

From Dialectics to Foundations:  
Objectifying Subjectivity through an Encounter with  
Thomas Müntzer (1489? – 1525)

Russell C. Baker

A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Theological Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts (Theological Studies) at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

March 2006

© Russell C. Baker



Library and  
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file    Votre référence*

*ISBN: 0-494-14217-0*

*Our file    Notre référence*

*ISBN: 0-494-14217-0*

#### NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

#### AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

  
**Canada**

## ABSTRACT

### From Dialectics to Foundations: Objectifying Subjectivity through an Encounter with Thomas Müntzer (1489? – 1525)

Russell C. Baker

This work is grounded in a moral horizon constructed around the worldview of emergent probability as central to a generalized theory of evolution reaching finality in the Trinity, in Otto Friedman's transdisciplinary framework for professional practice transposed into the realm of the transcendent, in Bernard Lonergan's transdisciplinary method in *Insight* and *Method*, and in an analysis of core problems in contemporary society. All these elements, when used as a guide to an encounter with the incarnate meaning of Thomas Müntzer, make explicit the horizons and intentions of the author as they relate to different levels of conversion required for intelligent, reasonable and responsible action during times of fundamental institutional change.

This study offers one concrete approach to objectifying such foundations, where the heuristic notion of an encounter with the meaning of another's life provides data for objectifying one's own foundations. This objectified intentionality can then be used to expand one's horizon and intentions or initiate a shift to a higher viewpoint. This work operates not at the level of common sense understanding but in the explanatory theoretical realm of meaning grounded in a working knowledge of the realm of interiority.

My encounter partner is Thomas Müntzer, an early 16<sup>th</sup> century German reformer whose commitment to Church and God fills a grey area in my own scientific and policy-making background. Evaluating and extending my positions vis-à-vis Müntzer's foundations is the immediate task; knowing exactly how to do this is the general theme. The subject matter is neither Müntzer nor the Reformation, although both are extensively researched, but my own foundational stance. The objective is not to work out a complete program, but to present and test one concrete procedure for intentionality analysis in the functional speciality of Foundations.

It is far easier to draw conclusions from what one already holds than to deepen one's understanding of what one's convictions mean.

Lonergan: *A Third Collection*



For Otto

## CONTENTS

Introduction 1

### Chapter

#### 1. CONTEXT 6

##### Conceptual 7

Searching for Fuller Being 7

Functional Specialities in Theology 10

From Dialectics to Foundations 16

Authenticity, Self-appropriation and the Universal Viewpoint 21

The Human Good 25

Worlds Mediated by Meaning 30

Historical Differentiation of Consciousness 31

Freedom 35

Incarnate Meaning 38

##### Historical Conditions 39

The Need for Foundational Studies 39

Breakdowns in Societal Valuation 41

A Chronic Lack of Imagination 45

The Holocaust 52

A Growing Need for Transdisciplinary Studies 56

Living in the Midst of Noise, Turbulence and Uncertainty 61

##### What is to be Done? 63

Objectifying Subjectivity 63

The Importance of Encounters 70

Improving Foundations 76

#### 2. STARTING POINT 79

##### Key Features 79

Elemental Meaning 79

Realm of Meaning 80

Expected Form 81

Demands upon the Subject 83

Fundamental Positions and Counter Positions 85

##### A Moral Horizon 89

Birth of the Triune God 95

Creating Creation 97

Emergence of Self-Aware Entities 103

An Open Invitation 107

Freedom to Respond 111

Climbing the Ladder 114

The Need for Faith 117

Opening the Door to Mystery 119

Experiencing the Trinity 122

The Community of Saints 125

Entering the Triune Communion 127

Reflections 129

Professional Practice	130
Being in the World	134
Orientation	135
Diagnosis & Evaluation	137
Estimating Scope and Constraints	140
Establishing Control over Meaning	142
Differentiation of Mind	146
Cognitive Operations	147
Patterns of Experience	148
Historical Consciousness	153
Myth and Magic	154
Mystery	156
Training the “Other Eye”	157
Conclusions	160
3. WHAT WAS GOING FORWARD	162
Passionate and Powerful Convictions	166
Reform was in the Air	168
Apocalyptic Expectations	170
What if?	173
Unexplained Socio/political Disruptions	175
A Heavy Hand	176
Existing Controls over Meaning	181
The Shift from Manuscript to Print Culture	183
The Gradual Re-emergence of Civil Society	186
Authority, Power, Influence	188
Excommunication	193
Piety	194
Dominant Concepts of the Good of Order	197
Church as Mediator	200
Fiat or Law?	204
Central Purpose of Society	205
Open and Closed Societies	206
Rule of Law	209
Fundamental Institutional Changes of Müntzer’s Time	211
Architectural Clues	211
Civil Society	214
The Church	220
Co-Ops	222
Long Periods of Change	223
Conclusions	225
4. THOMAS MÜNTZER	226
Introduction	226
A Brief Biography	226
Intentionality Analysis	228
A Mind Shaped by another Age	230
Müntzer’s “Extended Family”	232
A Highly Motivated Man	234
Müntzer’s Mission	235
Müntzer’s Use of Images	239
What is He Not Saying?	243

What is Known about Thomas Müntzer	245
Basic Questions (Intentions)	245
Building a Case History	250
The Writings of Thomas Müntzer	256
Passions and Powerful Convictions	260
Müntzer's Control over Meaning	265
Temperament	265
Imagery	267
Mysticism	268
Scripture	274
Non-differentiated Mind	275
Müntzer on the Good of Order	277
A League of Their Own	277
Conflict with Luther	278
Apostolic Authority	280
The Peasant's War	280
Müntzer's Involvement with Fundamental Institutional Change	282
Conclusions	285
5. POST-ENCOUNTER REFLECTIONS	291
A Similar Pattern	293
A Strange Sort of Christian	297
Descriptive Differences	298
Accounting for these Differences	300
A Mathematical Mind?	302
Religiosity	308
Autodidactic	314
Our Own Cultural Projects	319
Transcendence	327
In Praise of Prudence	331
Wordsmiths	334
The Path to True Faith	343
A League of Our Own	346
Personal Challenge	352
Modified Professional Practice	359
A Curious Detachment	361
In the End	363
Conclusions	367
Epilogue	369
Appendix I: Overview of Objectified Subjectivity	372
Appendix II: The Underlying Form of Professional Practice	376
Appendix III: A Transdisciplinary Framework for Professional Practice	380
Appendix IV: The Longer Cycle of Decline	395
Appendix V: The Problem of Liberation	398
Appendix VI: Common Guides for Common Action	401
Selected Bibliography	411

## INTRODUCTION

This study is bracketed by a few disjunctions.

First, objectifying subjectivity is not introspection, not “looking within.” The correct position is that determining what exists involves three cognitive levels of experiencing, understanding and judging (metaphysics’ potential, form and act). Objectifying subjectivity starts with the data of our own decisions, moves on to an explanatory understanding of one’s horizon and intentions, and affirms this understanding through verification and judging. A “genetic and dialectical encounter” uses this epistemological position to ground a methodology that goes beyond the common sense descriptions and uncritical observations of an undifferentiated mind.

Second, this study is not a single affirmation but a compound form of knowing that goes forward simultaneously on two fronts. In the foreground is a genetic and dialectic encounter with Thomas Müntzer that moves into understanding my own horizon and intentions as a function of authenticity and conversion. The background is formed by the upper blade of theory that anticipates what is to be known—an understanding of the realm of interiority and its application to foundational research.

This distinction between upper and lower blades, between theory and data, can be seen in selected sources. There is only one set of primary sources, those concerned with the upper blade, that consists of the two fundamental works of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1971). Primary sources on Müntzer require specialized interpretative skills that I do not have and for the purpose of this research do not need. The original sources are in old German, a specialized area of interpretation involving not only an understanding of the language of the time but highly technical theological terms that defined the debate over papal legitimacy (what if the pope became a heretic?) and the nature of redemption in an age dominated by apocalyptic immediacy. Instead, a secondary source—*The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer* by Peter Matheson, translator and editor, (1988)—was deemed sufficient for an encounter with someone different enough to pose a challenge yet not so different as to be an

insurmountable hurdle.<sup>1</sup> Tertiary references include various writings on Müntzer's life and times, contrasting material concerning current fundamental institutional changes, and background material on a variety of subjects relevant to intentionality analysis and professional practice.

Third, this study does not belong within any existing academic discipline; it belongs to Lonergan's theological functional speciality of Foundations. As one of eight functional specialities, Foundations stands at the cross-over from understanding history to making history, the point where an understanding of the positions and counter positions of others give way to a personal commitment of what is position and what are counter positions. Key concepts in this field include: religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion; authenticity and the tension of genuineness between transcended and transcending self; horizons, intentions, terminal values and the human good; self-appropriation of one's rational self-consciousness; differentiation of mind into various distinct realms of meaning; and the dynamic human spirit that finds its rest in God. Prior to working out such fundamental terms is the theologian's own involvement with conversion, coming to know his or her own horizons and intentions. As Psychoanalysts are not allowed to practice until they have undergone psychoanalysis, so too Foundationalists are required by the nature of their speciality to understand whom and what they stand for, and whom and what they oppose.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Matheson, translator and editor, *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988). Hereafter known as *Collected Works*.

<sup>2</sup> For the most part, Lonergan is treated as one more viewpoint among a number of philosophical and theological perspectives currently available for discussion in academic circles where the critical underlying issue is over criteria to distinguish between positions and counter-positions, between what is real and what is mere imagination (in some cases the very existence of criteria is denied, leading to a general relativism and eventually the loss of all standards, including academic standards of truth). For reasons that will become clear, my own foundational stance is based on Lonergan's Transcendental Method. Thus, my problem is not sorting through the variety of existing positions and counter-positions that confront theologians—clearing away the debris, so to speak—but coming to understand the implications of a choice made long before taking up theological studies.

The greatest of these implications is Lonergan's emphasis on the subject as prime mover and doer, as one seeking knowledge, as one caught up in the tension of genuineness and the need for authenticity. It is this shift from the transcended to the transcending subject that is decisive in Lonergan's thought, a shift reflected in the subject of this study: my own subjective foundational stance. To know yourself as knower is the first step facing anyone interested in adopting Lonergan's line of inquiry as their own.

Fourth, it is not necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of a subject before making a judgment. If that were the case, the scope of this study would make working out the details an impossible task. But such detailed knowledge is not necessary for establishing sound directions or eliminating unsuitable methods for future inquiries. Lonergan puts this very well:

The canon of parsimony [in interpretation] invokes the resources of critical reflection. Because the relativist fails to distinguish between the formally and the virtually unconditioned, he demands a complete explanation of everything before passing any judgment on anything. On the other hand, precisely because a distinction is to be drawn between the formally and the virtually unconditioned, it is both possible and salutary to illuminate with intermediate certitudes the long way to complete explanation. When sufficient evidence is not forthcoming for the more detailed interpretation, it may be available for a less ambitious pronouncement. When a positive conclusion cannot be substantiated, a number of negative conclusions may be possible and they will serve to bracket the locus of future, successful inquiry. Moreover, in the measure that the universal viewpoint is reached, radical surprises are excluded; in the measure that extrapolation is not to future but to past meanings, the relevant insights do not call for the discoveries of genius but simply for the thoroughness of painstaking and intelligent analysis; in the measure that eventually there was closed the gap that once existed between original meaning and available resources of expression, it is possible to begin from the later, more adequate expression and remount to the origin of the ideas in the initial, transforming stresses and strains in linguistic usage.<sup>3</sup>

Fifth, the primary object of research is not Mntzer but my own foundational stance; the relevance of Mntzer, as far as this study of my own subjectivity goes, lies in his role as an encounter partner whose contrasting foundational stance forces the objectification my own horizon, intentions and things related to the human good within the world-mediated-by-meaning that I have constructed for myself. Coming to understand such foundations—of how I myself come to understand not in any general theoretical sense but in the practical day-to-day exercise of intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility—not only requires a formal theoretical framework but a considerable amount of reflective and meditative time. Also, learning to live in the tension of genuineness, between self as transcended and self as transcending, is neither easy nor assured. This especially holds for self-appropriation in intellectual conversion, for this involves a shift

---

This also explains the extensive use of footnotes as counter-discussions or parallel conversations to the main point. Such running commentaries provide further clues and insights into the state of my own mind while engaged in working on various details. The reader is invited to share my own explorations of my foundational discernment while reflecting on their own preferred strategies for understanding, judging and deciding.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1957), 590. Hereafter known as *Insight*.

away from such inadequate intellectual myths as naïve realism, idealism or empiricism and toward a Transcendental Method that truly grounds all active and inquiring intelligence.

Sixth, because questions are set by my own positions and counter-positions, my own foundational perspective, the primary use of texts—excluding both *Insight* and *Method*—is synoptical rather than analytic. Texts from a number of works are forced into my own Lonergan-influenced vocabulary according to the specific question being asked. It is this task of objectifying the question and searching for relevant material for a tentative answer that constitutes the essential part of this encounter, for both question and material expose my own foundational stance thus allowing for the objectification of my own subjectivity.

