁵

Neurological demands for integration are not determinative because, though images are laden with affectivity, insights occur with reference to images and not feelings.¹⁶ There are demands for images and demands for affect. Lonergan describes the dramatic pattern of experience as “an artistic transformation of more elementary aggressivity and affectivity” raises a question about the relationship between affectivity, on the one hand, and concerns and the direction of intentional living, on the other. The function of psyche is to systematize more elementary operations and physiological schemes in light of the direction of dramatic intentional consciousness. Both levels of this multi-layered process are laden with affectivity. However, operations at the bodily level are integrated into a personal aesthetic only by the higher integration accorded by insight. For this reason, when insight is avoided, elemental operations and their accompanying feelings, may be dissociated from their original object and emerge in association with alternative, incongruous objects. However, the insight that matters is not merely a cognitional mediation of the intelligible world. It is an insight in the mode of constitutive meaning, or meaning operative in the order of responsibility or conscience. For this reason, systematic integration is resisted to the extent that insight emerges but the accompanying affectivity is resisted. The meanings may remain cognitive within also becoming transformative. Drawing upon the work of Wilhelm Stekel, Lonergan comments that the

occurrence of insight alone is not enough, since it may amount to intellectualization. Insight has to emerge with respect to the images as laden with their proper affects; “Otherwise, the insights will occur but they will not undo the inhibitions that account for the patient's affective disorder.”¹⁷ It is also worth noting here that positive change happens in the dramatic pattern, in particular, in the interpersonal therapeutic situation. We will return to this point later.

To give a brief example, operations and feelings remain dissociated and may emerge independently in consciousness as anxiety symptoms and phenomena commonly associated with trauma, such as what are called body-memories and flashbacks. At its core, the goal of trauma therapy is reintegration of these dissociated operations through insight and a radical acceptance of affectivity, often facilitated by narrative. Because the demand for affect and demand for images differ, the flight from insight specifically concerns the inhibition of processes that generate appropriate images. Thus, the censor may restrict images but allow displaced affects to emerge. Therapeutic changes occurs when operations and patterns at both the sensitive and intentional levels with their associated feelings are allowed to emerge together and to transform the subject's daily living.

It is within this complex of psychic health, aberration, and healing that Fr. Robert Doran has elaborated the concept of psychic conversion. Psyche, itself, Fr. Doran explains, may be defined in terms of the operations and states that constitute experience, “acts of external sensation and internal operations of registering, imagining, associating and remembering. Such acts always occur in conjunction with some experientially felt condition or state of conation and emotion.”¹⁸ Psyche is

Psychic conversion, initially, is the acquisition of the capacity to disengage and interpret correctly the elemental symbols of one's being and to form or transform one's existential and cognitive praxis on the basis of such a recovery of the story of one's search for direction in the movement of life. Psychic conversion aids the telling and the making of the story of one's engagement in the specifically human responsibility of advancing the human good by authentic performance at all levels of intentional consciousness.¹⁹

Psychic conversion is not identified with those acts of disengagement and interpretation, for it is conceived along the lines of intellectual conversion – the explanatory self-affirmation of the

knower.²⁰ Therefore, psychic conversion is that form of self-appropriation that allows the subject to collaborate in a genuine fashion with the principles of development involved in the psychic systematization of lower operations and patterns and in the disposal of psychic productions to higher systematizations.

Focusing

I have found Eugene Gendlin's method of focusing to be an invaluable tool in the facilitation of psychic self-appropriation and collaboration with the laws of human development. As a method, focusing mediates the immediacy of the subject to the elements for psychic integration and to psychic productions. What follows is a brief summary of Focusing and then an examination of some central ideas that constitute Gendlin's theory. Key terms in the summary will be explained fully later.

The Method of Focusing

The term Focusing itself refers to three things. First, it refers to an inner process of experiencing, the "carrying forward" of what is implied in that deep inner process, and the creation of new meaning. To some extent this occurs in all people, as, for example, when someone notices that she or he feels hungry. Knowing that one is hungry is a matter of directly attending to an inner sense, albeit at a rather superficial level. The inner sense to which one refers is called a "felt sense". It is experienced bodily and not explicitly cognized or known. It becomes known in the process of explication and symbolization, but prior to that it is felt or experienced bodily.

Focusing also refers to a technique that has been taught and employed in a variety of contexts. Within the focusing community, there exists some variety in the specific way which the technique is broken down. As Gendlin teaches it, focusing involves six steps or movements.²¹ The first movement is Clearing a Space. Clearing a space allows the focuser to create a psychic distance between himself and his problems and feelings. Often the individual feels an immediate sense of well being and relief. Before clearing a space, a person may be identified with his emotions and problems. After clearing a space, the person may feel as though he has his feelings

but is not identified with his feelings. This is a movement preparatory to actually working with the feelings. The second movement involves the Selection of a problem, issue, or feeling to which to give one's attention. It is the moment of direct reference, when the focuser turns her attention to a felt sense. The third movement involves "finding a handle" or finding a symbolization for the felt sense. The focuser attempts to identify the essential quality of the felt sense. The focuser allows a symbol, such as a word or image to emerge that completes the felt sense. The fourth moment is called Checking and involves holding in one's attention both the felt sense with its emergent quality and the name or image. The focuser checks to see if the symbol in fact completes the felt sense. The fifth movement is Asking. It is the moment when the felt sense is allowed to identify what "it" wants or what "it" is concerned about or what about the felt sense feels so much like that named quality.

The process is, of course, not static. As the focuser attends to the felt sense and allows the process to move forward, he might expect that the handle will change and shift. The very activity of finding a handle and checking allows the process to move forward. The right handle may in the next moment be insufficient because the felt sense has shifted simply by being attended to. Consequently, the third, fourth, and fifth movements may happen simultaneously or in circular succession. The sixth and final movement is Receiving or resting with the relief that is brought about with the shift in the felt sense.

Finally, focusing refers to the incorporation of the dynamics of focusing into Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy. This may or may not involve deliberate teaching of focusing during therapy sessions. What the early research showed is that clients who already possessed the ability to reference a felt sense experienced better outcomes in therapy. Consequently, some people are natural focusers. Therapists need only support and encourage that behavior. M. Leijssen observes that the "process of integration can be natural and fluid if clients are invited to recognize if what they are saying matches what they are experiencing."²² Other clients may be taught focusing over a course of sessions or referred to a focusing training workshop. In any case, the therapist's job is to create the warm, empathic, and genuine relationship within which it is safe for the client to attend to inner processes. Because feelings are intentional and inseparable from their environment, the therapeutic relationship

is also understood to be part of that inner process. The therapist may hold that fact in mind and intentionally work with the client's inner experiencing. A therapist may do so from within any psychotherapy orientation.²³

Background

Focusing grew out of Gendlin's work with Carl Rogers in the 1960's. It is certainly a part of Third-Force psychology, but more specifically it belongs to a class known as Process-Experiential therapies. This group of therapies is rooted in Person-Centered theories and shares a basic understanding of human persons as

aware, experiencing organisms who function holistically to organize their experience into coherent forms.... People are therefore viewed as purposive, meaning-creating, symbolizing agents whose subjective experience is an essential aspect of their humanness.²⁴

As with other Experiential psychotherapists, Focusing-Oriented psychotherapists employ what Elliott and Greenberg²⁵ call an attitude of empathic exploration, which communicates empathy and encourages client exploration of their own internal experiencing or microprocesses. But contemporary experiential-process theorists also attempt to correct certain limitations in the early formulations of that parent orientation. They criticize Person-Centered theories for their reliance on self-concept as an explanatory principle. They operated with a structural model that gave to self-concepts

a governing role in a manner that does not match the spontaneous or automatic process nature by which much experience and behavior occur.... Life has more complexity, depth, passion, and pain than can be described by struggles to be consistent and to maintain an image.²⁶

The move toward process is, in part, an effort to overcome this over emphasis on self-concept.

There is, in fact, some evidence that Rogers had also moved in this direction. Gendlin observes that in 1951 Rogers had defined the self as a "conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics."²⁷ Later, Rogers wrote that "self is primarily a reflexive awareness of the process of experiencing.... It is not a structure to be defended, but a rich and changing awareness of the internal experiencing".²⁸ This process definition of self gave rise to an awareness of the need

to find new ways to conceive of and to measure success in psychotherapy.

The development of Experiential Theories was primarily driven by the demands of research and the exigencies of therapy. Gendlin and colleagues noted that it had long been recognized that client intellectualizing and externalizing behaviors were inimical to good outcomes.²⁹ However, it was not clear what one is doing when one is not intellectualizing and externalizing. Whatever that process is, it clearly had something to do with affectivity. Successful clients did not simply talk about their feelings; they worked with their feelings. Psychoanalytic theory described this process as involving “(a) free association, leading to (b) blockages which are concretely and directly felt, and are then (c) worked through”. This description more or less implicitly affirms that “if the patient is to work through such directly encountered blockage, he has to be willing and able to center his attention on what he has thus run into, feels, and can't yet formulate clearly and explicitly.”³⁰ Gendlin asserts that this “working through” problems or process of experiencing is more than insight alone and is, in one way or another, a part of all therapies.

This process of experiencing has something to do with feeling, but it is not the same as emotion. The felt sense of a situation concerns what cannot be formulated clearly and explicitly because it is of an, as yet, unknown. On the psychoanalytic formulation, the blockage is experienced but not yet known. The theoretic difficulty centered on finding a way to conceptualize this activity of attending to the subjective experience of an as yet unknown, felt sense and its symbolic explication. Gendlin labeled this therapeutic behavior “experiencing” or “focusing” and drew on existentialist philosophers and phenomenologists in order to give a positive account of the process.³¹ *

* Noticing this kind of client behavior was itself the outgrowth of Client-Centered therapy and research. The early phase of Client-Centered psychotherapy focused on the advantage of attitudinal values, articulated by Rogers, of empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness in overcoming intellectualization (C. B. Truax, “The empirical emphasis in psychotherapy: A symposium. Effective ingredients in psychotherapy: An approach to unraveling the patient-therapist interaction,” in *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 10(3), 1963, pp. 256-263; Gendlin, “Client-centered developments...”, see endnote 29). The Client-centered attitudes were associated with success in therapy. Gendlin

To the initial question about what one is doing when one is not intellectualizing and externalizing, various Person-Centered, Experiential Theories give diverse answers. Emotion-Focused theorists distinguished three levels of processing: innate sensory motor; emotional schematic; and conceptual processing. People organize experience into emotion-based schemes that then play a central role in functioning and the creation of meaning.³² Emotion-focused researchers believe that “assisting clients to access their emotions in therapy enables them to examine their core beliefs and focus on their central needs and goals to develop more adaptive responses to problematic experiences.”³³ On this account, experiencing is the synthesized product of a variety of sensorimotor responses, emotion schemes, narrative identities, generalized rules of operation, tinged with conceptual memories activated in a situation. The focus, then, is on the known or schematized and narrated elements of the process. The difference here is that Gendlin's focusing involves not the synthesized product but the synthesizing or symbolizing process itself.

On Gendlin's theory, an exclusive focus on structures and content makes it difficult to explain personality change:

Personality theories have chiefly been concerned with the factors that determine and explain different individuals' personalities as

observes that, in the course of their work with schizophrenic patients and as a result of their empathic attention to the client's own individual experiences, Client-Centered therapists became aware of their clients' refusal to engage the therapist, their lack of subjective focus, the failure of empathic responses to elicit self-exploration, and the frequency of non-productive silences (Gendlin, “Client-centered developments...,” see endnote 29). Consequently they shifted their attention from therapist to client variables. They experimented with a new mode of initiating therapy. This new mode involved, first, being with the client not in response to the client's motivation for therapy but because the therapist desired to be with the other person. The therapist might stand in the hallway or sit with the client leaving the client free to remain or to walk away, to engage the therapist or to remain silent. The therapist, however, consistently returned to meet with the client. Second, the therapist was transparent, expressing what he or she is aware of in him- or herself and expressing confusion about what is going on in the client. Two concerns grew out of this work: An attention to client process and an effort to identify non-verbal clues to that process.

they are, and the factors which have brought about the given personality. What is called personality maintains its character despite circumstances. Aspects of an individual fail to puzzle us if his current situation explains them. We do not even attribute it to his personality when an individual shows all sorts of undesirable behavior under overwhelmingly bad circumstances, or when he becomes likable and secure under the influence of events which (as we say) would make almost anybody likable and secure. What we do attribute to personality is the reverse: when an individual remains likable and secure under overwhelmingly bad circumstances, and when an individual remains afraid and in pain despite apparent opportunities and good luck. Thus, it could be said that, far from explaining personality change, our theories have been endeavoring to explain and define personality as that which tends not to change when one would expect change.³⁴

Also, Gendlin held that felt experiencing is a process: “We cannot explain personality change with the sort of theory that considers experiences as entities, and personality as a container full of entities or contents.”³⁵ This is not to deny that, from the point of view of common sense, we do experience some form of identity and continuity. The focus on the experiencing process is driven by a search for concepts that are capable of explaining change. If concepts that remain the same in the face of exigencies for change are taken as explanatory, change itself, which is asserted to occur, becomes difficult to explain. Thus, Gendlin sought explanatory categories that could account for the observable facts that individual clients changed when they engaged in a genuine feeling process in the context of a therapeutic relationship.³⁶

Experiencing is primordial, while focusing is deliberate. Experiencing is always functioning implicitly and contributes to personality stability and change. Focusing refers to a mode of experiencing in which a direct referent is explicitly attended to and carried forward in ongoing personality change. Focusing is, therefore, a method for cooperating with this process of personality change.