Seventh, the whole point of this study rests on the notions of “self-appropriation” as essential to “intellectual conversion” and conversion in its various aspects of “falling in love with God” requiring “vertical shifts” to a “higher viewpoint.” While I have made an effort to avoid technical language as much as possible, still there is a need to establish the terms and concepts underlying this study. Unfortunately, there is little time or space to explain all the details behind the language or assess the willingness of the reader to attend to her own coming to understand—or even to share in this tension between self as transcended and self as transcending that so defines conversion in its religious, moral, intellectual and psychic dimensions. In the end, data has to be reviewed and analyzed, hypothesis generated, and evidence collected in order for a judgment to be made on the basis of the virtually unconditioned (lower blade of data), all while the theoretical grounds for anticipating what is to be known (upper blade of theory) are operative. Ultimately the reader is referred to the essential literature on Lonergan’s Transcendental Method, metaphysics, ethics and theological methods.

Chapter One sets out the basic theory and underlying terms, delves into current historical conditions that drive the need for foundational studies and suggests one possible course of action. Chapter Two outlines my own initial positions and counter-positions, an tentative “moral horizon” that lays out a formal hypothesis in answer to the question “What are we for?” and my



own long-standing interest in intelligent planning and policy-making under the rubric of “Professional Practice.” After this, the essential background to understanding early 16<sup>th</sup> century central European history necessary for putting Müntzer’s life into context is laid out in Chapter Three, before considering Müntzer himself in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five objectifies my own subjectivity in light of an encounter that makes Müntzer real for me, with the intent of clarifying my own positions and counter-positions as well as bringing to light critical areas requiring further reflection and discernment. Finally, the six appendices provide useful background material to aid the reader in understanding the personal approach that lies behind not only this study but my own motivations for going into Theological Studies, for traditional planning and policy-making practices undergo a radical shift when conversion takes hold.

It is important to keep in mind that the object of this study is my own foundational stance. In the end, what is important is neither Thomas Müntzer nor early 16<sup>th</sup> century central Europe, but the world-mediated-by-meaning that I call into existence, the reality I bring into being through potency, form and act—and through decisions concerning my own terminal values. It is my own horizon that I seek to know, including the objects and relationships between them that define my world, in an attempt to understand and enhance the dynamism of my own coming to know. This is knowledge of whom and what I am for and whom and what I’m against—and the best way of finding out is to compare my own positions with the positions of another. It involves a working knowledge of the realm of interiority as perceived, understood and judged to exist in my own coming to know and do. The very way that I go about these tasks is in effect the object of this study, for it is through this dynamics of making real the life and times of another that I learn about my own life and times, and it is through heightening my own awareness of what I am doing when I do this that I enter into the realm of interiority.

## CHAPTER I

### CONTEXT

The war years brought the knowledge that in art it is less important to see than to make visible.

Paul Klee: *Notebooks*

The task in this study is to “make visible”—to objectify, to give form to—my own foundational stance through an encounter with the foundational stance of another. This is a heightening of awareness to the point of explicit formulation of my horizon, my worldview, my outlook, of whom and what I am for and conversely whom and what I am against. While there is an apparent paradox between entering into an encounter with preconceived notions of how the encounter should be organized, where the end result is that one’s own preconceptions and preunderstandings are reinforced, the reality is that one always starts somewhere and the key issue is whether one follows the data or runs roughshod over it. This is a matter of respect, both for the person one meets and for oneself in following the innate dynamism of the human mind. It soon becomes apparent if the researcher does not respect data.<sup>1</sup>

There is a heuristic structure to entering into an encounter, the basic terms of which are laid out in the section titled “Context”, and contemporary problems that call for such encounters, set out in “Historical Conditions.” For before research can start on Müntzer’s life and the intentionality analysis of my own foundational stance, it is necessary to sketch the context within

---

<sup>1</sup> The point is whether or not one is willing to grow, to expand one’s understanding, to drop prejudices and tacit assumptions when they block understanding the data. To encounter another, then, is to transcend who one is starting at the moment the other is allowed into one’s world-mediated-by-meaning; it is the awareness of how we call the other into existence as part of our own meaningful world that grounds any objectification of subjectivity. As we shall see, the “other” is not an external reality to be seen to be known, but an entity to be called into existence as part of our own world-mediated-by meaning, as a unity that maintains itself in a coherent intelligible fashion over time. We “call” the other into existence by direct experience (the data consisting of actions, words, expressed desires, sharing confidences, etc.), understanding what these experiences mean (giving form to the data, by creating character or personality images of the other that explain past behaviours and predict future responses), and finally affirming the reality of that image (by collecting and weighing the evidence for or against, and making a conditional judgment as to whether or to what extent that image is true). The way in which I call Müntzer into being will shed light on my own foundations. And while a heuristic structure is used to order the investigation, the structure itself is only a method to allow the data to speak for itself.

which this research has meaning. Methods need to be defined, concepts elaborated and the underlying approach clarified—especially since Lonergan’s work is not yet part of the common body of theological knowledge in the way that Augustine’s *Confessions* or the works of Vatican II are. Like both of Lonergan’s major works—*Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1971)—this study is an invitation to share a journey into the realm of interiority.<sup>2</sup>

It is also important to understand the broad features of modern life that makes such research necessary. This includes the societal breakdown in valuation, a chronic lack of imagination, the Shoah or Holocaust, a growing need for transdisciplinary research and learning to live in an environment filled with high levels of noise, turbulence and uncertainty.

### *Conceptual*

#### The Search for Fuller Being

These days all disciplines claim sovereign authority over their own research, including common sense intelligence laying claim to the business of the world without interference from philosophers or scientists. While this allows for the specialized development of each discipline without interference, it also means that intellectual effort is fragmented to the point where it becomes next to impossible to relate disciplines to each other in any other way than to “merge” two disciplines, e.g. biochemistry or political economics or sociobiology. But divided minds fail to comprehend reality in any systematic way, which makes it that much harder to cope with problems that cannot be solved or understood within one or two explanatory viewpoints.<sup>3</sup> Many

---

<sup>2</sup> If this invitation is accepted, an interesting dynamic emerges. In the same way that I come to understand who I am by heightening my awareness of calling Müntzer into being, the reader can heighten their own awareness of their own foundational stance by calling me into being from the data that emerges as I call Müntzer into being.

<sup>3</sup> The split mind or soul is a real problem for Christians. Tad Dunne wrote *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985) specifically on that issue.

environmental problems fall into this category, as do systemic problems arising from the complex interactions between different facets of an institutional situation where the good of order is fragmented into different worlds-mediated-by-meaning.

Each discipline involves a search for being, a search for what exists. Each defines and verifies in data their own things and explanatory conjugates that relate these things to each other. Common sense intelligence has its own things and its own experiential conjugates that relate these things to our own senses and our own interests. The same goes for the realm of interiority with its insights, higher viewpoints, empirical residues, finality, proportionate being, universal viewpoint and reflective self-consciousness. Such things, along with their experiential and explanatory conjugates, are verified through a heightened consciousness that reveals our own emerging complexity of being from the passive self of experiencing to the self-defining self-determining individual operating at the level of deciding.

Even philosophers, practitioners of the queen of the sciences, have run into problems. Take Michael H. McCarthy for example:

The empirical study of modernity reveals the growing independence of cultural practices from philosophical prescription. In science, politics, the arts, and religion, the moderns increasingly have demanded autonomy of initiative and self-definition. The concept of philosophy as a higher discipline prescribing methods, vocabulary, and purposes for docile intellectual subordinates has vanished from the scene. Any attempt to restore philosophy to its role as cultural sovereign would be dismissed as tyranny. But this dismissal leaves undetermined the proper function of philosophy within a pluralistic age where human practices look after themselves. Our distinctive emphasis has been on the new relation that obtains between philosophy and empirical science. The primary purpose of modern

---

For most of us [Christians] . . . activism and unthinking obedience represent extreme positions. We fancy ourselves able to live in the secular world in an active, meaningful way and still be able to move easily into a religious world where we dedicate ourselves to loving God and neighbour in genuine charity. After all, what else can we do in the face of a secular culture but learn to get along with it at times, but get along without it also? This is the preferred solution and, for that reason, it is the more damaging to the soul and to the human order. At least mindless activism and mindless religious devotion are easily recognized and easily accused of mindlessness. But is anyone bothered by the fact that he or she lives in two worlds? Look at what this requires of us. It obviously tends to make religion a Sunday-only reality. But on a deeper level, it splits our very souls into two different worlds, each with its own language, its own view of human struggle, and its own purposes. In one language we may speak of economic booms, tax reform, emotional problems, juvenile delinquency, advertising campaigns, and so on. In the other language we speak of the Lord, of the Cross, of grace and providence, of discerning spirits, and of prayer. But there is no way to speak both languages in the same sentence. Nor is there a sharing of languages between two groups. (Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 4-5)

epistemology had been to monitor the compliance of scientific theories with the classical theory of science. The shift to historical consciousness made that project obsolete while leaving the theoretical function of philosophy in doubt.

... Philosophy is now at a turning point because the paradigmatic projects of modernity were tied to a classical theory of reason and knowledge that no longer commands assent. All the basic epistemic notions—rationality, objectivity, truth, and knowledge—need to be reconceived independent of Cartesian assumptions. Philosophy must take account of cultural pluralism and autonomy and surrender its attempt to integrate discourse by the method of logical reduction. In fact, all logical strategies of discursive integration become questionable once linguistic pluralism is taken seriously. There is no privileged propositional stratum of evidence to which legitimate discourse must be reduced. The identity between philosophy and logic ... ceases to be credible once philosophers take time and history into account.<sup>4</sup>

And not only philosophy:

When [religious] expression is confined to the realm of common sense, it can succeed only by drawing upon the power of symbols and figures to suggest or evoke what cannot adequately be said. When the realm of theory becomes explicit, religion may take advantage of it to bring about a clearer and firmer delineation of itself, its objectives, and its aims. But in so far as intellectual conversion is lacking, there arise controversies. Even where that conversion obtains, there emerge the strange contrast and tension between the old commonsense apprehension instinct with feeling and the new theoretical apprehension devoid of feeling and bristling with definitions and theorems. So the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is set against the God of the philosophers and theologians. Honoring the Trinity and feeling compunction are set against learned discourse on the Trinity and against defining compunction. Nor can this contrast be understood or the tension removed within the realms of common sense and of theory. One must go behind them to the realm of interiority. For only through the realm of interiority can differentiated consciousness understand itself and so explain the nature and the complementary purposes of different patterns of cognitional activity.<sup>5</sup>

The innate dynamism of the human mind cannot stand contradictions. Premature closure, flights from understanding and the refusal to consider options that may be detrimental to one's wellbeing are only a few of the ways we employ to avoid such internal distresses as a bad conscience (the dissonance between knowing the good and being unable or unwilling to work toward it) or trying to hold two contradictory positions at the same time (for example, the difference between a belief in individual responsibility characteristic of liberal democracies and a collective right for the state to impose its views typical of socialist states). However, our lives are often based on an interesting paradox: we can only work toward authenticity when we live in the tension of the difference between who we are and who we should be, i.e., between the

---

<sup>4</sup> Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy* (N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 229.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 114-15. Hereafter known as *Method*.

transcended self and the transcending self.<sup>6</sup> This is a tension that drives us toward fuller being, an appreciation that we can expand our lives to live more fully, more deeply, more aware not only of what exists but the potential greater existence we could bring into being.

### Functional Specialities in Theology

This study is framed in terms of Lonergan's functional specialities. These specialities are built upon the realm of interiority in the sense that they are defined in part by the different ways that we come to understand and given meaning to our world—the other part being a theological difference between understanding different worlds mediated by meaning and mediating in such different worlds. These specialities are grounded in his Transcendental Method, outlined in Chapter One of *Method in Theology* but given full expression in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*.

Lonergan's approach is based on the idea that major philosophical differences can only be clarified through a sound epistemology, and that an epistemology can only be grounded in an empirically verifiable theory of the cognitive operations of the human mind. He starts with the fundamental observation that human beings, when free from other concerns, express an unlimited desire to understand. The way in which we come to understand involves three separate yet interrelated activities: experiencing something through our senses, coming to understand these experiences by giving them form, and then verifying the reality of these forms through reflective intelligence that sets conditions, collects evidence and judges the truth of the matter. But what exists is only part of human cognition; so too is giving form and actualizing what might or should exist. Together, these three operations ground metaphysics. Deciding, the fourth level of cognitive operations, grounds ethics.

---

<sup>6</sup> There are many such tensions in society, the most notable one being the tension that always exists between the individual and society. There are also tensions between the conscious and unconscious, humanism and supernatural, meaning and expression, the sensitive and intellectual, and moral impotence over any long-term sustained development.