Direct Referent: The Felt Sense

For Gendlin the referent of focusing exists or occurs bodily and constitutes the pre-symbolic, pre-conceptual or pre-logical, aspects of human cognition. The direct referent is a bodily sense or

meaning: “Cognition must be viewed as including processes of which we are unaware (or partly aware) that play a natural role in it. Feeling and other organismic processes must function in cognition at a stage before conscious conceptual symbolization ever takes place.”³⁷ Drawing explicitly on Maurice Merleau-Ponty and John Dewey, among others, Gendlin claims that “the feel of meaning 'guides our inferential movements’ and that a felt meaning “guides us in speech, when we know what we are about to say, but the particular words come only as we open our mouth to let them out.”³⁸ What we intend to say is intended by non-cognitive, organismic processes before it is articulated in thought and speech. This common experience points to the distinction and relationship between what one has to say, which is sensed as a vague whole and the articulation and explication of that vague whole.

The felt sense is also understood to be a sense of oneself in a situation that conditions how one lives in such situations. It is a sense of the whole of the situation, and it always means more than a statement about any part of the situation. Still various aspects of the felt sense may be cognized or 'lifted out' or explicated in a series of steps.³⁹ As each aspect is lifted out or explicated, the whole itself changes. The felt sense is also operative at the “implicit texture” of one's “wholistic living.”⁴⁰

What is sensed as a vague whole is not unconscious, i.e. unavailable to conscious inspection. It operates on the fringe of conscious awareness and may be made conscious by deliberate attention.* Still, what is brought to conscious awareness differs from conceptualization. The bodily sense is meaningful, but felt meaning is not, strictly speaking, the same as symbolized or

* Ikemi (A. Ikemi, “Carl Rogers and Eugene Gendlin on the bodily felt sense: whay they share and where they differ,” in *Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapies*, 4(1), 2005, pp. 31-42) highlights Rogers's own dependence on Freud's concept of the unconscious and contrasts this with Gendlin's felt sense. Leijssen (see endnote 22) argues that some notion of an internal referent was operative in Roger's *On Becoming a Person*, indicating that Rogers himself had attended to the relationship between visceral and symbolized experience. According to Ikemi, sensory and visceral experiences were those that were denied to consciousness because they conflicted with one's self-concept. These experiences are already formed and are sensed as in conflict with already articulated concepts of the self.

cognitive meaning. Gendlin thought of it as analogous.⁴¹ Felt meanings are incomplete and await completion through the process of experiencing and symbolization. A felt meaning indicates, not something known in some bodily way, but something potentially known.* Felt meanings are the products of ongoing process and are not already in the person, like marbles in a jar. In Lonergan's terms, a felt sense is not already-in-here-now-real. The same is true of emotions. Felt meanings are potentially cognitive elements in our experience. They are also not determinatively related to only one symbolization. Felt meanings may be symbolized and explicated in a various ways, including verbalizations and behaviors. However, they are also not arbitrary. In retrospect, one can understand the symbolization and the new sense of the whole as in continuity with what came before. It emerges as a personal insight about what the whole problem was 'really about', as a new definition of the same problem.⁴² Gendlin observed that commonly theorists presuppose that explanatory elements are pre-existing units. "According to the most common theory of communication," for instance, "it is impossible for you to understand me unless you already have all the meanings to which I allude."⁴³ Such an explanation fails to account for how one acquires new meanings. Every present is a different whole and cannot be accounted for simply by the re-combination or re-structuring of past events. The present is not simply deducible from a pattern of past events. In retrospect, the present may make sense in light of the past. We may look at someone's personal history and understand something of how the individuals present behavior is influenced by the past and by how the past is functioning in the present. Still, the present situation could not have been predicted on the basis of the past. The present is the result of an ongoing process. Similarly, present and past units are themselves the product of that process. Gendlin describes how the felt sense of a whole situation shifts and changes in response to direct attention. Each subsequent shift marks a change in the relationship between the subject and the situation. The subject's feeling of the self changes and the content of the subject's self-thoughts change.⁴⁴

* As I will note at the conclusion of this paper, there is a thorny hermeneutic issue here. Gendlin and his students do frequently speak of the body as knowing, as possessing its own wisdom, and as doing so in a more complete way.

Consequently, with each shift issue forth new potentialities for meaningfulness.

Feelings and Process

Gendlin and colleagues distinguished between experiencing and feeling as an activity of reflective attending. Experiencing refers to a continuous process that goes on whether or not one is aware of it but that may be brought to awareness as a felt sense prior to being known and symbolized (or explicated). What is felt and apprehended, at first as an unknown, is the direct referent of one's attention and language. "Feeling", Gendlin writes, "as something focused on occurs only in an activity of reflective attending."⁴⁵ Feelings and emotions are not entities that exist or occur within us, in spite of us. They are the products of ongoing process and attentive focusing. Further, the process can become the focus of attention and may be expressed or symbolized, as in Gendlin's method.

Interpersonal Process

Gendlin's understanding of experiencing is founded on and directly relevant to an interpersonal theory of process.* Experiencing and feelings are intentional. A felt sense is a feeling of a whole situation and is itself meaningful. However, the meaning of a felt sense is analogous to cognitive meanings. The felt sense is an incomplete and implicit meaning that awaits symbolization and completion (what Gendlin calls "carrying forward"). The direct referent is explicated through the process of attending. As with insight, the act of symbolization occurs on its own terms. The focuser shapes the internal context, gives the process space to occur, and awaits the emergence of the most adequate symbol. What

* The interpersonal realm was, Mia Leijssen argues, an important part of person-centered theory. "The essentially *interactive* nature of the formation of a bodily felt sense in the client, is what Rogers stressed when he said that the client must to some degree perceive the empathy, genuineness and positive regard from the therapist. The inner process is always a function of the interpersonal process" (M. Leijssen, "Coping with fear in short term experiential psychotherapy," in *The Folio: A Journal for Focusing and Experiential Therapy*, 20, 2007, p. 126).

emerges is what is implied in the process. The symbol explicates what is implicit in the felt sense. Change is therefore explained as a mode of experiencing in which a felt sense is carried forward.⁴⁶ Gendlin's emphasis on interaction is largely his response to the problem of change. In a relationship, interaction is a single system, and each person contributes to the functional or dysfunctional process. That process has a reciprocal effect on the participants:

For example, two people in a close relationship may find the following pattern: 'If she were a little bit better or more loving (or different in this and this way), then I could be so good, (or I could be in this and this way...). But I can't be. Why not? because she won't let me. She isn't that little bit better. And why not? Because of the way I am. If I were a little bit better then she could relate to me the way I need her to do, so that I could be a little bit better, so that she could.'⁴⁷

Further, an interaction itself can originate the trouble.⁴⁸ That is, the trouble may be seen as an emergent novelty within a system. On a process model, then, interaction is not determined by antecedent units, but is itself a process generative of novelty.

The interpersonal dimension suggests that attending directly to a felt sense in order to facilitate a shift or carrying forward of an inner process is not something that an individual can simply bring about in him or herself. Because feelings are intentional, the process is facilitated in interpersonal relations. This does not deny that the individual can interact with, symbolize, and so carry forward his or her own experiencing process. To assert that the felt process can be a direct referent and function within the feeling process is to affirm this possibility. For Gendlin, the self is just this ongoing interaction with one's own feeling process. Self is a self-process: "self exists in the experiencing of feeling. At any given moment, the self is the experiencing."⁴⁹ But, the individual exists within interpersonal relations before the emergence of the self. Further, the responses of others may mediate one's own implicit feeling process or else alienate one from that process. In the latter case, the self emerges as a set of responses to the behavior of others rather than to a felt sense. The actually functioning meaning is not the implicit meaning of the feeling process but the meaning of a conceptual structure or social role; the process has been stopped.⁵⁰ That feeling process can be reconstituted and carried forward only to the extent that the self or another responds to the feeling process itself. For the individual to

do this alone means responding not to the ideas, evaluations, words, or behaviors of another but to the process beneath and behind all conceptualizations and symbolizations. This is no impossible, just difficult and unlikely.

In his most theoretical work, *A Process Model*, Gendlin extends his understanding of interpersonal interaction into an ontology of becoming.⁵¹ Universally, the relationship between bodies and environments is one of mutual implying. He describes this relationship as a single ongoing process in which both bodies and their environments are implicit. He thus defines body itself as an environmental interaction. It is this model that needs most to be examined in light of emergent probability.

Authenticity

In addition to a concern regarding the nature and possibility of change, Gendlin's writings also evidence a concern for a evaluative perspective. Later in his career, Gendlin associated his own philosophy of the implicit with Heidegger's notion of authenticity. A human being is really a human-becoming. Gendlin also claims that the nature of human nature is a process. Authentic living, living according to one's nature, means deliberately taking over or cooperating with that process.⁵² Gendlin did not interpret authenticity simply as a mode of unique, individual living over against living like everyone else. Mere caprice may fit that definition and yet not represent authentic living. Rather, authenticity is rooted in sensing and discovering the way one has already been living in and toward situations and, at the same time, allowing new possibilities for living to emerge. These possibilities emerge from the process that one is. Felt meanings may be symbolized and conceptualized authentically or inauthentically, adequately or inadequately. Authentic conceptualization allows the process to move forward; inauthentic conceptualization blocks the process. Inauthentic conceptualizations amount to intellectualizations that say what one must be feeling or what one must be like. This covers over oneself as process and, since one lives one's life in virtue of the vaguely felt sense, amounts to inauthentic living.

This means, then, that symbolization and conceptualization are not the same thing as intellectualizing. Authentic symbolization is an important part of human living. It is through symbolization

that explicit meanings are lifted out of process or the process is carried forward.⁵³ The difference is that authentic symbols meet the demands of the felt sense. They emerge as the subject focuses on the felt sense as the direct referent of his or her attention.

It also sets before Psychologists the way in which their theories have authentically or inauthentically symbolized human living:

Freud and Jung discovered depth psychology. They correctly saw that there is always a vastly complex texture involved in any human event, however simple and routine it might seem. In this they were right. Freud and Jung erred in taking the symbolizations from a number of people ... and constructing from this a system of contents in terms of which we are all supposedly explainable.

...

Let us change our fundamental way of considering psychological theory. If we see clearly in philosophy that the human way of being cannot be reduced to, or undercut by, any system of concepts--why leave psychology to that false assumption? A quite different kind of psychology is possible, one that studies the process, rather than imputing a content-system.⁵⁴

Gendlin did not reject the theories of any of the major schools of psychotherapy. He found that they all contributed something to his own practice and understanding. But, Gendlin consistently called for a new science of psychology that authentically symbolized the process of human living.

Provisional Dialectical Notes

First, let us note the benefits of Gendlin's method for psychic conversion. In its fullest sense, psychic conversion refers to a conscious cooperation with the unfolding of one's own development at the psychic level. Spontaneously, intelligence and imagination cooperate to select images for conscious attention, insight, judgment, and decision. De facto, the cooperation between operation at these levels may or may not be authentic.

To the extent that they are authentic, they are open to and even will into consciousness the images that are needed for the insightful, truthful, and loving construction of the human world and concomitantly of oneself as a work of dramatic art. They are free to admit to conscious negotiation the complexes of affect and image

that are really one's own, however much in need to healing and integration these complexes may be.⁵⁵

Where operations of intelligence or imagination are inauthentic they violate the demands of the lower order for integration at a higher level. To engage in focusing is to direct loving attention to all the complexes that constitute one's psychic life. Attention disposes psychic operations and patterns to systematization by higher order processes.

Additionally, at the level of psyche, lower operations and patterns are, on the one hand, systematized with respect to organic elements and operations, yet psychically patterned elements may be merely coincidental or even dialectically related to each other and to effective integration at other levels, resulting is dissociation and conflict. Focusing encourages loving attention to whatever emerges in the psyche and to any feelings of conflict, fear, anxiety, or excitement associated with this emergence. Such attention, again, disposes psychic elements to integration within the wider horizon of one's conscious living. The subject who cultivates the habit of such loving attention may find that any interpersonal situation or interaction affords an opportunity for responsible exercise of the laws of genuineness.

Second, psychic conversion is an extension of intellectual conversion and aims at an explanatory self-appropriation of psychic processes. To that extent focusing is itself susceptible to authentic or inauthentic engagement. At a theoretic level, focusing attempts to explicate human experiencing. There is tremendous potential here, provided Gendlin's method is articulated in the context of genetic method. Direct referencing of a felt sense results in meaning, but this is not the same thing as attending to data for the sake of insight. What is attended to and referenced is not data-to-be-systematized-by-insight, but the processes involved, for example, in presenting that data in images to consciousness. That is what Lonergan referred to as the work of the censor. The referents of focusing are lower elements as structured by psyche. What emerges is elemental meaning ordered to higher integration by intellectual, responsible, and religious processes. So direct referencing opens up psychic processes and provides a healing moment (ie. psychic conversion) in what Lonergan would talk about as bias originating in sensitive psyche. There are a couple of things that are relevant here. 1. Gendlin clearly distinguishes different kinds of meaning.

There is meaning as it relates to psychic process, that is, what I happen to mean by words or concepts I can generate that adequately express the felt sense that I have. And there is scientific meaning about processes and objects in the world. The latter is more independent. 2. Gendlin's account of genetic structures is expressed in terms of the implicit: "in the living body the seemingly "lower" micro processes have the "higher" perceptual and cognitive processes implicit in them."⁵⁶ Implicit possibilities and their circumstances are intricately organized. The possibilities are not separate next to each other; rather, they are implicit in each other. They are not merged but have a very precise organization. What would actually occur is implied very precisely. This kind of organization is more organized than side-by-side things can ever be. Anything enacted emerges very exactly formed.⁵⁷ For example, "Cognition and perception always occur as part of micro processes." They are parts as implied in lower processes.⁵⁸ Thinking from the implicit means paying attention to the implicit, which we have in a bodily way. "If we attend directly to something we have implicitly, we can be in a place that is grounded in our much wider actual body-environment interaction, and we can think from there."⁵⁹

Gendlin denies that the next occurrence in a process is random or even indeterminate. The newly implied possibilities are precise. At one point he limits them to a specific next action: "The cluster of implicit possibilities implies one next action. And that action will carry the cluster forward."⁶⁰ As rich as it is for honoring psychic process itself, Gendlin's philosophy of the implicit appears here to function in a less differentiated way as emergent probability does in Lonergan's more differentiated context. Consequently, on Gendlin's account, experiencing does not have a vertical finality to intellectual schemes and operations. Gendlin deliberately precludes from questions related to the origin and validity of cognitions. It looks to me as though, for Gendlin, attention to those questions must inevitably be idealist. He refers to Kant quite a bit on this score in order to say what he is not doing. Yet he never explores the relationship between the two types of meaning. Finally, the tendency of Gendlin's later writings is to reduce all meaning to felt meaning and to assert that the body has its own way of knowing. Whether this way of speaking is a matter of communications or amounts to a de-differentiation at a theoretic level is, for me, something that warrants further investigation.

NOTES:

- ¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992, p. 27.
- ² *Ibidem*, p. 30.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- ⁶ *Ibidem*.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.
- ¹⁰ R. M. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, Marquette University Press, Marquette, WI, 2006, p. 52.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 212.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- ¹³ Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 215.
- ¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 223.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.
- ¹⁸ Doran, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
- ¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 175.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- ²¹ Eugene T. Gendlin, *Focusing*, Bantam Books, New York, 1981.
- ²² M. Leijssen, "Making Space for the Inner Guide," in *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 61(3), 2007, p. 269.
- ²³ E. T. Gendlin, *An introduction to focusing: Six steps*, The Focusing Institute, New York, retrieved from http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2234.html.
- ²⁴ S. G. Greenberg and R. Van Balen, "The Theory of Experience-Centered Therapies," in L. S. Greenberg, J. C. Wason, and G. Lietaer (eds.), *Handbook of experiential psychotherapy*, The Guilford Press, New York and London, 1998, p. 28.
- ²⁵ R. Elliott and L. S. Greenberg, "The essence of Process-Experiential/Emotion-Focused Therapy," in *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 61(3), 2007, pp. 241-254.
- ²⁶ Greenberg and Van Balen, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
- ²⁷ C. R. Rogers, *Client-centered therapy*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1951; E. T. Gendlin, J. Beebe, J. Cassens, M. Klein, and M. Oberlander,

- “Focusing ability in psychotherapy, personality and creativity,” in J. M. Shilen (ed.), *Research in Psychotherapy*, vol. III, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., 1968, pp. 217-241.
- ²⁸ C. R. Rogers, “A tentative scale for the measurement of process in psychotherapy,” in M. Parloff and E. Rubinstein (eds.), *Research in psychotherapy*, vol 1, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., 1959, pp. 96-107; Gendlin et. al., “Focusing ability....”
- ²⁹ E. T. Gendlin, “Client-centered developments and work with schizophrenics,” in *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 9 (3), 1962, pp. 205-212; Gendlin et. al., “Focusing ability....”
- ³⁰ Gendlin, et. al., “Focusing ability....,” p. 217.
- ³¹ E. T. Gendlin, “Need for a new type of concept: Current trends and needs in psychotherapy research on schizophrenia,” in *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2 (1), 1962, pp. 37-46; E. T. Gendlin, “A theory of personality change,” in P. Worchel and D. Byrne (eds.), *Personality change*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1964, pp. 100-148.
- ³² Greenberg and Van Balen, *op. cit.*
- ³³ J. C. Watson and D. L. Bedard, “Clients' emotional processing in psychotherapy: a comparison between cognitive-behavioral and process-experiential therapies,” in *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology* 74(1), 2006, p. 152.
- ³⁴ Gendlin, “A theory of personality change,” p. 100.
- ³⁵ Gendlin, et. al., “Focusing ability....,” p. 219.
- ³⁶ Gendlin, “A theory of personality change.”
- ³⁷ E. Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL, 1997, p. 54.
- ³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 46.
- ³⁹ E. T. Gendlin, “Befindlichkeit: Heidegger and the philosophy of psychology,” in *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 16(1), 1978/1979, pp. 43-71.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.
- ⁴¹ Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*.
- ⁴² Gendlin, *Focusing-oriented psychotherapy*.
- ⁴³ E. T. Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, p. 32.
- ⁴⁴ Gendlin, *Focusing-oriented psychotherapy*.
- ⁴⁵ Gendlin, et. al., “Focusing ability....,” p. 219.
- ⁴⁶ Gendlin, “Need for a new type of concept....,” 1962; Gendlin, “A theory of personality change.”
- ⁴⁷ Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, p. 29.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 1997.
- ⁴⁹ E. T. Gendlin, and C. R. Rogers, “The conceptual context,” in C. R. Rogers (ed.), *The therapeutic relationship and its impact: A study of*

psychotherapy with schizophrenics, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI and London, 1967, p. 14.

⁵⁰ Gendlin, "A theory of personality change."

⁵¹ E. T. Gendlin, *A Process Model*, The Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, NY, 1997.

⁵² Gendlin, "Befindlichkeit ...".

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Doran, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁵⁶ E. T. Gendlin, "The derivation of space," in A. Cruz-Pierre and D. A. Landes (eds.), *Exploring the work of Edward S. Casey: Giving voice to place, memory, and imagination*, Bloomsbury Academic, New York, 2013.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ E. T. Gendlin, "Process generates structures: Structures alone don't generate process," in *The Folio*, 23 (1), 2012, p. 9.



Art Gallery "Spiritus"



Viorica Colpacci (director of "Spiritus" Art Gallery) and M. N. Rusu

Al-Ghazali's *Deliverance from Error* The Contemporary Relevance of a Medieval Text

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (c. 1058–1111) was a famous Muslim theologian, philosopher, jurist, and mystic. A few years before his death, he wrote an intellectual and spiritual autobiography called *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*Deliverance from Error*¹). Although now more than 900 years old, it offers much to think about in our contemporary context. There are several points that are particularly relevant to contemporary concerns in the areas of philosophy, education, and judgments of fact and value in general.

At first, this medieval text looks foreign and distant. Its style, its cultural background, and many of its scientific assumptions seem as medieval as, in fact, they are. On careful reading, however, as one grasps its meaning and the force of its arguments, it becomes clear that the issues being addressed are, if anything, surprisingly modern. In the first part of the paper, we discuss how Al-Ghazali's text deals with the very modern problem of what is called "foundationalism." Al-Ghazali argues against both empirical and rational foundationalism. This is a concern he shares with much of modern philosophy, especially postmodernism. Later in the paper, there is an examination of an aspect of Al-Ghazali's thought that seems to anticipate, in some respects, postmodernism's concern with the "social construction of meaning."

His difference from many modern and postmodern thinkers becomes clear, however, in his discussion of truth and, more forcefully, in his discussion of how an evaluation of rival truth claims may be made. The material clearly illustrates Al-Ghazali's concern with the possibility of reasoning to a sound judgment in such matters. The details of his method, however, are largely developed in his other writings, principally *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* and *The Revivification of the Religious Sciences*. Interested readers may want to pursue the details of the Ghazalian method of intellectual inquiry in his other writings. In this section,

Bert Breiner, PhD, is Adjunct Professor of Religion, Hunter College, City University of New York

we note particularly Al-Ghazali's critique of theology and philosophy. Of course, "philosophy" in the middle ages included the "hard" sciences and the human sciences along with what today would be called "philosophy" proper.

In this section, Al-Ghazali makes a simple point that, I believe, is crucial to the genuine pursuit of knowledge in any time or place. I call it "Al-Ghazali's Test for the Integrity of an Intellectual Inquiry."

The climax of the *Deliverance* is clearly Al-Ghazali's affirmation that the mystic's direct *experience* of God provides the ultimate (and only) certainty possible to the human intellect. In the final section of the paper, there is some discussion of how Al-Ghazali's developmental psychology serves as a way to anchor Al-Ghazali's understanding of the mystic experience in his philosophical system as a whole.

Al-Ghazali establishes the main theme of the *Deliverance* at the very beginning of the text. In a sense, it establishes the framework of the entire discussion of the text. Al-Ghazali establishes his main theme as the quest for certainty.

You have asked me, my brother in religion, to show you the aims and inmost nature of the sciences and the perplexing depths of the religious systems. You have begged me to relate to you the difficulties I encountered in my attempt to extricate the truth from the confusion of contending sects and to distinguish the different ways and methods, and the venture I made in climbing from the plain of naive and second-hand belief (*taqlid*) to the peak of direct vision.

Consequently as I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority (*taqlid*) ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me, for I saw that Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims.

I therefore said within myself: 'To begin with, what I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is'. It was plain to me that sure and certain knowledge is that knowledge in which the object is disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it, and that the mind cannot even entertain such a supposition. Certain knowledge must also be infallibly; and this infallibility or security from error is such that no attempt to show the falsity of the knowledge can occasion doubt or denial, even though the attempt is made by someone who

turns stones into gold or a rod into a serpent. Thus, I know that ten is more than three.

Modern readers often misunderstand the goal of Al-Ghazali's spiritual and intellectual quest. More often than not, they say that the object of his quest was the "truth." It is an understandable mistake. The opening paragraphs of the text speak even more about truth than certitude. A careful reading of the text, however, makes it clear Al-Ghazali's problem is not, per se, with the question of whether there is such a thing as the "truth" and whether it can be known. He is concerned with how one can establish which truth is to be preferred over the other. This is what he means when he clearly states that he embarked on an intellectual and spiritual quest for "certainty."

Obviously, this cannot be done based on some external authority. The conflicting claims of such authorities are the problem. These multiple authorities include the various religions, philosophies, and schools of thought that offer alternative explanations of the "truth." That is the point Al-Ghazali makes about children generally following the religion of their parents. This explains why, as he approached adolescence, "the bonds of mere authority (*taqlid*) ceased to hold [him] and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon [him]." The problem is not new. One need only think of Aristotelian logic, Socrates' criticisms of the Sophists, medieval nominalism and realism, Descartes' extreme skepticism, Kant's distinction between the noumenon and the phenomenon. Postmodernism carries on this tradition with its concern for the "construction" and "deconstruction" of knowledge.

Al-Ghazali anticipates by more than half a millennium the fundamental doubt of modern philosophy inaugurated by Descartes.

Thereupon I investigated the various kinds of knowledge I had, and found myself destitute of all knowledge with, this characteristic of infallibility except in the case of sense-perception and necessary truths. So I said: 'Now that despair has come over me, there is no point in studying any problems except on the basis of what is self-evident, namely, necessary truths and the affirmations of the senses. I must first bring these to be judged in order that I may be certain on this matter. Is my reliance on sense-perception and my trust in the soundness of necessary truths of the same kind as my previous trust in the beliefs I had merely taken over from others and as the trust

most men have in the results of thinking? Or is it a justified trust that is in no danger of being betrayed or destroyed'?