Loneragan believes in the innate intelligibility of the universe, a position that is opposed for example by an existential counter-position that finds no meaning in human affairs. Ultimately this intelligibility can only be grounded in a Transcendental Being, in God. But in the meantime we develop our common sense intelligence and work on explanatory theories of reality. In this context, spirituality is a matter of discovering and affirming what is real and what is true, for the affirmation of intelligibility is to fall in love with the source of all goodness and intelligence, and the discovering the real and the true involves following the dynamism of the human spirit to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and in love. Such is the path of conversion, a gift of the Divine Mystery that frees us to follow the dynamism of our own being. The condition of the subject, then, is of critical importance for although a culture embodies all that is currently known it is the individual who is the source of meaning. A flawed subject distorts affirmations of truth and being, leaving the individual to operate in an illusory world-mediated-by-meaning rather than a meaningful world that reflects or is grounded in the very intelligibility of the universe.

Even though the universe is understood to be intelligible, and even though the Transcendent Being that grounds the universe does so in ways compatible with human understanding and doing, that intelligibility is not to be verified through one of a number of inaccurate epistemologies, such counter-positions as naïve realism (knowing the real is a matter of looking), idealism (the unverified world of ideal types), or empiricism (restricting what can be known only through sense experience). Lonergan's "rock" upon which he builds his metaphysics and ethics is a cognitive theory that affirms the reality of a dynamic inquiring mind, potentially unlimited in the questions it can ask, through a systematic set of interrelated operations that lead to cumulative and progressive results. We come to know through patterned operations of "seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, inquiring, imaging, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding,

speaking, writing”<sup>7</sup>—or in Lonergan shorthand: experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. The first three grounds a metaphysics that forms the upper blade of all inquiry, for metaphysics anticipates all that is to be known; deciding grounds an ethics, an understanding of the human good and the dynamics of progress, decline and redemption; and falling in love with the source of all goodness makes both a true metaphysics and an honest ethics possible.

While all human beings may be born with the potentiality of reaching up to such a universal viewpoint, we all start in the animalistic sensate world into which we are born. In this world, reality is “out there”, to be touched, smelt, heard and seen. For a cat or for a young child, a bowl of milk is a bowl of milk. But human beings go beyond the sensate world to create a world-mediated-by-meaning where that same bowl of milk may become a votive offering to appease a wrathful god. Such world-mediated-by-meanings are a cultural artefact that grow ever more intelligent and reasonable over time as human beings are free to exercise their innate dynamism or declines and ultimately vanishes if they are not. Always there is a leading edge, beyond which lies the as yet unknown, the realm of magic, myth and mystery.

As this leading edge of the bubble of intelligibility expands into this realm of magic, myth and mystery several things happen. One is the development of intelligible order in society, which becomes a human good. Another is the differentiation of the human mind into different realms of meaning, so that explanatory theoretical realms are distinguished from common sense intelligence, scholarly from artistic, and the transcendental from interiority. A fully differentiated mind is familiar with each of these realms, knows the appropriate methodology for each, and is aware when the techniques or meanings of one intrudes into the operations of another. Non-differentiated minds confine them all into one confusing mass. A third is the need to provide a sound method for carrying out the multiple tasks set by polymorphic human consciousness, for the greater the differentiation and the more intelligent the good of order, the greater the need for control. But control cannot be exercised by cultural norms; it can only be exerted through

---

<sup>7</sup> *Method*, 6.



method. In the same way that scientists control inquires into the way things relate to each other, so too theologians need to develop a common method for guiding their own inquiries. Lonergan's method is grounded in that innate dynamism of the human spirit. It is the only possible ground for transdisciplinary work, for the dynamism of the human spirit understood as a verified explanatory cognitive theory is the only thing all human beings have in common.

Theology is a specialized pursuit, often conceived as faith in search of reason. Yet this understanding of the aim of theology is inadequate when it comes to contemporary intellectual life. Now it is no longer a matter of faith seeking intellectual justification but a matter of faith being given life in the many diverse cultural expressions of what it means to be human. Faith in search of reason is sufficient for any one culture whose members already believe in the divinity and role of Christ, but this approach falls short in conveying the Christian message to other cultural worlds mediated by meaning.<sup>8</sup> If theology has a role in this new world, than it can only be to appropriate the Christian life as it has and is being lived, work out the essentials, and then communicate them to people of quite different traditions and life-styles. As Lonergan expresses it, the role of theology is to “mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix.”<sup>9</sup>

Lonergan asserts that not only is this work to be carried forward in two stages but each stage can be differentiated into four levels or patterns of operation that are isomorphic with the four levels of cognitive operation. The first stage involves the appropriation of Christian life as it has been and is lived by numerous people for two thousand years. The second stage goes from

---

<sup>8</sup> One of the problems in formulating theology as faith in search of reason is that it postulates as opposites two different realms of meaning, the God-centered world of faith and the human world of reason, when in fact the opened ended dynamism of human intelligence finds its finality in God. The exercise of reason is as much a spiritual quest for fuller being as any religious practice. The second problem that arises from this formulation is that a multiplicity of cultures implies a multiplicity of Christianities with each expression of faith within that culture having to arrive at their own reasons, resulting in a number of theologies each culturally dependent. The third problem is that faith is somehow sacrosanct, beyond all reason—a mindlessness that runs counter to the modern question of ‘How does this work?’ The very question ‘How does Christianity work?’ poses problems to the religious mind as long as that mind is still orientated around Christianity as a cultural norm for ethical behaviour operative in the realm of common sense intelligence.

<sup>9</sup> *Method*, xi.

understanding history to making history, and as such is concerned with conveying current understanding of what it means to be church, what it means to be a Christian and what it means to live in a polymorphic world to people who live in very different worlds-mediated-by-meaning.

The collective appropriation of Christian life follows the same general operations as experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding, but now these activities are part of a collaborative operation undertaken by a number of people each concerned with their own slice of the whole. The theological equivalent to experiencing is Research: collecting and organizing the Christian artefacts including scrapes of parchment, old mosaics, biblical commentaries, etc. that express in some way the beliefs of a particular Christian community. The equivalent to understanding is Interpretation, where the meaning of the parchment or the drawing or the commentary is understood according to the intentions of the creator operating within the common sense of the times. The cognitive level of judging now comes into play as the determination of historical facts in the theological functional speciality of History. But histories are many, reflecting the common sense intelligence of the times they were written, and so there is a need for understanding the diversity of positions and counter-positions in Christian life—some apparent but not real, some contrary to each other and some outright contradictory where the choice is only between one position or the other. Together, Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectics affirm what Christians have in fact believed and asserted throughout their different communities.

It is important to keep in mind that Lonergan's understanding of these four functional specialities does not correspond to current practices or common use of these terms. His clarification of these different areas of theological activity is of great help when it comes to various practitioners, for it is easy to mix interpretation with history, dialectics with interpretation and so forth—and he certainly draws upon existing knowledge and experience of the many ways of doing theology. Yet the meaning of these specialities depends not on current usage but on an underlying explanatory cognitive theory, and the metaphysics and ethics to which this theory gives rise. Verification of this underlying explanatory theory is through the self-appropriation of

one's own rationality, and if this hasn't taken place then all of *Insight* and most of *Method* will be misunderstood.

The second stage of theological effort shifts from understanding history to making history. Once again, there are four distinct functional specialities each corresponding with one level of cognitive operation. But now, instead of starting with experience (Research) and moving up through a series of higher viewpoints to deciding (Dialectics), the movement is from the top downwards.

The upper speciality is Foundations. Theologians working in this area draw upon the analysis of positions and counter-positions revealed in Dialectics as well as their own level of authenticity or conversion to distinguish between real positions and inadequate counter-positions. It is to take sides, and the sides that one will take depend upon the authenticity of the decider engaged in the fourth level operations of deliberation and evaluation. "It is a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world-view. It deliberately selects the framework, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, and which communications are effective."<sup>10</sup> An understanding of conversion is essential, as well as learning to live in the tension of genuineness between transcended and transcending self; following the transcendental injunctions is a must. The objective of all this work is to set and define general humanistic and specific theological terms used not in understanding all of theology but to ground the subsequent functional specialities of Doctrines, Systematics and Communications.

Foundations can be conceived in two distinct ways. The first is a static, deductivist style that starts like Euclidian Geometry with a set of propositions, of basic axioms, from which all further statements are derived.

Now if one desires foundations to be conceived in [this] simple manner, then the only sufficient foundations will be some variation or other of the following style: One must believe and accept whatever the bible or the true church or both believe and accept. But *X* is the bible or the true church

---

<sup>10</sup> *Method*, 268.

or both. Therefore, one must believe and accept whatever *X* believes and accepts. Moreover, *X* believes and accepts *a, b, c, d, . . .*. Therefore, one must believe and accept *a, b, c, d, . . .*.<sup>11</sup>

In many ways, this is the imposition of a cultural norm rather than a systematic procedure for doing theology. The second way of conceiving foundations is dynamic rather than static, open-ended and creative rather than closed.

If one desires foundations for an ongoing, developing process, one has to move out of the static, deductivist style—which admits no conclusions that are not implicit in premises—and into the methodical style—which aims at decreasing darkness and increasing light and keeps adding discovery to discovery. Then, what is paramount is control of the process. It must be ensured that positions are accepted and counter-positions are rejected. But that can be ensured only if investigators have attained intellectual conversion to renounce the myriad of false philosophies, moral conversion to keep themselves free of individual, group, and general bias, and religious conversion so that in fact each loves the Lord his God with his whole heart and his whole soul and all his mind and all his strength.

. . . [I]t does seem necessary to insist that the threefold conversion [religious, moral and intellectual] is not foundational in the sense that it offers the premisses from which all desirable conclusions are to be drawn. The threefold conversion is not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is.<sup>12</sup>

From this momentous change, Doctrines, Systematics and Communications draw their strength. Theologians working in the functional speciality of Doctrines work out the core beliefs common to any Christian community (cognitive level of judging). Systematic theologians develop the explanatory theories that ground such doctrines (level of understanding), while Communication specialists seek ways to convey these realities to people living in quite different cultural matrixes (level of experiencing).

This study, though it draws upon the functional speciality of Dialectics for its data, belongs to the functional speciality of Foundations. It is an inquiry into the suitability of my own foundational stance for understanding what it means to be a Christian in our own day and age.

#### From Dialectics to Foundations

Both Dialectics and Foundations operate at the fourth level of consciousness: deciding. While experiencing, understanding and judging lead to metaphysics, this fourth level of cognitive

---

<sup>11</sup> *Method*, 270.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

operations—deliberating, evaluating and deciding—grounds ethics. This is the level where conscience comes into being, where any discrepancy between what one knows to be true and what one decides to do creates an internal uneasiness, where a psychic demand for wholeness plays itself out in the artistic drama of human living. It is also the level where the tension of genuineness—between who one is and who one could be (transcended and transcending self)—not only brings to awareness a fundamental moral impotence to do the good but drives the desire to wholeness within the greater intelligibility of the Transcendental Being.

The difference between the two specialties is that work in Dialectics seeks to understanding the fundamental decisions people have made concerning who and what they are for, whereas in Foundations a personal decision is made that separates positions from counter-positions. This is the difference between understanding history and making history, for the choice of position creates a world-mediated-by-meaning that expresses being. It is the difference between understanding the Christian lives of others and committing one's life to Christ—and while there is a communal aspect to such a shift, it is an intensely personal one that defines who one is, who one is to be.

Ethics anticipates the form that deliberating, valuating and deciding will take in any given situation; it does not replace it. There is a structure to the human good laid out by Lonergan in *Method*, but this structure is not normative. There are no “good” objects out there that all can agree on, for “good” derives from the process of deliberating, valuating and deciding. Nor is there an abstract quality of “goodness” attached to some thing. Instead, we have the human mind seeking answers to such questions as, What is the right thing to do? Why should I desire this rather than that? What do I consider important in my life? And all these questions involve the authenticity of those seeking answers within the dramatic and artistic meaning of their lives.

Any deep foundational shift involves an exercise in vertical liberty, a shift to a higher perspective that subsumes any previous position. But most of the time we expand our horizons in

a linear fashion, taking what we already know and believe, and extending this to include new areas of knowledge and activity within the same general viewpoint. As Lonergan writes:

For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not advert to the multiplicity of horizons. They do not exercise their vertical liberty by migrating from the one they have inherited to another they have discovered to be better.<sup>13</sup>

To work in Foundations is to recognize not only the polymorphism of human consciousness but the many worlds-mediated-by-meaning brought into being by the dynamism of the human mind to give artistic and dramatic meaning to one's life. Encountering people who live their lives in worlds of meaning quite different from our own is one way to exercise this form of vertical liberty—and the data provided by Dialectics offers this precise opportunity. So also does the need for transdisciplinary work, a need that arises from the complexity and interdependence of so much of contemporary life. In both cases one encounters other ways of living, some modes of which may be better than our own. Then the need to choose, to decide, nags at one's conscience.