I proceeded therefore with extreme earnestness to reflect on sense-perception and on necessary truths, to see whether I could make myself doubt them. The outcome of this protracted *effort* to induce doubt was that I could no longer trust sense-perception either. Doubt began to spread here and say: 'From where does this reliance on sense-perception come? The most powerful sense is that of sight. Yet when it looks at the shadow (sc. of a stick or the gnomon of a sundial), it sees it standing still, and judges that there is no motion. Then by experiment and observation after an hour it knows that the shadow is moving and, moreover, that it is moving not by fits and starts but gradually and steadily by infinitely small distances in such a way that it is never in a state of rest. Again, it looks at the heavenly body (sc. the sun) and sees it small, the size of a shilling; yet geometrical computations show that it is greater than the earth in size'.

In this and similar cases of sense-perception the sense as judge forms his judgements, but another judge, the intellect, shows him repeatedly to be wrong; and the charge of falsity cannot be rebutted.

Such was Al-Ghazali's refutation of empiricism as a sound foundation for knowledge. Not surprisingly, he turns to the claims of rationalism to serve as a sure foundation for our knowledge.

To this I said: 'My reliance on sense-perception also has been destroyed. Perhaps only those intellectual truths which are first principles (or derived from first principles) are to be relied upon, such as the assertion that ten are more than three, that the same thing cannot be both affirmed and denied at one time, that one thing is not both generated in time and eternal, nor both existent and non-existent, nor both necessary and impossible'.

However, he could not find the certainty he sought in the intellect and its ability to reason any more than he could in sense-perception. So far, there is nothing here that would startle anyone familiar with the development of modern philosophy since Descartes. After careful consideration, modern and postmodern philosophers might recognize some affinity between their own systematic doubt of foundational rationalism and Al-Ghazali's reason. At first glance, however, I think his argument here would strike them as decidedly premodern in its approach and in its assumptions. Al-Ghazali imagines a dialogue with his senses, in

which they make the following argument against the final, unequivocal reliability of the intellect and reason.

Sense-perception replied: 'Do you not expect that your reliance on intellectual truths will fare like your reliance on sense-perception? You used to trust in me; then along came the intellect judge and proved me wrong; if it were not for the intellect judge you would have continued to regard me as true. Perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge who, if he manifests himself, will show the falsity of intellect in its judging, just as, when intellect manifested itself, it showed the falsity of sense in its judging. The fact that such a supra-intellectual apprehension has not manifested itself is no proof that it is impossible'.

Modern and postmodern philosophy attack reason and rationality as firm foundations for certainty and truth on the basis of analysis. In attempting to understand the dependability of reason, philosophy since Descartes has tended to analyze the way it works. A number of conflicting analyses seek to explain how human understanding interprets, manipulates, and applies the data of the senses to achieve an intellectual apprehension of the world. In some of his other works, Al-Ghazali has a great deal to say about *how* this connection between sense-perception and intellectual apprehension functions; he does not do so here. His reason for questioning the reliability of human reason is different. It is one thing to approach the problem in terms of a Cartesian "dualism," Kantian a priori categories, or postmodernist social construction of meaning. It is quite another to posit the possibility of yet a higher level or kind of human knowing.

It is here that Al-Ghazali seems furthest removed from modern and postmodern approaches to philosophy. However, the basis for his denial of either empirical or rational foundationalism would probably be intelligible to modern and postmodern thinkers. His reasoning seems to be based primarily in what today would be called developmental psychology.

Man's information about the world is by means of perception; and every perception of perceptibles is created so that thereby man may have some acquaintance with a world (or sphere) from among existents. By 'worlds (or spheres)' we simply mean 'classes of existents'.

The first thing created in man was the sense of *touch*, and by it he perceives certain classes of existents, such as heat and cold,

moisture and dryness, smoothness and roughness. Touch is completely unable to apprehend colours and noises. These might be non-existent so far as concerns touch.

Next there is created in him the sense of *sight*, and by it he apprehends colours and shapes. This is the most extensive of the worlds of sensibles. Next *hearing* is implanted in him, so that he hears sounds of various kinds. After that *taste* is created in him; and so on until he has completed the world of sensibles.

Next, when he is about seven years old, there is created in him *discernment* (or the power of distinguishing, *tamyiz*). This is a fresh stage in his development. He now apprehends more than the world of sensibles; and none of these additional factors (sc. relations, etc.) exists in the world of sense.

From this he ascends to another stage, and *intellect* (or reason) (*'aql*) is created in him. He apprehends things necessary, possible, impossible, things which do not occur in the previous stages.

What was crucial for Al-Ghazali, however, was not simply that this *is* the pattern of human development. For Al-Ghazali, as we shall see, this is not a complete analysis of human intellectual development.

I once read this section from the *Deliverance* to a friend who teaches psychology. He remarked that it reminded him of Piaget, except that he had never heard of anyone with a three-stage Piaget-like developmental psychology. It was written more than 500 years before Piaget. As important as it may be for the history of psychology, however, the passage helps explain the basis for Al-Ghazali's rejection of either sense-perception or reason as a firm foundation for sure and certain knowledge. The sentence immediately following the above passage in the text is "Beyond intellect there is yet another stage."

This last passage comes near the end of the text. When Al-Ghazali introduced his quest for certainty, he went no further than the simple statement that "The fact that such a supra-intellectual apprehension has not manifested itself is no proof that it is impossible." Logically, of course, his point is sound. One may *assume* that such a further apprehension is impossible. It would be difficult or impossible to *prove* that it is, in fact, impossible.

Perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that Al-Ghazali's views are furthest removed not from modern and postmodern approaches to philosophy, *per se*, but rather from the "secularism" that seems constantly to accompany them. By "secular" here, I

mean specifically those views which hold that anything and everything that is intelligible is intelligible solely in terms of elements which are part and parcel of the universe of which we are a part. In other words, “secular” here refers to worldviews that deny either the need or the possibility of any “transcendent” categories beyond the existence of the universe. Of course, Al-Ghazali is no secularist. One could even argue that secularism would not be an option for him in any case, whether he succeeded in establishing with any certainty the reality of the transcendental categories of his philosophical and theological system. This is because it is impossible to establish, with absolute certainty, the non-existence of insensible and super-rational realities. He would be compelled to remain a thorough-going skeptic.

Al-Ghazali recognized this himself. Here is how he described his condition as a result of his imaginary dialogue with his senses.

When these thoughts had occurred to me and penetrated my being, I tried to find some way of treating my unhealthy condition; but it was not easy. Such ideas can only be repelled by demonstration; but a demonstration requires a knowledge of first principles; since this is not admitted, however, it is impossible to make the demonstration. The disease was baffling, and lasted almost two months, during which I was a sceptic in fact though not in theory nor in outward expression.

Al-Ghazali concludes this section on his profound skepticism by explaining how he was relieved of these foundational doubts.

At length God cured me of the malady; my being was restored to health and an even balance; the necessary truths of the intellect became once more accepted, as I regained confidence in their certain and trustworthy character.

This did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshalled argument, but by a light which God most high cast into my breast. That light is the key to the greater part of knowledge.

This, however, was not the end of his journey. On the contrary, it was just a beginning. If God became the foundation of his return to the belief that knowledge did indeed rest upon a sure foundation, this would lead him inexorably to the mystic path of Islam, Sufism. His discussion of Sufism, however, comes toward the end of the text.

His God-given acceptance of the necessary truths of the intellect did not cause him to abandon his quest for certainty. It did, however, portend the direction it would take.

Al-Ghazali resumed his quest for certainty by identifying four categories of “seekers after truth.”

When God by His grace and abundant generosity cured me of this disease, I came to regard the various seekers (sc. after truth) as comprising four groups:

- (1) the *Theologians* (*mutakallimun*), who claim that they are the exponents of thought and intellectual speculation;
- (2) the *Batiniyah*, who consider that they, as the party of 'authoritative instruction' (*ta'lim*), alone derive truth from the infallible imam;
- (3) the *Philosophers*, who regard themselves as the exponents of logic and demonstration;
- (4) the *Sufis or Mystics*, who claim that they alone enter into the 'presence' (sc. of God), and possess vision and intuitive understanding.

I said within myself: 'The truth cannot lie outside these four classes. These are the people who tread the paths of the quest for truth. If the truth is not with them, no point remains in trying to apprehend the truth. There is certainly no point in trying to return to the level of naive and derivative belief (*taqlid*) once it has been left, since a condition of being at such a level is that one should not know one is there; when a man comes to know that, the glass of his naive beliefs is broken. This is a breakage which cannot be mended, a breakage not to be repaired by patching or by assembling of fragments. The glass must be melted once again in the furnace for a new start, and out of it another fresh vessel formed'.

Unlike some late modern and postmodern philosophers, Al-Ghazali did not question the existence of “truth” or even its knowability. He did, however, question on what basis one could, with any degree of confidence, decide between competing truth claims. His skepticism was not *whether* the truth could be correctly known and stated, but rather *whether* and *how* one could judge which formulation of the truth was, in fact, the true one.

This becomes abundantly clear in his discussion of the four categories just enumerated. He speaks highly of the theologians and commends them for doing an admirable job in fulfilling their own purpose. This purpose, he says, is to defend the truth of Islam against heretical innovation.

I commenced, then, with the science of Theology (*'ilm al-kalam*), and obtained a thorough grasp of it. I read the books of sound theologians and myself wrote some books on the subject. But it was a science, I found, which, though attaining its own aim, did not attain mine. Its aim was merely to preserve the creed of orthodoxy and to defend it against the deviations of heretics.

His main problem with the theologians is their ultimate dependence on arguments based on authority. "Authority" in this context means the authority of the Qur'ān, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, and the "consensus of the [Muslim] community." At the beginning of the *Deliverance*, Al-Ghazali had already stated that "the bonds of mere authority (*taqlid*) ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me." This is because such claims do not address the issue of how to determine the truth or falseness of the authority being relied upon.

Not only does he not deny the truth taught by the Muslim theologians, but he freely admits it and even accepts the efficacy and validity of their arguments for many.

I do not exclude the possibility that, for others than myself, these results have been sufficient; indeed, I do not doubt that this has been so for quite a number. But these results were mingled with naive belief in certain matters which are not included among first principles.

My purpose here, however, is to describe my own case, not to disparage those who sought a remedy thereby, for the healing drugs vary with the disease. How often one sick man's medicine proves to be another's poison!

Here is a clear assertion that he is writing for those who seek sure and certain foundations for the truth of knowledge. He is not writing for the vast majority who are not plagued by that level of doubt.

He then turns his attention to "philosophy." It must be remembered that in Al-Ghazali's time and place, in fact up to the time of Descartes, "philosophy" included everything that we would include in the now distinct disciplines of philosophy, the "hard" sciences, and the human sciences. At the beginning of this discussion, he makes an important point about the integrity of intellectual inquiry.

After I had done with theology I started on philosophy. I was convinced that a man cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question

that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles, and even goes beyond and surpasses them, probing into some of the tangles and profundities which the very professors of the science have neglected. Then and only then is it possible that what he has to assert about its defects is true.

...

I realized that to refute a system before understanding it and becoming acquainted with its depths is to act blindly. I therefore set out in all earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy ... Thereafter I continued to reflect assiduously for nearly a year on what I had assimilated, going over it in my mind again and again and probing its tangled depths, until I comprehended surely and certainly how far it was deceitful and confusing and how far true and a representation of reality.

When I use Al-Ghazali's text in class, I usually attempt to explain this point in more contemporary terms. This restatement of Al-Ghazali's point generally follows these lines. Take any controversial issue: abortion, gay rights, economic concerns, ecological concerns, etc. If you cannot understand how someone (who is just as bright, knowledgeable, caring, and honest as you are) is on the other side of the issue, then you do not understand the other side of the issue. There are people of equal intelligence, knowledge, sincerity, and caring on both sides of all these issues. Personally, I think that Al-Ghazali's text should be a frequent assignment for students, if only to elicit a discussion of the point he is making here.

I refer to this argument as "Al-Ghazali's Test for the Integrity of an Intellectual Inquiry." The point seems obvious enough when one stops to think about it. On the other hand, very little, I believe, that seeks to pass as genuine intellectual inquiry could pass this test. I am not speaking only of the mass media aimed at the public in general, although perhaps here, more than anywhere else, the rigorous application of this test is of the utmost importance. Even serious academic scholarship, however, often fails to meet the criteria of this test.