When foundational choices are made in response to the fifth level operations of being in love, there's a profound shift in whom that person is.<sup>14</sup> Such changes work themselves down through successive lower cognitive operations as the dissonance between past beliefs and practices and current commitments are brought into coherent and intelligible oneness. These changes impose order from the top down, as opposed to the sensate practice of working from experience up. This is reflected in Lonergan's functional specialities, where the first four start with data on Christian beliefs and practices and rise through a series of higher viewpoints to an understanding of the essential agreements and disagreements that set out positions and counter-positions in the fourth level of Dialectics. Foundations starts with the personal affirmation of what is an authentic position then uses the very being of the theologian as the starting point for

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>14</sup> Lonergan doesn't mention such a fifth level in either *Insight* or *Method*, and there is certainly disagreement over whether this level exists as an independent operation of the human mind. Yet I find the notion useful in differentiating clearly and distinctly between metaphysics, ethics and the innate drive of the human mind toward transcendent being and knowing that emerges from the detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to *know* all there is to know even in the face of our obvious inability to achieve such a unity of knowing. In this, it is a matter of personal preference.

understanding doctrines on the collective level of judging, the formation of systematic theories at the level of understanding and finally the act of mediating between a religious tradition and a specific cultural matrix at the level of experiencing.

It is important to keep in mind that such fundamental changes in whom a theologian is, having fallen in love with the source of all goodness and meaning, automatically starts reorganizing one's set of priorities and values along quite different lines—essentially creating an orientation to deeper terminal values such as truth and justice, hope and charity, discipleship, and the conversion experiences associated with suffering. Such moral changes in one's profile of the human good require new objects or things as the foreground of one's horizon, as is the case when one's understanding of another is mediated by an understanding of the dynamic drive of human beings to live a fuller existence. Criteria for judging between what is real and what is mere ideation change, when for example a naïve realism that assumes “reality” is out there and one has only to look to affirm reality is replaced by a critical realism that recognizes the fact that what we believe is real is a function of experiencing through out senses, giving form to the potentials in that experience, and finally making a judgment concerning the reality of that form.

The essence of Foundational work at the fourth level of human consciousness is intentionality analysis. A cognitive operation at this level of deciding what or what not to do goes beyond consciousness of being, the outcome of the first three levels, and enters into the realm of conscience. For this reason, the work is not metaphysical as such but the exercise of a free and responsible conscience—and a good conscience at that. Analyzing intentions and the horizons reveals how this or that person exercised their conscience within the existing state of the good of order of their own time.

In many ways, people are engaged in fundamental institutional change through their allegiance—or lack of it—to one of the competing options for the good of order. Such changes are the result of unsolved problems and other critical issues that can arise within a culture or be imposed from the outside, and as such they are of importance to all people. They can emerge

from the dynamism of the human spirit, which often challenges traditional mores and norms, or come into being as the unexpected consequences of some decision or action. To understand the kind of order that people give their allegiance to and the problems of that time-and-space-specific socio-political order is to advert to the conditions within which conscience operates. Analyzing the intentions of others is to understand their understanding of the state of the good of order of their society and their own personal response to changes within this good of order.

Human living is dynamic, not static. People are ever on the move, caught in the tension between whom they are and who they might be. So it is that understanding the state of the good of order in any society depends on knowledge of the development of that order (genetic) and the tensions of positions and counter-positions within that order (dialectics). It is important to look for those shifts in objects to which people attend, for any conversion sets into motion different worlds-mediated-by-meaning and such worlds vary according to the things or objects to which people are concerned.

The need to make foundational choices emerges once a person is exposed to the positions and counter-positions of others. Now people make choices of who they are all the time, in the sense that we are constantly taking a stand on this or that issue, and if everyone were truly authentic in following the human dynamism toward a fuller existence there would not be a problem—we all would agree on the right thing to do. But various forms of bias take their toll, and positions are taken that are less than intelligible or intelligent, less than moral or loving, and so people come together and take sides. What sides they will take depends on the authenticity of each person.

The functional speciality of Dialectics is concerned with understanding the essential points of agreement or disagreement among the various positions and counter-positions brought to light by the work of historians. This is the study of conflict, either overt or covert, that

... may lie in religious sources, in the religious tradition, in the pronouncements of authorities, or in the writings of theologians. They may regard contrary orientations of research, contrary



interpretations, contrary histories, contrary styles of evaluation, contrary horizons, contrary doctrines, contrary systems, contrary policies.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore,

Not all opposition is dialectical. There are differences that will be eliminated by uncovering fresh data. There are the differences we have named perspectival, and they merely witness to the complexity of historical reality. But beyond these there are fundamental conflicts stemming from an explicit or implicit cognitional theory, an ethical stance, a religious outlook. They profoundly modify one's mentality. They are to be overcome only through an intellectual, moral, religious conversion. The function of dialectic will be to bring such conflicts to light, and to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion.<sup>16</sup>

Choosing one's own foundational stance first involves objectifying one's own subjective differences—conflicts—with another. So it is that this study starts with clarifying my own horizon and intentions, given the nature of the conflicts that have arisen and concerned me over the course of my life (the objects to which I habitually attend). This will not be an extensive analysis, since my prime concern is over the potential of my own foundational stance to include the Divine Mystery as operative in human concerns, but it should be sufficient to highlight the fundamental choices that have guided my development and the current stages of that development as expressed in the notion of Professional Practice.

### Authenticity, Self-appropriation and the Universal Viewpoint

While it is possible to concentrate on the symbol systems that define a world-mediated-by-meaning—the expression of religious experience is the ecstasy of shamans, the presence of sacred places, the rituals and periodic festivals that establish the flow of time, traditional myths that tell of the beginning of the world—there is something more fundamental at work. As Lonergan notes:

I have been contrasting major stages in the cultivation of religious experience: the sacralization of the universe and of the whole of human living in preliterate times; the emergence of religion as a distinct institution with its schools of ascetics, its prophetic traditions, its priesthoods; the contemporary phase in which much institutional religion appears to be in decline, the universe has been desacralized, and human living secularized.

But it would be a mistake, I think, to concentrate on such differences to the neglect of what is more fundamental. For in the main such differences represent no more than the ongoing process in which man's symbols become ever more differentiated and specialized. What is fundamental is

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

human authenticity, and it is twofold. There is the minor authenticity of the human subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him. There is the major authenticity that justifies or condemns the tradition itself. The former leads to a human judgment on subjects. The latter invites the judgment of history upon traditions.<sup>17</sup>

Authenticity involves the lived tension between the transcended self (who one is) and the transcending self (who one is called to be, to live a fuller life) as expressed in the dynamic orientation to being open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, responsible in deciding and above all being in love with the Transcendent Being who is the source of all love. Self-appropriation involves the personal affirmation of one's own cognitional structure of operations—of experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and falling in love—as grounding all human activity no matter what culture or civilization, what organization or social group. The universal viewpoint is a potential inherent in any truly authentic self-appropriated person to expand one's horizon and intentions to include those of any other person or group, thereby avoiding the truncating effect of trying to understand another from a limited perspective unable to follow the data. Together, all three set the conditions or criteria for evaluating any one foundational stance—including my own.<sup>18</sup>

Authenticity is derived from the transcendental injunctions postulating the unobstructed workings of the human mind guided by the detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know. For example, if we are conscious of self as experiencing, then the moral imperative of experiencing is to be fully open to experience. But until one has appropriated this pattern for one's own, counter-positions will prevail and much of what follows will seem strange, confused and disjointed.

---

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985), 120.

<sup>18</sup> There are other specific identifiers than transcendence and the drive for fuller being, for example willingness and unrestricted desire to know, that provide basic principles for development. But they are implicit in authenticity, self-appropriation and the universal viewpoint. It is important to keep in mind that self-appropriation is only the starting point toward intellectual conversion: it is this decision to affirm oneself as a reasoning entity that sets the conditions for understanding the implications of this decision, namely a metaphysics, an ethical approach to understanding the good and the gradual shift to transcendent being and knowledge.

Operations in the pattern are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, writing.

It will be assumed that everyone is familiar with some at least of these operations and that he has some notion of what the other terms mean. Our purpose is to bring to light the pattern within which these operations occur and, it happens, we cannot succeed without an exceptional amount of exertion and activity on the part of the reader. He will have to familiarize himself with our terminology. He will have to evoke the relevant operations in his own consciousness. He will have to discover in his own experience the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to the next. Otherwise he will find not merely this chapter but the whole book about as illuminating as a blind man finds a lecture on color.<sup>19</sup>

Lonergan identifies eight features of these operations, operations that are now known by the central operation of each: experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. His summary runs as follows.<sup>20</sup>

1. Each operation is transitive; they have objects. Intentionality is thus involved at each level, e.g. by seeing there is revealed what is seen; by deciding there is revealed the human good.
2. These operations are conscious operations that not only reveal the object but enable the operating subject to be present to herself.
3. Introspection is therefore not a matter of “looking within” but a means of objectifying the contents of consciousness.
4. Objectifying the objects of consciousness reveals different levels of consciousness and intentionality, for the things intended by experiencing are different from the things conceived through coming to understand, which are different from the things relating to evidence and judgments, which in turn are different from the moral things at the level of deciding. “On all four levels, we are aware of ourselves but, as we mount from level to level, it is a fuller self of which we are aware and the awareness itself is different” (*Method*, 9).
5. In the same way that different operations reveal different levels of consciousness within the subject, they also result in different ways of attending to reality. Paying attention to what we experience may be selective, but it is certainly not the kind of investigative or detective work required in coming to understand and to formulate that understanding in words. Good judgment requires a detached intelligence quite different from the tension of inquiry, and detached intelligence gives way at the level of deciding to attending to the human good and the moral universe of good and bad consciences.
6. While these operations take place one at a time, resulting in a single instance of knowing and doing, they also cluster together in a compound form of knowing where many objects are revealed and a universe of meaning brought into being.
7. Each of these four primary operations is associated with a particular mode of consciousness, but when taken together as a compound form of knowing they reveal an inner drive of the human spirit. “To know the good, [the human spirit] must know the real; to know the real, it must know the true; to know the true, it must know the intelligible; to know the intelligible, it must attend to the data” (*Method*, 13). And so it begins.
8. The resulting pattern is dynamic. Not only does the pattern have its own internal logic of operations that we master as we mature, but it is an open-ended, “ever going beyond what happens to be

---

<sup>19</sup> *Method*, 6-7. It is the importance of these words that sparked the two and a half year slow read of *Insight*.

<sup>20</sup> See *Method*, 7-13.

given or known, ever striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown or incompletely known totality, whole, universe” (*Method*, 13).

This is why the self-appropriation of one’s own rationality is so important, for without it this pattern of operations cannot be understood or if understood cannot be verified and thus made real. As Lonergan’s twelve functions of his Transcendental Method make clear, there are many reasons for wanting to make this cognitive structure real and operative.<sup>21</sup>

1. Normative function, where the transcendental precepts of Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable and Be responsible have their grounds in the prior reality of the spontaneously self-organizing operations of the human mind.
2. Critical function, where many philosophical disagreements can be resolved by “bringing to light the contradiction between a mistaken cognitional theory and the actual performance of the mistaken theorist” (*Method*, 21).
3. Dialectical function, where the transcendental method can be used to clarify fundamental positions that analysis confirms and counter-positions that are denied intelligibility through their own internal contradictions.
4. Systematic function, where the objectification of the method sets basic terms and relations that ground an epistemology that is “isomorphic with the terms and relations denoting the ontological structure of any reality proportionate to human cognitional process” (*Method*, 21).
5. The transcendental method allows for continuity through the control of meaning that insures progressive and cumulative results without insisting on a rigid program that blocks the unfolding dynamism of the human spirit.
6. Heuristic function that outlines both the form of the intended knowing and the steps necessary to get there even when all there is to start with is the question.
7. Foundational function, where the transcendental method sets the grounds for understanding the common norms in every field even when dissent runs rampant and no common area of agreements seems possible.
8. Transcendental method grounds any specific methodology, including that of theology.
9. “The objects of theology do not lie outside the transcendental field, for that field is unrestricted, and so outside it there is nothing at all” (*Method*, 23).
10. The transcendental method adds nothing to theology, but “simply draws attention to a resource that has always been used” (*Method*, 24).
11. The transcendental method constitutes a generalized empirical method that offers the potential of a unified science.
12. Transcendental method “is a heightening of consciousness that brings to light our conscious and intentional operations and thereby leads to the answers to there basic questions. What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it?” (*Method*, 25).

Self-appropriation affirms all this, and more. It affirms metaphysics as central and conjugate potential, form and act, as genetic and dialectic, and as a science. It affirms an ethics of progress

---

<sup>21</sup> See *Method*, 20-25.

and decline, where the ultimate good for which we all strive is a life of fuller being. It affirms the possibility of knowing that transcends the cognitive operations of the human mind, a knowing that involves the spiritual intelligibility of a Transcendent Being. It involves an empirical worldview of emergent probability that stands in contrast to other worldviews such as Aristotle's, Newton's, or the indeterminacy of quantum physics. It involves the differentiation of mind, as the polymorphism of human consciousness is given expression in different patterns of experience and realms of meaning. Perhaps most important of all, it grants entry into the realm of interiority, a higher perspective that includes all of the above, for the realm of interiority allows for the development of a truly empirical human science and a theological methodology that does not suffer from the successful discipline-specific empirical methodology of the hard sciences or the imposition of cultural norms.