He identifies six categories of "philosophy": mathematics, logic, "the natural sciences or physics," metaphysics, politics, and ethics. Each of these categories receive substantive treatment, and his conclusions about the value of each are clear and concise. Of mathematics, he affirms that: "None of its results are connected with religious matters, either to deny or to affirm them." Concerning logic, he claims: "Nothing in logic is relevant to religion by way of denial or

affirmation.” When he discusses the natural sciences and physics, he points out that “just as it is not a condition of religion to reject medical science, so likewise the rejection of natural science is not one of its conditions, except with regard to particular points which I enumerate in my book, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*.” The “particular points” to which he is referring include, for example, the eternity of matter and the denial of the bodily resurrection. Metaphysics is the place where “occur most of the errors of the philosophers.” After giving a definition of politics, he claims that political philosophers “borrow [their basic insights] from the Divine scriptures revealed through the prophets and from the maxims handed down from the saints of old.” Of philosophical ethicists, he writes: “Their whole discussion of ethics consists in defining the characteristics and moral constitution of the soul and enumerating the various types of soul and the method of moderating and controlling them. This they borrow from the teaching of the mystics.”

It is not that Al-Ghazali has no criticisms of mathematics, logic, or the “hard” sciences. His criticisms, however, center on the deleterious effect that these sciences can have *outside* their proper area of competence. He notes that some people, overly impressed by the precision and apodictic quality of the hard sciences begin to dismiss other areas of knowledge where neither of these qualities are possible. Alternatively, they may be so impressed with the solid accomplishments of mathematics, logic, and the “hard” sciences, that they assume that those who are accomplished in these areas must be equally competent in all aspects of knowledge. Thus, when they learn that many scientists are atheists or agnostics, they assume their views in this area must be as well grounded as their views in the sciences. He makes this point in the section on mathematics and it is worth quoting here. One must remember that “philosophy” and “philosopher” in this context includes the categories we now distinguish as “science” and “scientists.” In Al-Ghazali's first three sections under philosophy, “science” and “scientist” would be the more accurate translation in a modern context.

The first is that every student of mathematics admires its precision and the clarity of its demonstrations. This leads him to believe in the philosophers and to think that all their sciences resemble this one in clarity and demonstrative cogency. Further, he has already heard the accounts on everyone's lips of their unbelief, their denial of God's attributes, and their contempt for revealed truth; he becomes an

unbeliever merely by accepting them as authorities (*bi'l-taqlid al-mahd*), and says to himself, 'If religion were true, it would not have escaped the notice of these men since they are so precise in this science'. Thus, after becoming acquainted by hearsay with their unbelief and denial of religion, he draws the conclusion that the truth is the denial and rejection of religion. How many have I seen who err from the truth because of this high opinion of the philosophers and without any other basis!

Conversely, he points out that others, believing that, since the religious beliefs of these people are wrong, they ought to dismiss anything they say, including the sound conclusions of science. Of this group, for example, he writes:

The second drawback arises from the man who is loyal to Islam but ignorant. He thinks that religion must be defended by rejecting every science connected with the philosophers, and so rejects all their sciences and accuses them of ignorance therein. He even rejects their theory of the eclipse of sun and moon, considering that what they say is contrary to revelation. When that view is thus attacked, someone hears who has knowledge of such matters by apodeictic demonstration. He does not doubt his demonstration, but, believing that Islam is based on ignorance and the denial of apodeictic proof, grows in love for philosophy and hatred for Islam.

Al-Ghazali's criticisms of the "hard" sciences, based as it is on their influence on other members of society who are not themselves trained in these sciences, reflects the concerns of contemporary postmodernism. Postmodernism is generally associated with the human sciences. Postmodernists have written much in the areas of art, literature, history, sociology, politics, and culture. It is easy to find many books on and by postmodernist thinkers in which the word "science" does not even appear in the index. However, one aspect of the postmodern critique of science relates directly to its social function and role. Postmodernists argue that science long ago abandoned anything approaching its claim to "be the disinterested quest for the truth about nature." Instead, postmodernism insists that "science" must be understood as a social construct like any other, and this is true whether or not one accepts the efficacy of its methods and whether or not one accepts the presuppositions of the scientific method. "Hard" science, no less than the human sciences, must function within the social, political, educational, and economic realities of its time and place.²

Al-Ghazali's concerns are definitely not those of postmodernism. He shares none of their skepticism about the possibility of knowing and discerning correctly between things that are true and things that are false. Yet, he clearly would not dismiss the postmodernist concern for the social construction of knowledge. This is clear from his observation that "Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims." Although the words are not his, Al-Ghazali would not, per se, deny "the social construction of meaning." The word "cross" obviously "means" something different to a Christian than it does to Muslim in the sense that it will have different significance, value, and connotations for each. This, however, does not keep either of them from correctly identifying the "shape" of a cross when it is perceived by the senses. He is aware that even science operates within a social context and argues that this social dimension of science can have a deleterious effect on the "social meaning" of a whole society. There is nothing that would imply that Al-Ghazali is unaware of the reality of "socially constructed meaning." For him, however, it complicates the possibility of distinguishing true statements from false ones; it does not, however, negate the possibility of doing so.

It is customary with weaker intellects thus to take the men as criterion of the truth and not the truth as criterion of the men. The intelligent man follows 'Ali (may God be pleased with him) when he said, 'Do not know the truth by the men, but know the truth, and then you will know who are truthful'. The intelligent man knows the truth; then he examines the particular assertion. If it is true, he accepts it, whether the speaker is a truthful person or not. Indeed he is often anxious to separate out the truth from the discourses of those who are in error, for he knows that gold is found mixed in gravel with dross. The money-changer suffers no harm if he puts his hand into the counterfeiter's purse; relying on his skill he picks the true gold from among the spurious and counterfeit coins. It is only the simple villager, not the experienced money-changer, who is made to abstain from dealings with the counterfeiter. It is not the strong swimmer who is kept back from the shore, but the clumsy tiro; not the accomplished snakecharmer who is barred from touching the snake, but the ignorant boy.

Even a cursory reading of the *Deliverance*, will reveal Al-Ghazali's deep conviction that the intellectual abilities of many (he strongly implies most) people are weak. He is, therefore, very

concerned about the social dimension of meaning and its influence on the beliefs of most people. At the end of the *Deliverance*, he identifies four negative influences on people whose intellectual abilities or development are weak.

When I considered the reasons for people's laxity and weakness of faith, I found there were four:

- (a) a reason connected with those who engage in philosophy;
- (b) a reason connected with those who engage in the mystic way;
- (c) a reason connected with those who profess the doctrine of *ta'lim*;
- (d) a reason based on the practice of those who are popularly described as having knowledge.

He gives examples of each category. Instead of repeating them all here, one example will suffice. The interested reader can find the others easily in the online text. The following quote is an example he gives of the first category. It illustrates one way errors based on the philosophy can develop.

A fifth man says: 'I do not perform these acts out of obedience to authority (*taqlidan*). I have studied philosophy and I know that prophecy actually exists and that its achievement is wise and beneficial. I see that the acts of worship it prescribes aim at keeping order among the common people and restraining them from fighting and quarreling with one another and from giving rein to their desires. But I am not one of the ignorant common people that I should enter within the narrow confines of duty. On the contrary I am one of the wise, I follow wisdom, and thereby see clearly (for myself) so that I do not require to follow authority'.

This is the final word of the faith of those who study the system of the theistic philosophers, as you may learn from the works of Ibn Sina and Abu Nasr al-Farabi.

Al-Ghazali then refers the reader to some of his other works for examples of how he believes it is possible to deal with some of the problems created by unclear thinking.

In most catalogues of Al-Ghazali's works, the *Deliverance* is listed among his works on Sufism, Islamic mysticism. In fact, when I use the text in class, it is always in conjunction with a course or module on Sufism. As noted above, Al-Ghazali said that God had cured him sufficiently for him to regain a working confidence in sense-perception and reason. However, this was the kind of "cure"

that cures only the symptoms and not the disease itself. Al-Ghazali's desire for certainty remained.

Having found that theology, philosophy, science, and the “authoritative teaching” of the Bāṭiniyyah [Ismā‘īlī Shī‘ism] form of Islam could not produce the level of certainty for which he was searching, he turned to the fourth category on his list of “seekers after truth,” the Sufīs.

When I had finished with these sciences, I next turned with set purpose to the method of mysticism (or Sufism). I knew that the complete mystic ‘way’ includes both ‘intellectual belief and practical activity; the latter consists in getting rid of the obstacles in the self and in stripping off its base characteristics and vicious morals, so that the heart may attain to freedom from what is not God and to constant recollection of Him.

The intellectual belief was easier to me than the practical activity. I began to acquaint myself with their belief by reading their books, such as *The Food of the Hearts* by Abu Talib al-Makki (God have mercy upon him), the works of al-Harith al-Muhasibi, the various anecdotes about al-Junayd, ash-Shibli and Abu Yazid al-Bistami (may God sanctify their spirits), and other discourses of their leading men. I thus comprehended their fundamental teachings on the intellectual side, and progressed, as far as is possible by study and oral instruction, in the knowledge of mysticism. It became clear to me, however, that what is most distinctive of mysticism is something which cannot be apprehended by study, but only by immediate experience (*dhawq* – literally ‘tasting’), by ecstasy and by a moral change. What a difference there is between *knowing* the definition of health and satiety, together with their causes and presuppositions, and *being* healthy and satisfied! What a difference between being acquainted with the definition of drunkenness - namely, that it designates a state arising from the domination of the seat of the intellect by vapours arising from the stomach - and being drunk! Indeed, the drunken man while in that condition does not know the definition of drunkenness nor the scientific account of it; he has not the very least scientific knowledge of it. The sober man, on the other hand, knows the definition of drunkenness and its basis, yet he is not drunk in the very least. Again the doctor, when he is himself ill, knows the definition and causes of health and the remedies which restore it, and yet is lacking in health. Similarly there is a difference between knowing the true nature and causes and

conditions of the ascetic life and actually leading such a life and forsaking the world.

I apprehended clearly that the mystics were men who had real experiences, not men of words, and that I had already progressed as far as was possible by way of intellectual apprehension. What remained for me was not to be attained by oral instruction and study but only by immediate experience and by walking in the mystic way.

The first thing Al-Ghazali does is to make a sharp distinction between Sufism and the other categories of seekers after truth. Sufism, unlike the others, is more than an “intellectual” endeavor. “Intellectual” here is meant broadly; it includes all forms of reasoning, both the purely logical and the scientific. Al-Ghazali believes that a bright person can learn the intellectual knowledge of the first three categories from careful study of their written materials. The knowledge of the Sufis, however, cannot be learned from books, even if one's understanding of the material is perfect. It is an experience. It is clear that this is an experience of God; by definition, therefore, it is transcendent experience.

The exact nature of it is, therefore, problematic. It does not lend itself to rational examination, because reason, by definition, does not transcend itself. There are some awkward corollaries of this, and Al-Ghazali is fully aware of them. He speaks of the fact that the mystic experience cannot be described or discussed in words or concepts. He warns Sufis that to try to do so will inevitably lead to error.

In general what they manage to achieve is nearness to God; some, however, would conceive of this as 'inherence' (*hulul*), some as 'union' (*ittihad*), and some as 'connection' (*wusul*). All that is erroneous. In my book, *The Noblest Aim*, I have explained the nature of the error here. Yet he who has attained the mystic 'state' need do no more than say:

Of the things I do not remember, what was, was;
Think it good; do not ask an account of it.

(Ibn al-Mu'tazz).

Al-Ghazali may well have had in mind the famous execution of the Baghdadi mystic Maṣūf al-Ḥallāj. Al-Hallaj was executed for blasphemy in 922 C.E., almost two centuries before Al-Ghazali's own death in 1111 C.E. He had said “I am the Truth [*or* the Real]” (*anā al-ḥaqq*). *Al-ḥaqq* is one of the Ninety-nine Names of God. The implication of his utterance was a clear identification of himself with

God. He was hardly the only Sufi to use such language. In fact, most schools of Islamic law allow that utterances spoken in a state of mystic ecstasy are not punishable, because the person has no more control of his actions than does someone who is totally inebriated.

Of course, the certainty of this experience is granted only to the person who receives it. However, as mentioned earlier, Al-Ghazali's doubt was never about the existence, knowability, and expressibility of "truth." Rather, he was concerned with "certainty," which is, for him, a higher and more rigorous concept than truth. An obvious corollary of this is that the truth or falseness of an assertion can be known even when certainty is not present.

Now this is a mystical 'state' which is realized in immediate experience by those who walk in the way leading to it. Those to whom it is not granted to have immediate experience can become assured of it by trial (sc. contact with mystics or observation of them) and by hearsay, if they have sufficiently numerous opportunities of associating with mystics to understand that (sc. ecstasy) with certainty by means of what accompanies the 'states'. Whoever sits in their company derives from them this faith; and none who sits in their company is pained.

...

[The level of] certainty reached by demonstration is *knowledge* ('ilm); actual acquaintance with that 'state' is *immediate experience* (*dhawq*); the acceptance of it as probable from hearsay and trial (or observation) is *faith* (*iman*). These are three degrees. 'God will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in degrees (se. of honour)' (Q. 58, 12).

In a sense, Al-Ghazali's *Deliverance* can be read as a very modern text. The author shares with modern philosophy a concern for certainty, and this creates a refusal to accept either empiricism or rationalism as secure foundations for truth. If one reads his text for meaning and does not get caught up in its alien language and cultural, one can detect an anti-foundationalism almost as radical as that held by contemporary postmodernists. He also resonates with modernity in his concern for context, including the social dimension of meaning, and for language.

On the other hand, his concern with direct *experience* enables him see a multilevel foundation of knowledge. First, there is the *experience* of sense-perception. Then, there is the *experience* of the faculty he associates with the age of discernment. There follows the *experience* of rational, thought and the intellectual understanding that

it enables. Finally, there is the possibility to *experience* the mystic's nearness to God. Each level is accessible to the level(s) above it, but not the other way around. It is the commonality of human experience that enables Al-Ghazali to believe that, although there is a powerful element of the “social construction of meaning” in the reality of human existence, human experience itself is foundational for all forms of knowledge. It thus provides a basis for the conviction that “truth” exists, that it is expressible, and that it is testable.

We have discussed Al-Ghazali's rejection of either an empirical or a rational foundationalism for the dependability of human knowledge. In his discussion of the various categories of “seekers after truth,” Al-Ghazali discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. He develops what I call his “Test for the Integrity of an Intellectual Inquiry.”

Al-Ghazali ultimately finds his absolute certainty in the way of the mystics. He sees mystical enlightenment as another stage in the development of the human person. In conclusion, although this 900 year-old treatise anticipates many of the categories of modern and postmodernist philosophy, it does this in the defense of “truth;” in defense of its comprehensibility and its communicability.

NOTES:

- ¹. A literal translation of the title of Al-Ghazali's work would be *That Which [or He Who] Delivers from Error*. However, the Watt translation, which I use throughout the article, consistently translates the title as *Deliverance from Error*. All quotations are taken from an online version of Montgomery Watt's translation. There are no page numbers or paragraph numbering provided in the internet source, and so none are provided with the quotations. The text used throughout the article is: W. Montgomery Watt, tr., *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1953. (Al-Ghazali.org. 28 June 2014 <http://www.ghazali.org/works/watt3.htm>)
- ². For a fuller discussion of postmodernism and science, see: Iain Hamilton Grant, “Postmodernism and Science and Technology,” in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. Stuart Sim, Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 65-77.

Notes on Goethe's *Faust*

Awakening

The beginning is illegal, heretical, perilous – and eminently active. Not a trace of elegiac anguish. With the logical thoroughness of an academic and the self-indulgence of an anarchist, Faust surveys and passes judgment on the world he has known until now: the official academic world and its institutions, the society in which he has until now played a role. He even passes judgment on all his associates – none of whom can hold a candle to him – which we find believable when we later compare him with his colleague Wagner, who is not stupid, but a normal, intellectually gifted academic scholar. Here a man is burning all the bridges behind him and moving on to new frontiers. He will experience many things, but one thing is without doubt: he will never return to the narrow world of scholastic philosophy, dogmatic theology, speculative medicine and ossified jurisprudence. He is finished with the isolation of pure theory. But rejection is not freedom, and the three big attempts of this night end very differently than he wants. At dawn on Easter morning the man who had set out to seize all that the universe had to offer is left weeping with despair and uttering the words, “The earth has me again!”

The magnitude of the attempt is equivalent to the magnitude of the defeat. To get from “Am I a god?” to “I am like a worm” requires a great fall. The delights of the macrocosm soon show themselves to be delusory. The attempt to magically absorb and conquer infinite space and time is shattered from without. “You are like the spirit in your mind – not me!” Faust cannot comprehend the equivocation in this rejection – not here and now. Being forced to earn his freedom and existence is the final word of wisdom.¹

Drawing himself back up from the collapse of knowing himself as the “most miserable of the sons of earth” and restoring his Faustian self-awareness, he now counters the Earth Spirit’s rejection with “all or nothing.” Since “No dog can go on living like this,” the euphoric programmatic suicide is the unavoidable

Heinz-Uwe Haus, PhD, is Professor of Theatre at the Department of Theatre of the University of Delaware.
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alternative: negative self-actualization. But then he is wrenched back from this explosion turned into implosion on Easter morning by a simple, almost banal stirring of emotion: childhood memories.

But the suicide is theoretically carried out. The “all or nothing” stays with him, and he will die many such deaths. In this hour he is predisposed for the course of his life: he who does not fear death will also accept the devil.

Alternative

Easter stroll – Faust among the people – a happy resurrection? Even great sympathy toward his character cannot hide that he is distant and aloof from other people, and that their gratitude evokes only a despairing bad conscience in him. He can understand their joy in nature, given the burden and limitation of their lives, but he can't relate to it. He remains a pained observer: where they dance, he dreams of flying, and already the protest and rebellion are there again. The failed magician will be easy prey for the poodle trailing flames.

The briefly opened door of the study closes again. The unappeased restlessness seeks the quiet of the evening in the cozy lamplight, but this is a strange self-deception: the catacombs of rebellion as reading room for a devotional hour. But already in the first sentence of the New Testament, it isn't working. Faust, the dissatisfied, translates anew, “In the beginning was the Deed!” and immediately the poodle begins to whine. Mephisto, simultaneously disturbed and called, appears on the scene after staging a short, gimmicky introductory event – “Why all the fuss?” The action man, the practitioner, the man of the world offers his services, explaining, “Even the coarsest company will make you feel more human.” He has more of such banal proposals, and therein the solution to the riddle is hidden, though including the solution is unintended by him and not yet recognized by Faust. The solution is in the experience of living, and engaging in the sphere of human activity and individual fulfillment. But for the moment, there is no talk of this. Faust, who has nothing left to lose anyway, is deftly manipulated to a low point by Mephisto, in which he renounces not only faith, hope and charity, but also reason and knowledge, and then dedicates himself to frenzy and “the rush of incidents.” Instead of identification with the universe, identification with humanity – but the step into the real is

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oriented in a pessimistic direction: “And with it, one day meet my end.”

Mephisto’s error in the wager is after all very understandable. He is convinced that the experience that he offers, and as he understands it, must inevitably corrupt Faust. That is wholly the attitude of the philistine, (“What is man, but half angel and half devil”) who doesn’t believe in how the experience can humanize.

But Faust is playing his own trump card at this moment: “As soon as I stop striving, I’m a slave.” With these – historically sensational – terms of the wager, he keeps their duel under purely earthly and human conditions. This is where he gets his chance – but no certain victory: active striving to see, to discover, to engage in endless desire. The wager is to be taken literally and contextually: it’s not only a question of “the moment” and the “Stay with me,” but also a question of knowing the difference between the “the right way and the wrong” that is mentioned in the prologue in heaven. In the sense of this “double-entry bookkeeping,” Faust’s accounts are not settled until the end. The scales of judgment teeter between the two participants in the wager all the way to Philemon and Baucus.² It’s not until the vision that we see a final decision, that the eternal striving has led upwards. At that point the argument about the moment becomes pointless.

When Faust exits, the student enters. Vague and yet energetic ambition encounters Mephisto’s cold analysis of the facts. This scene illustrates Faust’s account of his situation at the beginning. But where Faust rebelled, Mephisto shines with the escape he offers both the student and Faust: adapt to the dull misery of life, of which the highlight is poking around lingerie. Then he flies off with Faust on the magic cloak, and the “new course of life” begins in the academic neighborhood: Auerbach’s Cellar. Faust, unused to this kind of academic life, is initially inhibited, then aloof. He experiences only the vulgar flipside of the milieu he has abandoned. This is only a confirmation of the break he has made from his life, and no new beginning. For Mephisto this episode represents no grand operation, but a botched start.

Observations on Plot, Form, and Rhythm

After Auerbach’s Cellar comes the first break – for us the intermission. After that there is a new tone, a leap into another level.

Note on the course of the plot: Faust exits his study (in the broad sense) and enters the world. He engages in lively and sensual activity, which shows the measure of this man, and changes him.

Aesthetically, this is the move from accentuated subjectivity of the first phase into a gradual objectification of Faust in the world. This objectification grows continually until the vision,³ in which he sees the potential of unifying subject & object, self and humanity, freedom & necessity.

Scenically this corresponds to the importance of the monolog. Everything is experienced with Faust, through Faust, everything is seen, shown and absorbed by him and for him. Empathy and identification are required. There's no true dialog with living, corporeal partners like Wagner. And the actual dialog partners (Earth Spirit, Mephisto) are more like counterpoints in a monolog than they are real partner. Mephisto, in his double role of both fantastic and highly terrestrial figure, leads the way into the second phase, from Faust's monolog world into his dialog world, and this world appears to him in Gretchen, as Gretchen, and through her.

It is worth noting how, after the diversity of voices that follow in *Faust, Part II*, (the scenes: Court of the Emperor, Classical Walpurgis Night, the Helen act and War), the monolog prevails again in the 5th act. Faust's journey of experience and perception manifests itself in the height of subjectivity (blindness and monolog) and yet becomes one with the deepest objectivity. ("Upon free soil with a free people" – but NOT in the placid calm of an end – "surrounded by danger" one must conquer freedom every day...)

The rhythm of the first part is rapid. The joke becomes serious: "begin with the end of the world, and then slowly build up from there..." Here there is not only external tempo on top of the events, but also painstakingly subdued fervor in the moments of rest, in the lyrical mood, and above all, there are harsh, fast, often contrapuntal montages of scenes, and they culminate in the clamoring contradiction between the static, tender idyll of Gretchen's world and the dynamic passion of her bursting into love.

This internal and external tempo, the montages of contradictions – these are not only technique, but appropriate form for the revolutionary explosive power of the fable. This is a revolution taking place in Germany – on stage (and in philosophy).

Tragedy of Love

Mephisto's plan seems to be working. Faust, who had started out pessimistically, has received an education in the witch's kitchen: he has been civilized into a man of the world and prepped for sexual indulgence, he is ready to enter the world as a lecherous seducer. The encounter with Gretchen comes harshly on cue, "With that stuff in your belly, I guarantee, you'll find a Helen in every girl you see." This encounter is the first, best opportunity to show the frivolity of the "depraved man" (Brecht).

But the "depraved man" is Faust, and Gretchen is not the "first, best." Faust breaks into an unfamiliar, parochial, self-contained world. He discovers boundaries, he discovers beauty. Mephisto has awakened Faust's libido, but not killed his emotions: in sensuality he seeks beauty, in pleasure he seeks productivity, and in Gretchen he seeks the world. But even as he slips from Mephisto's grasp, he is driven squarely back into his arms through the unavoidable catastrophe.

Gretchen is not the world, and her love is itself a Faustian escape from her world of limiting convention, rigid dogma and narrow-minded morality. This attempt to escape out into freedom fails because of what makes it great: the constraints on each of the lovers. In the most beautiful moments of their love, two individuals meet. Faust has no world to offer, as he is on a journey, and Gretchen's alternative is her world, in which she remains bound by a thousand societal shackles. Faust attempts to flee the unavoidable conflict: Forest and Cave. Using inner turmoil and self-deceit Mephisto forces him to make a decision about Gretchen, and Faust concludes, "[May] both of us hurry toward destruction." But she will be destroyed without him. Faust must choose between being disloyal to himself or to Gretchen. The decision is tragic, and no one can take the responsibility from him. It remains to be seen whether he is able to accept that responsibility.

Gretchen's major free decision is her surrender to Faust after their discussion on religion. It's not only a matter of sleeping with a man before marriage – she's giving herself to a man who is outside the framework of the laws of her world, and she's not asking about religion, law or security. Then the norms and institutions, codes, and ecclesiastical and bourgeois morality come at her, destroying her entire family. Mephisto entraps Faust in these norms (killing

Valentin is a capital crime) and easily pushes him to betray Gretchen.

Mephisto has a scheme to continue to push Faust's unassuaged drives, and work against passionate emotion and regret. This plan centers on Walpurgis Night:⁴ the "eternal feminine draws us downward."⁵ But the Witch's Sabbath, like everything else in this story, has two sides. On one hand it is a fantastic composition of the animalistic, equivocal, reactionary, and unproductive side of the human world, but on the other hand it shows the pagan and natural world in opposition to how the clerical & dogmatic institutions denounce nature and violate the senses. Mephisto maliciously invents generalizations on human behavior and contemporary societal conditions that are verifiable through thousands of facts, and offers these inventions on the level of empiric evidence with cynical corollaries. He follows the dialectic law "everything that's been created deserves to be destroyed" with "better it had never been created." Faust is all too human enough to succumb to the temptations of the Walpurgis orgy. The memory of Gretchen calls to him and brings jarring dissonance to the scene: at this moment he's not an ascetic, but a man nearly flooded in sexuality. The contradiction is *in him*, however, since he produces the memory himself. His accusations against Mephisto are honest in his frantic despair, but they are not justified. Mephisto counters his reproaches with "Who ruined her, me or you?"