It remains . . . that transcendental method is only a part of theological method. It supplies the basic anthropological component. It does not supply the specifically religious component. Accordingly, to advance from transcendental to theological method, it is necessary to add a consideration of religion. And before we can speak of religion, we first must say something about the human good and about human meaning.<sup>22</sup>

### The Human Good

There are two primary counter-positions when it comes to conceiving the human good: that we think of nothing but good objects, e.g. a good car, a good house, or a good job; and that we are going to consider an abstract quality that all "good" things possess. The problem in the first case is that the good is not always visible, it is not something "out there" to be seen, and the "good" is never general but always a good to someone in particular. Truth and justice may be considered "goods", but neither of them are objects. And disputes over capital punishment or a woman's right to an abortion—or even the relative worth of different makes of cars—shows that the "good" is not out there but a factor of the human subject. We cannot talk about the human good

---

<sup>22</sup> *Method*, 25.

without talking about the people who make such value decisions and the biases that may exist that end up distorting these choices.

The problem in the second case is that goodness is conceived as an innate property of the universe, as something that all “good” things possess, when in fact goodness is a decision of value made by a very real human person in unique time-and-space-specific circumstances. If “goodness” is to have any meaning, it is to be found in the authentic subject determined to follow the transcendental precepts—be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love—in an unrestricted fashion. When we do not follow these precepts—when we limit the good to our own well-being (egotism), or set values according to the organization or society to which we have given our allegiance (group bias), or fail to consider the long term implications of what we do (common sense bias)—we choose as good only a restricted set of the greater set of possible goods. Such restrictive value choices promote decline.

Historical records affirm the innate dynamism of the human mind to seek both the real and the good as conducive to progress rather than decline. This is especially true when it comes to freedom, for the drive toward liberty that became possible with the development of a post-agricultural economy lies behind the French Revolution, the British Magna Carta and the American Revolution. It lies in the current tension between traditional societies dominated by a world-mediated-by-meaning that places all authority and power in the hands of a few, and the relative openness of Western liberal democracy that stresses individual freedom, liberty and responsibility.

This innate dynamism of the human spirit toward progress is expressed in time. The Jews invented the idea of linear time, of going from a distant past of goodness in Eden, the fall, the tension now existing in our fallen state, and a goal or direction to history that will find its conclusions in the final days. Up to that point, history was essentially cyclic: recurring patterns of seasonal cycles, yearly progressions and social events such as war or the succession of kings. But now progress, decline and recovery/redemption entered into our understanding of history, and are

now crucial concepts in the Christian/Jewish world-mediated-by-meaning. Not only is history now linear in form, but we stand embedded in history—not above it.<sup>23</sup>

Then there is the reality of decline, manifested in the loss of the good of order. While progress is manifested in cumulative development of the human good and recovery/redemption is manifested in human repentance and a shift toward living in the tension between transcended and transcending self that include a world-mediated-by-meaning based on a higher viewpoint, decline fragments what was once whole.

On the surface, decline might be easily understood as symptomatic of corrupt minds. But what of the person recognizing decline?

Decline has a still deeper level. Not only does it compromise and distort progress. Not only do inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility produce objectively absurd situations. Not only do ideologies corrupt minds. But compromise and distortion discredit progress. Objectively absurd situations do not yield to treatment. Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good. Imperceptibly the corruption spreads from the harsh sphere of material advantage and power of the mass media, the stylish journals, the literary movements, the educational process, the reigning philosophies. A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency. It cannot be argued out of its self-destructive ways, for argument has a theoretical major premises, theoretical premises are asked to conform to matters of fact, and the facts in the situation produced by decline more and more are the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility.<sup>24</sup>

Lonergan's description indicates that the root causes of decline are not easy to discern, for they are embedded in the various ways the innate dynamism of the human spirit can be diverted or blocked. Egotism can restrict inquiring intelligence to the well-being of one person. Group bias can restrict further questions to the good of one's own tribe or organization, failing to take into account the well-being of others groups in society. Common sense bias, especially in non-differentiated minds that verify the real and the true by an appeal to common beliefs and practices, erodes the coherency and intelligibility of the social and political order by choosing the practical thing to do over the intelligent course of action. Or as Lonergan maintains:

Precepts may be violated. Evaluation may be biased by an egoistic disregard of others, by a loyalty to one's own group matched by hostility to other groups, by concentrating on short-term benefits and

---

<sup>23</sup> See Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills: The World Before and After Jesus* (New York, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> *Method*, 55.

overlooking long-term costs. Moreover, such aberrations are easy to maintain and difficult to correct. Egoists do not turn into altruists overnight. Hostile groups do not easily forget their grievances, drop their resentments, overcome their fears and suspicions. Common sense commonly feels itself omniscient in practical affairs, commonly is blind to long-term consequences of policies and courses of action, commonly is unaware of the admixture of common nonsense in its more cherished convictions and slogans.<sup>25</sup>

Recovery/redemption changes the direction of development according to the changes in who one is. Conversion is the key to this process:

As orientation is . . . the direction of development, so conversion is a change of direction and, indeed, a change for the better. One frees oneself from the unauthentic. One grows in authenticity. Harmful, dangerous, misleading satisfactions are dropped. Fears of discomfort, pain, privation have less power to deflect one from one's course. Values are apprehended when before they were overlooked. Scales of preference shift. Errors, rationalizations, ideologies fall and shatter to leave one open to things as they are and to man as he should be.<sup>26</sup>

One significant error is the belief that knowing is looking (naïve realism). So too are empiricist and idealistic epistemologies that fail to meet standards set by any inquiring mind:

Now we are not discussing a merely technical point in philosophy. Empiricism, idealism, and realism name three totally different horizons with no common identical objects. An idealist never means what an empiricist means, and a realist never means what either of them means. An empiricist may argue that quantum theory cannot be about physical reality; it cannot because it deals only with relations between phenomena. An idealist would concur and add that, of course, the same is true of all science and, indeed, of the whole of human knowing. The critical realist will disagree with both: a verified hypothesis is probably true; and what probably is true refers to what in reality probably is so. To change the illustration, What are historical facts? For the empiricist they are what was out there and was capable of being looked at. For the idealist they are mental constructions carefully based on data recorded in documents. For the critical realist they are events in the world mediated by true acts of meaning. To take a third illustration, What is a myth? There are psychological, anthropological, historical, and philosophic answers to the question. But there also are reductionist answers: myth is a narrative about entities not to be found within an empiricist, an idealist, a historicist, an existentialist horizon.

Enough of illustrations. They can be multiplied indefinitely, for philosophic issues are universal in scope, and some form of naïve realm seems to appear utterly unquestionable to very many. As soon as they begin to speak of knowing, of objectivity, of reality, there crops up the assumption that all knowing must be something like looking. To be liberated from that blunder, to discover the self-transcendence proper to the human process of coming to know, is to break often long-ingrained habits of thought and speech. It is to acquire the mastery in one's own house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing. It is a conversion, a new beginning, a fresh start. It opens the way to ever further clarifications and development.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 239-40. This is what is meant by "calling Müntzer into being." Müntzer is not someone out there to be known, but a set of written records that provide potential forms for understanding Müntzer—and different historians will work out different images of Müntzer from such potentials, some working close to the data, some imposing their own beliefs, preassumptions or lack of a universal viewpoint.



This is the crux of self-appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness. It is also the primary objective of this research project, both at the upper blade of theory and the lower blade of data.

The indicators of both progress and decline are the various components of the human good. Generally speaking, the reflective self-consciousness that deals with the human good operates on three levels: the individual, the group and the transcendent. All three are operative in the good of order. At the individual level, both need and capacity come together to establish a series of operations designed to achieve a particular good. At some point, a cooperative approach emerges that takes the innate plasticity and perfectibility of people to improve and develop skills that result in the good of order. The good of order consists of organized institutions, roles and tasks that can only be enhanced through potential liberty of its citizens to decide their own orientation according to various levels of conversion and society's commitment to a particular terminal value. Personal relations become the social glue that holds it all together.<sup>28</sup>

The whole is subject to genetic levels of historical development and the dialectic of a multiplicity of positions and counter-positions. The choice of a particular terminal value takes place at the cognitive level of deciding, for terminal values are chosen within a given horizon according to a set of common values and norms that determine what things are or are not important. The genetic and dialectic analysis of different historical choices involving both the good of order and the terminal value falls into the functional speciality of Dialectics. The methods of good decision-making, of sound discernment, belong to the speciality of Foundations. Foundations is intimately concerned with the human good, for work at this level of deciding involves distinguishing between positions that promote progress and decrease darkness, and counter-positions that lead to decline and if not reversed eventually end in dark ages or outright extinction.

---

<sup>28</sup> For a more complete understanding of the structure of the human good see *Method*, 47-52.

## Worlds Mediated by Meaning

While human beings share a sensate world with the animal kingdom, human beings do not live solely in the sensate world but in a world of signs and symbols that have significance beyond mere appearance. We live in a world-mediated-by-meaning, a cultural matrix that not only identifies significant meaningful objects and events, but provides the context within which people give artistic and dramatic form to their lives. A good example of this is wealth. If people have enough to feed and shelter themselves, and to live a basic human life, than what is the need for great wealth? The continued accumulation of wealth may, if a society is rich enough, become social and political markers of status, of power, of influence and authority. It is not that one has a car as a mode of transportation, but that one has *this* car or *this* house in *that* neighbourhood. Furthermore, the social marker is shifting away from real estate, gold or even intangible assets like the promissory notes of money to an even more intangible asset: one's line of credit.

The choice of a system to give meaning to existence can range from any of the many religions that currently exist, as well as certain ideologies offering faith and a broad understanding of human affairs, e.g. Communism, Nationalism or Individualism. Humanism is one such foundational stance, defining a horizon with recognized objects and intentions; so is Christianity, in any of its current manifestations. When a person takes a personal stance concerning these or other options for living a fuller life, he or she enters into a world of meaning that adds special significance to the world around them.

This world-mediated-by-meaning is often given expression in an *ordo*, a recognized perhaps idealized good of order that underlies the social interactions of those living at a certain place and time. Then people share a common map of the important institutions in their society, along with the acceptable norms and criteria for living within these institutional structures. People constantly orientate themselves, keep track of who and where they, what they are doing and how they stand in the scheme of things.

But people exist at various stages of conversion, and so can affirm counter-positions and deny positions. The result is that conflict is inevitable, no matter how much the organization, institution or culture is devoted to peace, for different degrees of discernment result in different worlds-mediated-by-meaning and since their roots may be contrary or contradictory to each other, so too are the resulting mediated worlds. Sometimes the conflict is within the existing institutional structure, when for example calls for reform are meant not to overthrow the powers that be but to restore order to a somewhat chaotic situation. Sometimes the conflict reaches the level of the *ordo* itself, in which case two institutional structures may exist in competition and contradiction to each other. This kind of institutional change is fundamental, for each of the various options constitutes different worlds-mediated-by-meaning that cannot exist in the same social and political space for any length of time without leading to confusion, the loss of the good of order, and perhaps turning into outright war.

The study of such differences belongs to the functional speciality of Dialectics. Choosing the side to which one will give one's allegiance belongs to that of Foundations. When these issues involve religious matters, work in these areas becomes theology—in which case the task is to map the Christian message onto a very different cultural matrix.

### Historical Differentiation of Consciousness

For most of human history, the primary realm of meaning has been that of common sense. Common sense intelligence knows the particulars of a time and a place, knows exactly what to do in any situation that is likely to arise, and in general knows how to get things done. In itself, common sense is an essential component in human living, for without a knowledge of the common sense intelligibility of an era one is lost, disorientated, and left adrift from the affairs of others. But what common sense doesn't know is theory. In fact, the non-differentiated mind whose primary realm of meaning is that of common sense lives in a world with rudimentary and

rather primitive theoretical and religious beliefs all clumped together under the forms of coming to understand that are particular to common sense intelligence.

Common sense falls short when asked what this or that term means. For example, any person knows when a person is being courageous—that is part of the common sense usage of the term learned over years of correction as people interact with each other. But what does the word “courageous” mean? What is an explanatory definition of the word, “courageous”? The same holds for other question, e.g., what does “sin” mean? Or the “community of saints”? People of common sense intelligence may know the proper use of these and other terms and still be unable to answer such questions. The reason for this is that these questions no longer belong to the realm common sense; they are questions that belong to the realm of theory.