On magic horses Mephisto & Faust go by the place of execution on the way to Gretchen. The mood is gloomy, she's penned up in a cage, the place is not unlike a pigsty. But rescue through Mephisto's aid, by Faust, whose love is dying away in blood guilt and a new lust for life, is not possible for her. She had based her life on love, against God and against the world. And now that love is dead. ("Where has your love gone?") *That* has driven her to madness, and in insane despair she submits to the verdict of the world from which she tried to escape. Faust has been defeated and hauled away by Mephisto, and Gretchen has been dragged out to the blood court, but above them the voice of eternity – God, history – resonates with majestic coolness: "She is saved!" We call on you to hope – the legacy, not consolation of the one who has been sacrificed.

The usual Mephisto

It's time to leave the theatrical black, white & green demon behind us. Mephisto as devil belongs in the costume of folk tale: horns, talons, cloven foot, tail, shaggy fur, gruesomely comical. As an earthly being he wears normal human clothing and a normal human face. What kind of devil would he be if he couldn't conjure up a human appearance that inspired confidence? And what a statement! – discovering the devil in that which is “normal”! He never quite sheds being the Prince of Darkness, he must deal with the annoyances of daily life and human custom, he is happy when he is allowed to behave as he generally would in his line of work (Witch's Kitchen, Walpurgis Night), and has the mysterious and yet also ludicrous contradiction between his human appearance and his devilish magic tricks. All of these things give this figure theatrical dimensions, the appeal and wit in the combination of earthly partner and medieval specter.

There is nothing demonic about Mephisto. He's too negative for that (said Goethe to Eckermann). At the same time Goethe declares both the “dismal, unsatisfied ambition of the protagonist” along with the “derision and harsh irony of Mephistopheles” to be parts of his own nature. Mephisto is clever, with esprit, wit, and sometimes even charm; he is sharp observer and keen analyst, and he is a realist when Faust is an idealistic rhetorician. Already in the prologue the Lord declares that people need a prickly negative partner. It's clear that Faust would be lost without Mephisto – he wouldn't take a step into real life and experience. That negation begins in a dull manner and becomes nasty, but it begins, and therein lies the possibility of creating. Mephisto's magic arts are on the level of county fair tricks, but also in anticipation of technical advances (flight, military techniques, building of canals, shipping). Evil motivation cannot diminish technical quality. It is clear that there is no human progress in which Mephistophelian characteristics have not played a role. Mephisto has something that is both attractive and necessary.

But what do these abilities add up to? Faust is always in danger from vague passion, furious desire for insight, unbridled desire for experience; he stands at the edge of chaos and is able to maintain his ground only because of the creative essence of his human existence. He needs Mephisto, but without this essence, he would be lost through Mephisto.

For Mephisto experience, intelligence, and realism (materialism) conversely add up to negative essence: pessimism, egotism and opportunism are his life's maxims. He is a philistine. There is a polarity in his character: he's attractive & appealing, but his being also inspires repulsion and rejection, and the horror at repulsion and rejection is exactly the goal. The Mephisto philistine shimmers in many shades: he is an intellectual and a back-alley plebian; he's conservative and then progressive. In his *core* he is – in complete opposition to Faust – *static*. Faust criticizes, offers opposition, rebels – there is motion from the internal to the external, and the external to the internal. Mephisto analyzes, mocks, and both practices and preaches assimilation: this is only intake from the external to the internal. Mephisto accordingly bears all the rules and laws (and restraints) of the devil's world from which he has emerged, as a matter of course. He is the chief executive officer of hell, with the tangible technical and magical skills of his business, but lacking the ambition and the ability to change anything about himself or hell. A man like Faust – a man who both possesses and uses the ability to shed his own skin and to grow beyond himself – is highly irritating to Mephisto the philistine. These abilities alone allow the Faust who is initially helpless and dependent on Mephisto and his kind in all terrestrial things to be victorious in the end.

Mephisto as an earthly being has a capable brain, is a shrewd thinker, cynical practitioner, and platitudinous philosopher. This life-threatening combination needs only external attributes and a dramatic introduction (the prologue in heaven), and the devil on earth is ready.

Beginning and Ending in Heaven

The play begins in heaven (after the prelude in the theater), and this scene is on the open stage, with bare stagecraft, with familiar props, very modern and direct: we and our audience.

This is a theatrical heaven: the act of theater, the deed, is to show, and then to play without inhibition. We don't want clericalism, transcendentalism or coyly underplayed atheism here. In this case one must build on Faust's earthly story.

The basic situation is similar to the milieu of a feudal medieval court: welcoming of the hosts, report, paying homage. Then further, a view of the big picture. The archangel's extolment is

genuine and dreadful at the same time – they don't pay close attention to earth. "And yet your servants, Lord, revere the gentle turning of your day." Mephisto arrives late, is out of place, takes a stand against this view: nihilism against APOLOGETICS! Out of the old struggle (Lucifer, Adam & Eve, Job) the wager emerges: the Lord, who finds his self-confident serenity challenged, makes use of Faust as a new example: one human represents the chance for humanity. Overlying the wager is a repressed irritation and uncertainty in the Lord: the conclusion is open, the human has all possibilities in himself; Creation was ended imperfectly: humankind has the ability to bring creation to its conclusion or destroy it. With the view from the prologue in heaven onto the distant earth, Faust's story receives a general theme: does life has meaning, does humanity have a chance at advancement, of knowledge, ruling over the world, or is life only an empty cycle of forced existence between birth and death in which one chases naked self-preservation, stale indulgence, futile deeds and animal pleasures?

The prologue in heaven turns Faust into the chief witness, and the function of the prologue is to put Faust's philosophic and historic story in a prominent position. Coming out of the prologue, the audience must become Faust, then become his witness, and finally become judge. The audience must produce a positive judgment from the vision – otherwise the heaven of the epilogue⁶ becomes a superfluous and empty apotheosis.

Here Faust's story leads again into the heights above time and space, out of the narrow historical reality into the unlimited reality of development. The heaven of the prologue drew humoristic elements out of the dramatic setting – it wasn't material, but still of the world. The heaven of the epilog is distant, almost crystalline, deeply earnest. The difference emphasizes that the cycle will not be closed with an enlightening answer to the wager of the beginning. Instead of that we get the resurrection of Faust as a theatrical image for the resolution of his ambition in the coming centuries. No conclusion of motion, but ever onward, upward without end: Faust, youthful, a gigantic individual, because he has become an example, goes through all spheres of heaven, through all times. The task remains to show this movement without end: it is the essence of history.



Note: The author recently adapted and directed *FAUST I* for the Resident Ensemble Players (REP), Thompson Theatre, Roselle Center for the Arts, University of Delaware, Newark (opening March 8, 2014). The REP is Delaware's only resident professional acting company. Presenting some of the less frequently produced classics like *FAUST* is part of their mission to give audience and company the opportunity to engage in the diverse riches of live theatre.

Scenic & Lighting Design: William Browning, Costumes: Andrea Barrier, Choreography: Joann Browning; Faust: Stephen Pelinkski, Mephisto: Mic Matarrese, Gretchen: Sara J. Griffin

NOTES:

¹ The last word Wisdom ever has to say:
He only earns his Freedom and Existence,
Who's forced to win them freshly every day. (Faust II, V:vi. The Great Outer Court of the Palace)

² Faust, Part 2.

³ at the end of Faust II

⁴ Faust II

⁵ This quotation is from the end of Faust II – but it contains either a typo or a deliberate alteration of the text. The quotation is “zieht uns hinan” – “draws us upward/onward.” This article quotes the line as “zieht uns hinab” – “draws us downward.”

⁶ at the end of Faust II





Despre cauzele și sensul suferinței

Starea primordială a omului – după chipul și asemănarea lui Dumnezeu – nu cunoștea nici boala, nici suferința, nici moartea.¹ Abia odată cu ispitirea și căderea lui din Rai omul a pierdut această situație creându-se un dezechilibru în ordinea naturii. Aceasta din urmă a devenit coruptibilă, supusă alterării. Moartea a fost introdusă în natură pentru ca starea de păcat – care exprimă situația omului după cădere – să nu se perpetueze.² În starea primordială, omul se afla într-un echilibru cu sine și cu Dumnezeu, echilibru care îi asigura deplină sănătate și nemurire. Numai în urma alterării relației sale cu Dumnezeu, prin dorința de a deveni autonom și ajuns să acționeze independent, răul – adică boala, suferința și moartea – au pătruns în lume. Acestea au ajuns să caracterizeze condiția actuală a omului.

Însă suferința și moartea capătă sens prin evenimentele Întrupării, Pătimirii, Morții, Învierii lui Hristos și trimiterii Duhului Sfânt pentru călăuzirea omului pe drumul de întoarcere la Dumnezeu. Prin aceste evenimente, viața, suferința și moartea ființei umane capătă un înțeles nemaiîntâlnit. Dacă acestea acționau în dauna omului – suferința și moartea cu neputință de a fi depășite –, după asumarea de către însuși Dumnezeu a unui trup omenesc, ele au ajuns să lucreze în favoarea lui spre unirea cu El. Hristos a sfințit prin viața sa această situație a omului, transformându-i înțelesul.³ Cei care acceptă revelația lui Dumnezeu dau ascultare Cuvântului revelat al Acestuia. O întregă învățătură a fost lăsată oamenilor spre descoperirea misterului suferinței și al morții, după exemplul lui Hristos.

John Breck constată faptul că atunci când depășește anumite limite, durerea fizică și suferința psihică prelungită, pot învinge voința și frânge cele mai bune intenții ale inimii. Ea poate dezumaniza sau depersonaliza omul lăsându-l fără speranță și asuprit doar de gândul propriei sale situații mizere. Viața poate să devină o povară de nesuportat. Puterea de a urma țelurile vieții sau

Gabriela Munteanu, Drd. Facultatea de Filosofie și Științe Social-Politice, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" Iași, România

sensul ei transcendent poate să dispară. „Pragurile durerii sunt relative, însă și factorii genetici și cei ai mediului joacă un rol în dezvoltarea lor. [...] Cea mai serioasă și periculoasă ispită a celor ce se confruntă cu suferința psihică sau trupească este că ei își percep chinul ca pe unul absurd și lipsit de sens.”⁴

Dar, pe lângă aspectele negative ale suferinței, putem întrevedea și posibilitatea unui sens pozitiv în măsura în care suferința conduce la o conștiință de sine sporită și la conștientizarea limitelor personale. Aduce atenția minții în prezent sporind conștiința de sine. Omul se vede forțat astfel să-și reevalueze prioritățile, să se concentreze în mult mai mare măsură asupra a ceea ce contează cu adevărat pentru viața lui.⁵ Mai mult, suferința determină omul să descopere în sine vulnerabilitatea și slăbiciunea sa, caracterul efemer al existenței sale pe pământ, fragilitatea și neputința sa în fața acesteia. Starea de autosuficiență a omului este pusă în discuție.⁶ Ne este semnalat faptul că nu suntem stăpâni pe noi înșine, fapt care poate fi o experiență „profund umilitoare, una ce poate duce ori la disperare, ori la înălțimi ale credinței și dragostei, necunoscute până atunci.”⁷ Suferința trezește conștiința vie a faptului că suntem muritori.

Gândirea creștină abordează suferința într-un cadru prin excelență *ascetic*. Întâlnim aici o concepție care se opune atitudinii pasive a omului în fața răului, care ar putea izvorî dintr-o acceptare a fatalismului existenței. Răul fiind, după cum am văzut, rodul libertății exercitate de către om, el poate și chiar *trebuie* să fie ameliorat. Ameliorarea acestuia este principala sarcină care derivă din responsabilitatea introdusă prin ideea de libertate. Părinții mărturisesc despre o anume *putere răscumpărătoare* a suferinței. Dar pentru ca suferința să ia această întorsătură, transformându-se dintr-un eveniment care introduce în mod constant lipsa de sens în existența omului, într-un eveniment investit cu sens, e necesar ca omul să se lasă pe sine în brațele lui Dumnezeu. Cu alte cuvinte, atunci când e trăită în interiorul unei bune orientări, suferința poate să aibă valoare răscumpărătoare. Nu-i suficient că Dumnezeu S-a întrupat, a suferit, a murit și a înviat pentru eliberarea omului din condiția sa căzută, ci este necesar ca omul însuși să se îndrepte spre El pentru a participa la misterul Crucii. Regăsim aici ideea de conlucrare sau de sinergie a omului cu Dumnezeu. Nu există nicio constrângere din partea lui Dumnezeu, ci omul este lăsat pe deplin liber putând să întoarcă atât spatele cât și fața spre Dânsul. Ca

fenomen de sine stătător, suferința nu are sens, ea nu posedă nicio valoare răscumpărătoare în sine.⁸ Însă poate ocaziona creșterea spirituală.