It was the early Greeks who, starting with Plato’s Socrates well over two thousand years ago, first distinguished between common sense and theoretical realms of meaning. But it wasn’t until the beginnings of the scientific era that explanatory intelligence took control of its own development with its own specific methodology for empirical research. A new technical language began to emerge: the language to describe how things relate to each other, rather than how things relate to us as human beings (the central feature of common sense intelligence), is mathematics. Unlike common sense that relishes the particular, theorists seek to strip away non-relevant features to formulate the essential things and their relationships. So Newton watched an apple fall from a tree and developed the theory of gravity as the force of attraction between two masses—in this case the relatively small mass of the apple and the far greater one of the earth. The equation that gives expression to this relationship states that the mutual attraction of any two masses varies according to the inverse of the square of the distance between them. This law has subsequently been verified in a wide number of instances, including predicting the orbit of the planets around the sun.

When it comes to getting on with the affairs of the world, both common sense and theory are needed. But this is not recognized until there’s another differentiation of mind, this time between

common sense, theory and interiority. Interiority is the realm of transcendental method, and as such it is a heightening of consciousness into the polymorphism of the human mind, the variety of problems and questions it faces, and the resulting methods appropriate to answering these different kinds of questions. Common sense intelligence relies on general maxims or even fables to store essential observations into common sense life: “a stitch in time saves nine” may provide the required insight into any given situation. And scientists have highly technical languages and elaborate research methods to understand the essential correlations between the things they have formulated and verified as existing.

While differentiating the realm of interiority from the two other realms is essential when it comes to knowing how the two fit together, one does not remain in that realm of meaning. Instead, once the transcendental method has been mastered through a process of self-appropriation it is used as a high level perspective to guide and direct work in the other two realms. This is necessary for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the tendency of common sense intelligence to think that it knows everything that needs knowing in order to get on with the demanding affairs of the world and so relegates theory to the dust-bin of impracticality. When action is taken on the basis of practicality alone, common sense bias can undermine any sense of intelligent order in a society. The loss or degradation of the good of order in a society is a sure indicator of decline.

While there are other realms of meaning—notable the scholarly, which understands the common sense of another time and place, and the artistic, which gives an aesthetic meaning to much of our lives—the realm of importance for the purposes of this study is that of the transcendent. There is a realm of meaning that involves falling in love with the source of all goodness, all being, the Transcendent Being, that Divine Mystery so active in human history both at a collective and individual level. There is knowledge of a fuller way of being that is possible only through an encounter with this Transcendent Being. It is the grounds of all religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion. It provides the tension between transcended and transcending

self that is the hallmark of an authentic person seeking to follow the innate dynamism of the human spirit: Be open, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible, and Be in love.

Now, common sense relates things to us. But who are we? Do we not change over time, as acquiring common sense knowledge we are bound to do? One way to get a handle on this is to inquire into common sense's subjective field.

While realms of meaning concern the heuristic structures appropriate to different questions, patterns of experience are just that, recurring patterns of purpose, interest, attention, striving—effort along a given path and in a given direction. They are ways in which we experience the world around us, ways that range from the biological (purposeful pleasure, pain) to the aesthetic (the exuberance of creative play in the artist), to the intellectual (the seasoned spirit of inquiry), to the dramatic (a dramatic component behind merely getting things done). Out of such patterns of experience we have the transcending artistic drama of human beings giving meaning to their lives.

In common sense we also encounter various biases that restrict horizons and limit intentions. The egotist constrains her thinking solely to her own well being; questions that might arise concerning the well being of others are not allowed into the self-set drama of her own life. At the communal level, group bias restricts common thought to the good of one's tribe, one's organization, one's country, one's civilization. "My country, right or wrong!" is the rallying cry of those who restrict their horizon to their own club and their intentions to the well being of their reference group. Then, in the drive to get things done, common sense bias emerges that prefers the expedient without considering long-term (theoretical) consequences. This is the long cycle of decline outlined in Appendix III, where civilizations lose any coherent sense of itself as an intelligible unity; the good of order falls apart, and the resulting chaos sends a culture into the dark ages of forgetfulness.

## Freedom

The terminal values we choose, the horizon we adopt, the intentions we pick, all affect the probability of the emergence or survival of any given scheme of recurrence. Such schemes form the basis of the theoretical worldview of emergent probability, as opposed to such common sense worldviews as intelligent design or creationism. But we can do more than affect the probability of emergence and survivability of any given scheme; we can create either a new thing or a new set of conjunctions that have no prior existence other than the practical insight of our own intelligence. Reflective consciousness—that dispassionate inquiry into whether such and such is so—is replaced by a reflective self-consciousness that seeks finality through ever fuller expressions of being.<sup>29</sup>

Human freedom lies in the unconstrained capacity of each person to choose who she is to be, to develop over time a true and tested incarnate meaning of her own life. This does not mean that all our actions are the result of the exercise of our freedom to choose; in many if not most cases we follow the sensate stream of our existence, working unconsciously and uncritically within a given world-mediated-by-meaning without averting to the diversity of positions. Then there are the constraints of our own egotism, our allegiance to the groups to which we belong and the practical

---

<sup>29</sup> It is possible that the concept of predestination depends on a metaphysical understanding of reality as pre-existent (in the mind of God), not emergent. The explanatory understanding of reality belongs not to the realm of common sense but to the realm of theory, where empirical verification of things at different explanatory levels, or the identification of conjugates associated with these things, form the bases for a metaphysics grounded in current well-established scientific classical and statistical practices. This worldview of emergent probability did not exist during the Reformation, with the result that the non-differentiated common sense consciousness of the time failed to attend to the way in which things relate to each other and instead confused a simple explanatory notion of an all-knowing God with a non-evolutional notion of reality to affirm that one's fate was already known in the mind of God.

Does the negation of the doctrine of predestination imply that God is not all-knowing? It might be more appropriate to say that God knows the full expression of reality that to us starts with potential, is given form through our ideas, and finally verified through reflective consciousness; that in knowing this reality, God knows all possible courses of actions, all possible emergent schemes, all possible end states in finality; that knowing all that we could be does not change the cognitive operations of our minds to come to understand being and to seek to express a fuller being in our lives. The evidence that we do decide lies at the cognitive level of deciding. The evidence that we give meaning to physical reality beyond that reality lies in the insights that we experience on a daily basis. It is this additional meaning that creates the adult world-mediated-by-meaning. The doctrine of predestination denies the reality of all this, a denial that creates a discordance that eventually acts to overturn this counter-position.

intelligence of common sense understanding. There are the tensions between society and self that are always present, the limitations of a resource poor economy, the tribal need to belong, and the more sophisticated form of constraints due to an under-developed or primitive good of order that cannot allow creative play or innovative proposals lest the entire people suffer.

In a rough sense, there are two kinds of freedom that reflective self-consciousness can exercise: the freedom to respond to higher order structures and the freedom to reorganize lower order events. In the worldview of emergent probability, there are successive genetic explanatory levels arranged in a series of higher viewpoints that are self-consistent and autonomous in their own right and yet—because of the canon of statistical residues—are never fully determined. The basic explanatory level is that of quantum mechanics. But in the statistical dance of quantum events, structures emerge that can only be understood in terms of the higher explanatory level of atomic theory—and so it goes, up through chemistry, to biology, animal sensitivity, to psychic, to human beings who are both an explanatory genus and an explanatory species. For human beings are an explanatory genus above that of the sensate, and our species is both a source of higher systems and subject to higher orders of Transcendent Being.

It is as a source of higher systems of intelligibility and being that human freedom is exercised. Out of this, potential schemes are given form in a practical insight that reflective self-consciousness acts to bring them into being and then sustain them over time. But to the degree that human beings are both explanatory genus and explanatory species—an instance of a transition from the intelligible to the intelligent—we not only seek finality as the unlimited extension of the dynamism of the human spirit but are part of a series of ever higher explanatory levels. At least one of these levels transcends human intelligibility, a level we associate with the Divine Mystery or a Transcendental Being.

It is for this reason that there are two basic types of freedom. The first is the freedom to respond to the higher order things and conjugates that are intelligible only to God. In human experience, this is a response to divine love that permeates the universe. While we are free to



reject this love and choose a lesser form of being, we cannot escape its presence. The innate dynamism of human beings to seek to know all things, to be all things, finds its fulfillment only in this higher order explanatory level. So it is that we can be caught up in this tension between self as transcended and self as transcending, between the self that we know and the self that we need to be if we are to find wholeness.

It is this response to divine love that sets in motion a series of ongoing conversions that are never assured and never safe against the pull of the transcended self. Religious conversion, and the psychic, intellectual and moral that follow from it, involve not the homogeneous expansion of a pre-existing horizon and intentions, but a shift to a higher level of intelligibility that allows for the full and complete expression of what it means to be open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging and responsible in deciding.

The second basic form freedom can take is the modification of those schemes of recurrence that take place at lower explanatory levels of being. When practical insights are given weight through reflective self-consciousness, and being is understood through reflective consciousness, it becomes possible to create new things and bring into being new conjugates at any one of a number of levels. So scientists can recreate in their particle accelerators early particles that last existed within microseconds of the big bang, or hydraulic cycles are changed through the building of dams and large irrigation systems, or new architectural forms are given expression through new materials generated in chemical labs and industrial factories. Entities such as limited corporations are created things within the explanatory level of social intelligence. So too is the first differentiation between common sense and theoretical explanatory intelligence, followed by the realm of interiority that puts both into a common perspective. The world-mediated-by-meaning and the good of order of our particular neck of the woods are both human compound creations first given expression in simple terms that are then elaborated both in terms differential and operational skills.

In the same way that we can refuse God's love and retreat to cruder less intelligible and coherent forms of human existence that in some cases may not even seem human, we can reject or destroy those very things that previous generations have created. After all, human destructiveness is as much a part of the exercise of human freedom as is creation. But to do so is to reject the very dynamism of the human spirit, to channel the once open drive to fuller understanding and being to a limitless intelligible world-mediated-by-meaning—a very dangerous enterprise considering the moral and intellectual force that such dysfunctional being can bring to human affairs. In the end, the result is a break-up of whatever good of order that existed into a more primitive, chaotic, unpredictable disordered society with a sharply constricted future.

### Incarnate Meaning

Central to this research project is the idea of incarnate meaning, for any genetic and dialectic encounter with Müntzer is an encounter with the incarnate meaning of his life both for his times and for ours.<sup>30</sup>

Incarnate meaning combines all or at least many of the other carriers of meaning. It can be at once intersubjective, artistic, symbolic, linguistic. It is the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds. It may be his meaning for just one other person, or for a small group, or for a whole national, or social, or cultural, or religious tradition.

Such meaning may attach to a group achievement, to a Thermopylae or Marathon, to the Christian martyrs, to a glorious revolution. It may be transposed to a character of characters in a story or a play, to a Hamlet or Tartuffe or Don Juan. It may emanate from the whole personality and the total performance of an orator or a demagogue.

Finally, as meaning can be incarnate, so too can be the meaningless, the vacant, the empty, the vapid, the insipid, the dull.<sup>31</sup>

To assert the incarnate meaning of another is not as hard as it might first appear. This is something that we do naturally as human beings creating and maintaining a world-mediated-by-

---

<sup>30</sup> In a crude sense, there are three ways to formulate Müntzer's incarnate meaning: the significance he had for those of his own time and place, the meaning that he has five centuries later in a society that is no longer Christian, and the meaning his life has for God. The latter goes beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>31</sup> *Method*, 73.

meaning in which *every* event or thing or person that captures our attention does so because of the meaning they have. Everything else disappears into the empirical residue.

### *Historical Conditions*

#### The Need for Foundational Studies

Where do you come from? What are your (intellectual) roots? What is your family background? To what groups do you give allegiance? The answer to these and other questions are often intended to provide a sense of who you are and what your intentions may be—no easy task in this day and age. For there is nothing so problematic for human beings than other human beings—especially during times of fundamental institutional change when it would appear that humans are no longer the darlings of God, species mortality gnaws at our souls, and instead of things getting better we seem to be able to do little that is right. Whether these perceptions are explained as a species tropism that has us keep a constant eye out for danger, or the result of such historical events as earth-rise photos over the moon’s horizon, or the crematoriums of the Nazi concentration camps, or an emerging ecological awareness of the disruptiveness of the human species, or the reality of life in a post-Hiroshima post-modernist world, the result is a situation where trying to keep tabs on who and where we are, and what we should be doing, is unquestionably *the* dominate activity in contemporary life.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> That, and the other companion question to who we are, namely what are we for. Orientation, the first of the three pre-planning pre-policy-making steps of Otto Friedman (the other two being Diagnosis & Evaluation, and Estimating Scope & Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change), is an essential component of our existence during times of fundamental institutional change. My favourite image of this is that of a *very* early ancestor of mine running through the disappearing forests of Africa engaged in the hunt of a dangerous predator. If this person should ever lose track for one moment of who he is, where he is, and what he is doing (a complex ever-changing virtual reality that includes the intentions of not only his fellow hunters but of the game itself)—it would spell disaster. Orientation is the one primary task of our overlarge craniums, overdeveloped in evolutionary terms because of the need to position and engage in the ever fluid social dynamics of any “primitive” primate kinship group.