Sfinții Părinți ne asigură de faptul că Dumnezeu nu *vrea* suferința oamenilor, însă El o *îngăduie* ca pe un fel de „pedagogie spirituală”⁹. Suferința nu se găsește în planul lui Dumnezeu cu privire la om. Starea primordială în care omul a fost făcut nu cunoștea nici boala, nici suferința, nici moartea. Numai în urma căderii ea și-a făcut intrarea în lume stabilindu-se aici. Cu toate acestea Dumnezeu o îngăduie, lăsându-l pe om să trăiască în continuare suportând consecințele căderii de care el însuși se face răspunzător, dar investind-o totodată cu această *putere răscumpărătoare*, prin care omul se poate întoarce înapoi la unirea cu El.¹⁰ Această putere care transformă suferința în beneficiu este iubirea lui Dumnezeu pentru om. Ea nu trebuie căutată, însă atunci când este inevitabilă, suferința trebuie asumată creștinește, urmându-l pe Hristos.¹¹ Ba chiar, „în loc să vadă în boală o fatalitate și să se lase pradă ei, omul, întărit prin biruința dobândită asupra păcatului și a puterilor răului, trebuie să facă tot posibilul pentru a o combate. Această luptă împotriva bolii face parte, indirect, din lupta pe care el trebuie s-o ducă împotriva puterilor răului.”¹²

Larchet aduce în atenție faptul că termenul grecesc *paidagogia*, pe lângă semnificația de *educare*, o are pe aceea de *redresare* sau de *îngrijire* a unui bolnav. Suferința apare astfel ca un fel de medicament de care Dumnezeu se folosește spre binele omului. Autorii creștini îl consideră pe Dumnezeu ca pe un Doctor al sufletelor. Privită astfel, suferința este un rău numai în aparență. Ea se poate transforma chiar într-un bine pentru om, în măsura în care acesta – dacă se folosește bine de ea – „poate să dobândească mari binefaceri spirituale, făcând din ceea ce era la început semnul pierzării sale un instrument al mântuirii sale.”¹³ Prin suferință omul participă la misterul Răstignirii lui Hristos, Cel care l-a scos pe om definitiv din sclavia păcatului.¹⁴ Participarea liberă prin suferință la însăși suferința lui Hristos reprezintă un act de martiriu sau de mărturie liberă.

Creștinismul recunoaște drept definitiv pentru condiția umană actuală, mai mult decât orice altceva, tocmai această suferire-pătimire, consecință a căderii. Condiția umană este caracterizată mai ales prin suferință. Ca și cum ar fi înțeles acest lucru, Dumnezeu a transformat sensul suferinței din dragoste pentru om: nu pentru a fi

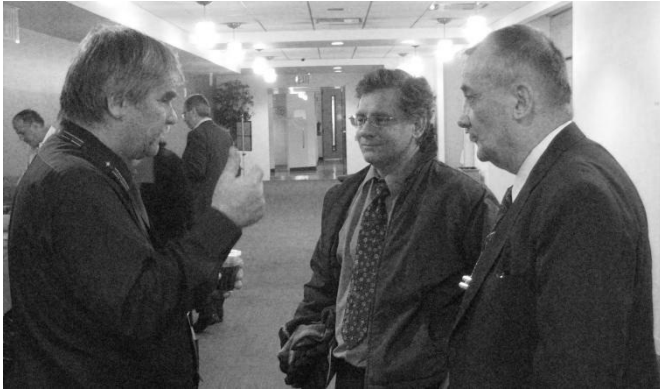
spre chinul și în dauna omului, ci spre sfințirea și apropierea de El. Suferința fizică și psihică poate și trebuie să fie dominată pe cale ascetică. Omul, ajutat de Harul lui Dumnezeu, poate atinge această capacitate de dominare spirituală a suferinței, făcând-o să lucreze nu în dauna lui, ci spre binele său.

Boala și suferința ne pot face conștienți de nesfârșita dragoste și milă a lui Dumnezeu. Apostolului Pavel spune în epistola către Romani astfel: „ne lăudăm și în suferințe, bine știind că suferința aduce răbdare și răbdarea încercare și încercarea nădejde, iar nădejdea nu rușinează pentru că iubirea lui Dumnezeu s-a vărsat în inimile noastre, prin Duhul Sfânt cel dăruit nouă.”¹⁵ Bogăția iubirii lui Dumnezeu dă putere celui ce suferă de a o răbda, atrăgându-l astfel pe om spre comuniunea deplină cu Dânsul, adică spre împlinirea țelului ultim care este îndumnezeirea. De pe urma îndurării suferinței omul poate crește din punct de vedere spiritual. El nu doar că își întărește mai mult credința, dar primește de la Dumnezeu și anumite *virtuți* pe care nu ar fi avut altfel ocazia să le dobândească. Dar aceste bunuri spirituale pe care le poate primi „nu sunt efectele bolii înseși, nici ale suferinței care o însoțesc, ci daruri ale lui Dumnezeu cu prilejul acesteia și omul, pentru a beneficia de ele, trebuie să aibă atitudinea adecvată, adică să se arate gata a le primi, să se întoarcă la Dumnezeu, să se deschidă harului Său, să se străduiască să și-l asimileze. El trebuie să devină colaboratorul activ al lucrării divine care urmărește progresul său spiritual și mântuirea sa.”¹⁶

Suferința poate avea, cu siguranță, o valoare negativă – mai ales atunci când acționează ca piedică în calea atingerii scopului apropierii de Dumnezeu –, dar și una pozitivă – tocmai atunci când, fiind răbdată cu credință, apropie de Dumnezeu. În același fel, starea de bine sau lipsa suferinței nu este nici ea un lucru prin sine bun, ci face parte dintre lucrurile de mijloc care nu sunt nici bune, nici rele. Recunoscând o anume putere dăunătoare a stării de bine, precum și o putere răscumpărătoare a suferinței, Părinții Bisericii îndeamnă la a nu admira orice fel de bine sau plăcere și a nu detesta orice fel de suferință.

NOTES:

- ¹ Vorbindu-i primului om creat și așezat în grădina raiului, Dumnezeu îi spune: „Din toți pomii raiului poți să mănânci, dar din pomul cunoștinței binelui și răului să nu mănânci, căci în ziua în care vei mânca din el, cu moarte vei muri!” (Facerea 2, 17); Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. I, Editura Institutului Biblic, București, 1996, pp. 280-283.
- ² Jean-Claude Larchet, *Creștinul în fața bolii, suferinței și morții*, trad. de Marinela Bojin, Editura Sofia, București, 2006, p. 220.
- ³ „Natura umană, căzută prin Adam, este restaurată de Hristos în starea ei originară și-și recapătă privilegiile stării paradizice”, *Ibidem*, p. 59; Jean-Claude Larchet, *Sfârșit creștinesc vieții noastre, fără durere, neînfruntat, în pace...*, trad. de Marinela Bojin, Ed. Basilica, București, 2012, p. 121.
- ⁴ John Breck, *Darul sacru al vieții*, traducere de Irineu Pop Bistrițeanul, Editura Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pp. 273-274; Cf. Jean-Claude Larchet, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- ⁵ „Întrucât zdruncină ființa, boala pune adesea în cauză falsele echilibre anterioare și-l face pe om să se întrebe asupra fundamentelor existenței sale”; cf. Jean-Claude Larchet, *Teologia bolii*, trad. de Vasile Mihoc, Editura Oastea Domnului, Sibiu, 1997, p. 60.
- ⁶ „Aducând sufletul în limitele trupului, boala și suferința distrug iluziile de plenitudine și autosuficiență pe care omul le putea avea înainte, inspirate fiind de o sănătate pe care el o credea durabilă. Ele îi arată sărăcia și chiar goliciunea sa (Facerea 3, 7) ontologice și-l fac să-și aducă aminte că este țărână (Facerea 3, 19). El nu mai poate să se considere ca un absolut; orgoliul său fundamental este sfărâmat”; *Ibidem*, p. 59.
- ⁷ John Breck, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
- ⁸ Jean-Claude Larchet, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- ⁹ John Breck, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
- ¹⁰ *Ibidem*.
- ¹¹ Jean-Claude Larchet, *Creștinul în fața bolii, suferinței și morții*, p. 39.
- ¹² Idem, *Teologia bolii*, p. 81.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 56-57.
- ¹⁴ „Eliberarea noastră din sclavia păcatului și a morții este săvârșită în întregime prin propria suferință și moarte a lui Hristos”; John Breck, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
- ¹⁵ *Romani 5*, 3-5.
- ¹⁶ Jean-Claude Larchet, *Teologia bolii*, p.69.

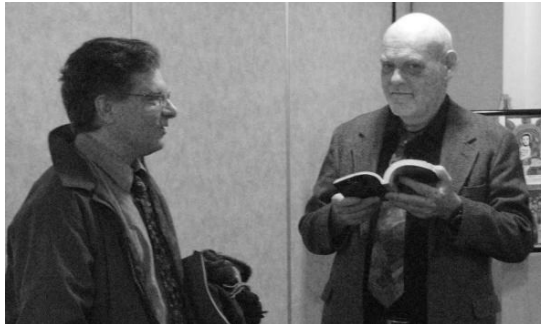


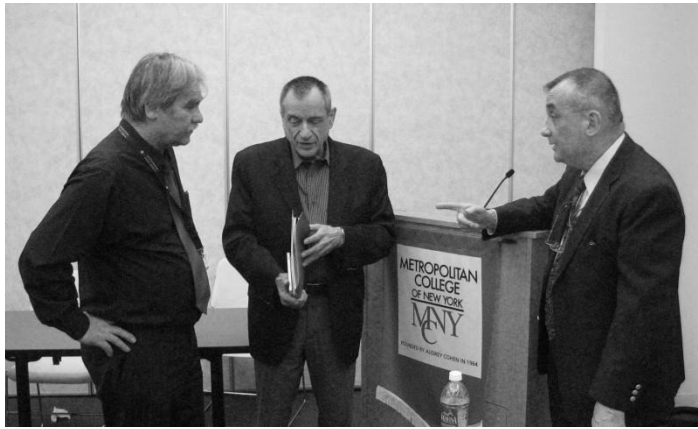
Theodor Damian (left), Paul LaChance, Richard Grallo



Doru Tsaganea (left) and Louis Tietje

Paul LaChance (left)
and Bert Breiner





Theodor Damian (left), Louis Tietje, Richard Gallo



Paul LaChance (left), Richard Gallo, Theodor Damian

**The Academy of Romanian
Scientists**
Splaiul Independentei 54, Sector 5
050094 Bucharest, Romania
tel. +40-21-314 7491, www.aos.ro
USA: 30-18 50th Street, Woodside,
NY 11377, Tel. (718) 626-6013
Theodor Damian, PhD, US Branch president
DamianTh@aol.com,



**THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE
OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY
AND SPIRITUALITY**
30-18 50th Street, Woodside, NY 11377,
Tel. (718) 626-6013, DamianTh@aol.com
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**How Post-Modern Rhetoric Shapes Our Understanding of
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10:00 AM

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Subway 1, 9, A, C, E stop at Canal Street

PROGRAM:

Theodor Damian, PhD

Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York; President of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality:

How Can Transcendence Help Reinvent Ourselves?

Richard Grallo, PhD

Professor of Applied Psychology, Metropolitan College of New York:

On Seeking Understanding

Louis Tietje, PhD

Professor of Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York, and

Steven Cresap, PhD

Associate Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Metropolitan College of New York:

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard in Matthew 20: 1-16: A Story about Justice of Mercy?

Steven Cresap, PhD

Associate Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Metropolitan College of New York:

Advocacy in the Mission Statement: What Academics Should Do about Institutional Partisanship

Doru Tsaganea, PhD

Associate Professor of Mathematics, Metropolitan College of New York:

Industrialization - The Defining Economic Element of Modernization

Constantin Virgil Negoita, PhD

Professor of Computer Science, Hunter College, City University of New York:

Postmodern Logic

Elvin T. Ramos, PhD

Assistant Dean, Metropolitan College of New York:

The Rhetoric of Hope: Illuminating the Reality of the World's Poor and the Role of Religious Charities

Paul J. LaChance, PhD

Associate Professor, Philosophy/Theology Department, College of St. Elisabeth, New Jersey:

Process and Insight: Sounding in Gendlin and Lonergan Toward a Future Dialectic

Bert Breiner, PhD

Adjunct Professor of Religion, Hunter College, City University of New York

Al-Ghazali, Certitude and Postmodernism

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Humphrey Crookendale, JD

Dean, School of Management, Metropolitan College of New York

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Vinton Thompson, PhD

President of the Metropolitan College of New York

Ruth Lugo, PhD

Dean of the Audrey Cohen School for Human Services and Education, Metropolitan College of New York

DISCUSSANTS:

David Rosner, PhD

Assistant Professor of Values and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York

Clyde Griffin, EdD

Assistant Professor of Human Services, Metropolitan College of New York

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