One has only to imagine the confused individual who no longer knows who or where they are to realize the overriding importance of being able to find and bind oneself successfully in both time and space. Who has not experienced an instant of total confusion when, descending a flight of stairs, mind elsewhere, one is jolted back into reality by an extra unexpected step? Orientation is the first thing you do when you

Who are you? What do you want? While it is easy to give a superficial answer in terms of our daily lives, it is not so easy to answer these questions with any degree of authority. What are you *for*? is a far harder question to answer, for it relates to the very meaning of our lives. Part of the problem is that we have to deal with a number of interrelated struggles that in effect define a new set of operating parameters for the human species:

—A breakdown in the societal processes of valuation resulting in a profusion of appreciative systems that make consensus building on even the simplest plan or policy a difficult if not impossible task.

—A lack or stifling of imagination that may confirm ourselves to ourselves as being good, generous and decent people but expose our complicity in the banality of the evil of our times to the judgment of future generations.

—A “black hole” in our social and political universe that is the Holocaust, an as yet unique historical event that seems to defy understanding. That it happened once opens an abyss beneath us, an ever present possibility that it could happen again, now, here, with new “Jews” and new “Germans” to enact the same roles.

—The failure of various disciplines to cope with the complexity of many of our critical problems, resulting in a growing need for a truly comprehensive transdisciplinary framework plus a general theory of history in order to even *begin* to understand the fundamental institutional changes now taking place—much less to work out the regulatory plans and policies necessary to promote progress by adding to the human good while avoiding those actions that lead to decline.

—Coping with the problem of regulating ever more complex and intricate organizations and institutions, with “information” abounding in books, the media, and on the web, with increasing levels of confusion and turbulence as unplanned and unexpected consequences emerge to become a part of history.

Together these five points constitute a major hurdle when it comes to orientating ourselves during times of changing institutional environments.<sup>33</sup> And if we cannot orientate ourselves

---

wake up from an extended excursion into the preconscious mentality of deep sleep. It is so important that, to avoid panic and the subsequent damage random trashing may ensue, the first things that a hospital patient is told when coming out from under a general anaesthetic is his or her name and where they are. The latter example shows that we orientate ourselves to a world-mediated-by-meaning rather than the physical world of our senses.

The point is that if at any time you are fed the wrong information or make the wrong judgments, you will at best be out of step with what is happening around you, or at worse (if hunting) you will be dead, having blundered into the grasp of the very prey on which you hoped to dine. This brings us to an important point: while it is possible to tolerate non-intelligent, unreasonable and irresponsible behaviour in times of relative peace and tranquility, during times of crises the tares have to be separated from the wheat. When your back is to the wall, sound judgment and responsible decision-making are no longer luxuries, they are necessities. See Robert D. Kaplan, “The Dangers of Peace”, in *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 169–185.

<sup>33</sup> By definition, an institution is an organization that has been raised to special importance. Whereas organizations come and go with no outsider caring very much, institutions—if threatened—are immediately supported by society at large. For if these institutions were to fail, a good slice of society would soon follow—for the loss of institutions constitutes a loss in the regulatory capacity of a culture or society. If there are fundamental value shifts in society, these shifts are expressed in institutional changes that in turn

successfully, we cannot act according to the needs and demands of the time—for the simple reason that restricted or misplaced orientations leave one operating in an imaginary world of things that do not exist.

Authenticity, the human good, freedom—of such things is my world constructed, the world-mediated-by-meaning as it “appears” to me, or since this presupposes a reality out there to be seen, has been brought into being on my part through various encounters with the positions and counter-positions of other contemporaries. The objects and relationships—the unities and conjugates—that make up this world are for the most part social and political variables having to do with broad societal trends and needs. Yet it is also an intensely personal world, for the major components have to do with practical intelligence action, with plans and policies that lead to progress rather than decline, with getting ourselves out of this mess we as a species have created for ourselves. It reflects a search for the fundamentals of human living.

### Breakdowns in Societal Valuation

The seminal work in this area is Karl Mannheim’s “The Crisis in Valuation” (1943).<sup>34</sup> “There is definitely a coherent system of social and psychological activities which constitute the

---

affect the ways in which a culture regulates itself and its environment. If these shifts involve incompatible horizons, then alternative institutions are imagined, created and maintained, thus splitting societies and resulting in the loss of a collective good of order.

An excellent barometer of institutional change may be found in architectural developments throughout the ages. Without fail, the dominate powers—the fundamental organizations of any age that are granted institutional status—express themselves in monuments. To the early Egyptians, it was the temples at Karnack (Thebes) or the pyramids of Giza. To the Romans, it was the great public palaces of the emperors. To medieval society, soaring cathedrals dominated the skyline of Europe—that and the great palaces and retreats of feudal kings and queens. In our times, our institutional monuments are great commercial structures such as the former Twin Towers of New York or the glass facades of the great banking institutions that dominate many downtown skylines. Both the parliamentary buildings in Ottawa and the White House in Washington D.C. pale in comparison: one suspects that they are monuments to the powerful institutions of another age.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Mannheim, “The Crisis of Valuation”, *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1943), 12–30. See also Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936) for an understanding of the ways in which grounds for collective action are achieved through ideological and utopian modes of “thinking.” For another expert analysis of current regulatory problems, see Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *Value Systems and Social Process* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1968) and *Freedom in a Rocking Boat: Changing Values in an Unstable Society* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970).

process of valuation; among them value creation, value dissemination, value reconciliation, value standardization, value assimilation are the most important, and there are definite social conditions which favour or upset the smooth working of the process of valuation.”<sup>35</sup>

Mannheim argues that traditional societal processes of valuation had started to break down around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the face of a number of social and political realities:

—Uncontrolled rapid growth where ever larger groups dominate social and political realities, leading to a dissonance between the values of a parochial world where handicrafts and agriculture prevailed over society.

—The exponentially growing number of contacts between people, where there exists neither techniques for mediating between radically different valuations nor time for any real assimilation.

—The emergence of new forms of authority and sanctions, with the loss of traditional forms of justification, i.e. the ways of our forefathers, the will of God, an eternal rational law, the law of the strongest, justification on the bases of usefulness, or the uncontrollable inspiration of a charismatic leader.

—An upsetting of the balance between conscious and unconscious forces by having to “bear the burden of a greater amount of consciousness”, especially conscious value appreciation.

This crisis in valuation manifests itself as fundamental conflicts based on positions and counter-positions that can only be understood in terms of conflicting horizons, diverse orientations, and whatever degree of conversion and differentiation of mind that may exist in such time-and-space-specific realities. The situation is such that:

In the very same social environment we now have the most contradictory philosophies of life. First, there is the religion of love and universal brotherhood, mainly inspired by Christian tradition, as a measuring-rod for our activities. Then there is the philosophy of Enlightenment and Liberalism, with its emphasis on freedom and personality, and its appreciation of wealth, security, happiness, tolerance and philanthropy as the means of achieving them. Then we have the challenge of the Socialists, who rate equality, social justice, basic security and a planned social order as the chief desiderata of the age. But beyond all this we have . . . the most recent philosophy, with the demoniac image of man emphasizing fertility, race, power, and the tribal and military virtues of conquest, discipline and blind obedience.

We are not only divided against each other in our evaluation of the big issues, such as the principles of the Good Life and those of the best social organization, but we have no settled views especially in our democratic societies, concerning the right patterns of human behaviour and conduct. One set of education influences is preparing the new generation to practise and defend their rational self-interest in a competitive world, while another lays the emphasis on unselfishness, social service and subordination to common ends. One set of social influences is guided by the ideal of asceticism and repression, the other by the wish to encourage self-expression.

We have no accepted theory and practice concerning the nature of freedom and discipline. Some think that, owing to the self-regulating powers inherent in group life, discipline would spontaneously emerge if only full freedom were given and the pressure of external authority removed. In contrast to this anarchist theory, others hold that if strict regulation is applied to those spheres of life where it is

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 17.

necessary, the scope for real freedom is not suppressed by rather created. To such thinkers discipline is the pre-condition of freedom. Having no settled views on freedom and discipline, it is not surprising that we have no clear-cut criteria for the treatment of criminals, and do not know whether punishment should be retributive and deterrent or a kind of readjustment and re-education for life in society. We hesitate whether to treat the law-breaker as a sinner or as a patient, and cannot decide whether he or society is at fault.<sup>36</sup>

Thirty years from the time these words were written, Sir Geoffrey Vickers exposed the trap humans have fallen into, a trap that combines both the crisis in valuation and the extensive socio/political changes that had been taking place. Both are part of unexpected and unanticipated consequences of a powerful economic scheme developed by the Victorians—a new world order of liberal economics that was intended to initiate peaceful economic and political change without having recourse to the heavy hand of authority or the destructive practices of war.

A century later we can see well enough the trap which they were preparing for their successors. . . The changes they initiated were to create a world which is neither stable nor regulable at any level or in any aspect. Each organized population, whatever its form of government, faces increasing problems of internal regulation, and these are compounded by their inability to regulate external relations which they could formerly ignore but which are now essential to their existence. Some of these problems are ecological; they arise from the relations of growing populations to their increasingly crowded and polluted living space. Some are political, concerned with the regulation of public power both internally, where the need for regulation makes it increasingly dominant, and externally, where it increasingly conflicts with others. Yet other of these problems are economic; for the economic system proves to be ever less 'automatically' regulable, either internally or externally, and in both fields the machinery for deliberate regulation is unequal to the demands on it. The most fundamental of all regulative problems are social and personal. These are the problems of setting standards, sufficiently self-consistent, attainable, valid and widely acceptable to preserve the coherence through time and change of men and their societies. These in turn are part of those shared systems of interpreting experience on which all cooperative action and all effective communication depend.<sup>37</sup>

A half-century later, our dilemma runs even deeper. These disruptions in value creation associated with increasing rates of change themselves associated with the industrial age, leave us without the means to decide between those systems of appreciation that are available to us.<sup>38</sup> In

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

<sup>37</sup> Vickers, Sir Geoffrey, *Freedom in a Rocking Boat: Changing Values in an Unstable Society* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970), 19. He goes on to note that no matter what the scale—global or individual—the basic nature of the trap remains the same: threats to the physical basis of existence, threats to the institutional basis for existence, and threats to appreciative systems as the need for revaluation and reassessment outstrips human capabilities. For an excellent analysis of the origins of this trap, see Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, first released in 1944 (Boston: Beacon, 1957).

<sup>38</sup> The problem has even deeper roots. The reason for the proliferation of multiple appreciative systems lies in a failure of a specialized form of intelligence known as common sense—to practical, realistic and down-to-earth men and women who specialize in common sense insights into the particular, the unique, the time-and-space-specific 'now.' The most important thing for the politicians, lawyers,

this era of relativism, an era that eased seamlessly into the deconstructionist mentality of post-modernity, little is of intrinsic value. If all cultures are valid simply because they are “intact” cultures, beautiful “pearls” in themselves that westerners now accused of massive destruction of vibrant cultures no longer wish to “colonize” by imposing their own values, then the capacity for moral judgment may still exist but the freedom to exercise that capacity has been, at the very least, compromised.<sup>39</sup> This is the dilemma “Old Europe” now faces:

France and many of its old Europe allies are not just placating external enemies. . . . Opening their doors to a massive influx of Arab immigrants was part of the bargain [with Arabic principalities] too, and the price has been especially steep in countries like France. America, with its open, free-market economy, is a land of opportunity for Arab immigrants. France, with its rigid, tightly regulated

---

administrators and business people of the world is to get on with the world’s business. There is no subordination of this drive to a deeper appreciation of history or of the world of theory, and certainly no time to gain a consensus among the population at large; the ultimate criterion is the practicality of the proposed schemes itself.

The result is rather predictable. As each active individual and group promotes their own agenda according to their own terminal values, the general social body fragments into competing clusters and constellations whom lack any shared appreciative system sufficient to guide and direct the action of the whole. Group bias reigns supreme, as conflicting groups and organizations compete with each other for power, control, and the resources they bring. Unless these men and women of common sense are willing to forgo the practical in favour of a general theory of history or a subordination to the laws and principles worked out in the realm of theory, the social scene continues to fragment in a process of devolution where ever lower and less comprehensive schemes of understanding and appreciation become the norm. This is the longer cycle of decline worked out by Lonergan in *Insight*, Chapter VII on “Common Sense and Object”, subsection 8: “General Bias.” The solution to this problem involves moving to a higher viewpoint of humankind, one that places all the fragments of society within a common perspective as local expressions of the basic transcendent operations of the human process of coming to understand.

<sup>39</sup> This is no more evident than those who take to the streets in recent protests over the warmongering of the current president of the United States while ignoring the “butcher of Baghdad’s” brutal regime during which tens of thousands were tortured and executed, or the refusal of Europeans to admit that there is a terrorism problem, preferring to label terrorists as militants or freedom fighters. To be fair, with France’s six million Islamic citizens, compared with a mere 600,000 Jews, the French may not have much in the way of choice but to accept *Dhimmi* status; ditto Germany and the Netherlands, where in the latter over half of those eighteen and under will be Muslim by the year 2020. (Mark Steyn, “A Western Alliance No More?” [*The Washington Times*, November 10, 2003], reprinted and distributed by the Canadian Institute of Jewish Research, *Isranet Daily Briefing*, Volume III, Number 747, Tuesday, November 11, 2003.)

But the problem runs deeper than mere demographic weight. Take the question of terrorism: “Terrorists aren’t the big problem. The big problem is that leading news organizations, from Reuters to the BBC, refuse to call them terrorists. An even bigger problem is that when news people use weasel words like “militants” to describe bestial fanatics who blow up bus riders or wedding guests in Israel, it doesn’t merely reflect their fear [but] their moral confusion. It’s not just that Reuters and the BBC assume a facade of neutrality because they don’t want their own reporters targeted (the excuse offered sometimes) but that Reuters and the BBC can no longer tell the difference. Neither can the CBC, which also uses “militant” for terrorist. . . . It’s not cowardice, or not just cowardice; it’s that many news people have lost the moral capacity to distinguish between patriots and terrorists. Or good and evil.” George Jonas, “Pragmatic Anti-Semites” (*National Post*, October 27, 2003), reprinted and distributed by the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, *Isranet Daily Briefing* (Volume III, Number 741, November 3, 2003).



economy is not, and angry, unemployed, and unassimilated Arabs, living an apartheid life in the lawless, high-rise, concrete warrens that form threatening rings around French cities today are now 20 percent of the French population, and the most rapidly growing part. Fearing civil unrest, France needs to placate this explosive population and, since she is unwilling to take the economic steps necessary to create meaningful job opportunities for them, she offers them a proxy victory over Israel instead, poisoning their hate-polluted minds with a constant stream of anti-Israel and anti-American propaganda, and pretending to be shocked when French Arabs attack French Jews and burn down French synagogues.<sup>40</sup>

Surely one would expect the post WWII instigators of this Europe-Arab scheme to predict such pressures as a natural consequence of their actions. Certainly, Europe shows signs of an already severe crisis of valuation made worse through immigration. The root cause most likely lies in a common sense attitude that took immigration as the expedient thing to do under the circumstances. Yet, there is another factor. In political affairs as in other facets of human life one finds a surprising lack of . . . not intelligence, but of imagination. Imagination is essential in the process of valuation, for it is through our imaginations that we come to understand other people, other groups, and it is through our imaginations that practical insights arise. In the former case, for example, if one cannot imagine what it is like to be a Christian, then much of Christian life will be a closed book; in the latter, if one cannot imagine a business opportunity, that opportunity does not exist—at least for that person or group or civilization.

#### A Chronic Lack of Imagination

What we cannot imagine, we cannot “see”; what we cannot “see” does not exist, is not real, and cannot be part of our world-mediated-by-meaning, our self-created virtual reality. Our

---

<sup>40</sup> Lerner, Barbara, “Bush vs. Geneva”, *National Review Online*, December 3, 2003. The extent to which Europe appears to be accepting dhimmi status may be observed in European acceptance of Arab opinion that Jews constitute the deadly enemy of world peace. “At a period [1970 s] when American historians were, for the first time, uncovering the history of the extermination of European Jewry and revealing the political and religious implications, a virulent campaign was launched in Europe to present the Israelis as Nazi criminals. This destructive policy, which focused on Israel, boomeranged on the Christian *dhimmi*s with irreversible consequences because it constituted a smokescreen concealing their oppression. It is a remarkable fact that it was during this period, when the PLO was active in the destruction of Lebanon, that from Europe emanated hate-filled invective against Israel, whose prime minister from 1977 was Menahem Begin, a Holocaust survivor.” Bat Ye’or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, translated from the French by Miriam Kochan and David Littman (Madison, UK: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 301.

insights into our past, present, and future depend to a great extent upon images that bind concepts and relations into a unique whole.<sup>41</sup> If such images are not allowed to surface, if they are denied existence for any reason—a megalomaniac egotism, a pathological subservience to a group, denying future realities by concentrating on the immediate with no thought given to the question “And then what?”—then the process of coming to understand and value is distorted.<sup>42</sup> The result is that we live in a world twisted by what can only be called evil, as unintentional as this evil may be.<sup>43</sup> This, as Toynbee notes, places considerable stress on the process of valuation:

If and when this controversy [between a rich north and a poor south] broke out, it seemed likely to be carried from the plane of economics and politics on to the plane of religion, and this on several accounts. In the first place, the peasantry’s persistence in breeding up to the limits of its food supply was the social effect of a religious cause which could not be modified without a change in the peasantry’s religious attitude and outlook. The religious outlook which made the peasantry’s breeding habits so resistant to argument might not have been irrational in origin, for it was a survival from a primitive state of society in which the household had been the optimum social and economic unity of agricultural production. A mechanized technology had now done away with the social and economic environment in which the worship of family fecundity had made economic and social sense; but the persistence of the cult when there was no longer any sense left in it was a consequence of the relative slowness of the Psyche’s pace on the subconscious level in comparison with the pace of the intellect and the will.

Without a religious revolution in the souls of the peasantry, it was hard to see how the World’s Malthusian problem was to be solved; but the peasantry was not the only party to the situation that would have to achieve a change of heart if Mankind was to find a happy issue out of an impending catastrophe. For, if it was true that ‘Man doth not live by bread alone’, then a complacently prosperous Western minority had something to learn from an unworldly vein in the *ethos* of the peasantry.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> See *Insight*, 7–13, for the importance of images in definitions; for inhibitions on the demand for images, 193–94. But the issue runs far deeper. The truly great mystery, acknowledged in Lonergan’s title yet often forgotten in the many tidbits that follow, is that human beings have insights into data that bring new routines into being—a leap of imagination into possibilities not derived from extending existing ideas. These insights are so common, so much a part of our daily lives, that we take them for granted. Yet they form the difference between intelligent action and floundering around in a morass of unrealistic expectations and misleading routines that only lead to decline. A driving need to know—the question—is one of the factors behind the emergence of an insight; so too is the image. And it is this flow of images that the imagination can provide. This applies to all realms of meaning, from common sense to explanatory, from scholarly to interiority: a lack of imagination forestalls the development of necessary insights into data or the demands of the situation to move to a higher viewpoint of what it means to be human.

<sup>42</sup> So is the need for cultivating one’s emotions, an equally important yet neglected aspect of intellectual life. (See *Method*, 30–34.) For an excellent analysis of the breakdown of the affective sphere in meeting the demands of industrial life see Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes* (Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1976).

<sup>43</sup> Yet, “Blindness, as Freud has taught us, is more often the consequence of a positive act than the result of mere defect. It is not that we *are* blind—we *choose blindness*, for good reasons.” Garrett Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 18. Hardin’s italics.

<sup>44</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, abridged (New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957), 344.

Such is part of the dynamics of trying to regulating ever larger human ecological units (urban conglomerations that contain tens of millions of people) under pressure of an expanding population base. No longer can one person or group stand above the fray and enforce their beliefs upon the whole. Not only was the situation far too complex for that to have any chance of success, the very process of acquiring the levers of control generate a group bias that will in the end defeat any such attempt to dictate the nature of reality and the truth of the situation. But it takes an active imagination to realize that such problems exist.

The well-known contemporary novelist and student of the realities of human living, Doris Lessing, raised this issue of a lack of imagination when answering a question put to her by Jonah Raskin in the spring of 1969 at the State University of New York:

I'm tormented by the inadequacy of the imagination. I've a sense of the conflict between my life as a writer and the terrors of our time. One sits down to write in a quiet flat in London and one thinks, Yes, there's a war going on in Vietnam. The night before last, when we were having dinner here, the police were raiding the university and arresting students. . . .

The strain of watching the horrors becomes so great that middle-aged people block them out. My generation doesn't understand that young people have penetrated below the surface and have seen the horrors of our civilization. We've been so damned corrupted. Humanity has got worse and worse, puts up with more and more, gets more and more bourgeois. The youth have realized this.

I have always observed incredible brutality in society. My parents' lives and the lives of millions of people were ruined by the First World War. But the human imagination rejects the implications of our situation. War scars humanity in ways we refuse to recognize. After the Second World War the world sat up, licked its wounds ineffectually, and started to prepare for the Third World War.<sup>45</sup>

But the most damning comment she made, one that should give us a moment's pause, was in her response to Studs Terkel in a Chicago interview held the same year:

Terkel: This is a theme without ending – the theme of man and circumstance. In Hannah Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, with its subtitle "The banality of Evil"—and we face now too the evil of banality—she says that Eichmann was indeed not a beast: he was a man who acted *bestly*. Isn't this what you're saying, that the possibilities are within?

---

<sup>45</sup> Jonah Raskin's interview with Doris Lessing took place on the campus of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, in the spring of 1969. Reprinted as "The Inadequacy of the Imagination" in Doris Lessing, *Conversations*, edited by Earl G. Ingersoll (Princeton, New Jersey: Ontario Review Press, 1994), 13–18. While particulars may have changed since the days of the Vietnam War, the horrors still remain – in Rwanda, Iran, Palestine, Zimbabwe, for example, as well as the break-away republics of the former Soviet Union who were ill-prepared for a sudden immersion in global realities. For a first-hand account of contemporary conditions in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Togo, Egypt, Turkey, Turkestan, Iran, Pakistan, and southern India see Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy* (New York: Vintage, 1997).

Lessing: Yes, can you imagine in 100 years' time, if anyone is alive then, that anyone's going to look back to the Second World War and say, "Oh, those beastly Germans"? They're going to say that the world allowed a certain type of government to take power in Germany, and a very small group of people in other countries protested what was going on; but we're all going to be implicated in this kind of guilt. And they're going to look back on what we're living through now and say, "Those people allowed" – I'm not going to list the horrors, because we all know them – "to happen," even though we're terribly nice, good, kind, charming, delightful people. Right?<sup>46</sup>

It is tempting to think that we are above all that. But we too are implicated in evil, this time in a tragedy that we not only passively allow but in many cases actively support, and that is the Tragedy of the Commons, or in its more generic form, the Double C–Double P Game (Common Costs—Private Profits—and *don't tell anybody!*).<sup>47</sup> The Tragedy of the Commons has to do with

---

<sup>46</sup> Studs Terkel, radio interview with Doris Lessing, Chicago, June 10, 1969. Reprinted as "Learning to Put the Questions Differently" in *Conversations* (1994), 22. Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" is possible only through a lack of imagination that otherwise allows us to walk – even temporarily – in the shoes of another. Doris Lessing, *Re: Colonized Planet 5, Shikasta*, the first volume of *Canopus in Argos: Archives* (New York: Knopf, 1979) should in my opinion be required reading for any theological student interested in stretching his or her religious imagination to go beyond traditionally defined Christian modes of religious interiority in order to face the tragic and the evil of human dramatic, often rhetorical, living.

<sup>47</sup> Hardin's original comments on the Tragedy of the Commons were presented as a presidential address before the meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Utah State University, 25 June 1968. It was completely ignored by the press. The paper was then revised and published in *Science* (Volume 162, December 13, 1968), 1243–1248. The complete essay may be found in Garrett Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 250–264. It still remains essential reading for anyone interested in environmental ethics.

A description of the Double C–Double P Game may be found in Garrett Hardin, *Filters Against Folly: How to Survive Despite Economists, Ecologists, and the Merely Eloquent* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1985), 104–114. It is the larceny of external costs vs. private profit, i.e. a Common Costs–Private Profit ethic where individual gain takes precedence over societal loss.

An interesting aspect of this game is Paul and Anne Ehrlich's "Rivet Poppers." It's worth quoting in full.

As you walk from the terminal toward your airliner, you notice a man on a ladder busily prying rivets out of its wing. Somewhat concerned, you saunter over to the rivet popper and ask him just what the hell he's doing.

'I work for the airline—Growthmania Intercontinental,' the man informs you, 'and the airline has discovered that it can sell these rivets for two dollars apiece.'

'But how do you know you won't fatally weaken the wing doing that?' you inquire.

'Don't worry,' he assures you. 'I'm certain the manufacturer made this plane much stronger than it needs to be, so no harm's done. Besides, I've taken lots of rivets from this wing and it hasn't fallen off yet. Growthmania Airlines needs the money; if we didn't pop the rivets, Growthmania wouldn't be able to continue expanding. And I need the commission they pay me—fifty cents a rivet!'

'You must be out of your mind!'

'I told you not to worry; I know what I'm doing. As a matter of fact, I'm going to fly on this flight also, so you can see there's absolutely nothing to be concerned about.'

Any sane person would, of course, go back into the terminal, report the gibbering idiot and Growthmania Airlines to the FAA, and make reservations on another carrier. You never *have* to fly on an airliner. But unfortunately all of us are passengers on a very large spacecraft—one on

tracts of land held in common that anyone could use to graze their animals or collect harvest. Now, as long as the land is underused, there's no problem. But once the carrying capacity of the land has been reached, an interesting dilemma emerges—an innate regulatory problem that has no solution within the commons system. In its pure abstract form, it is better known as the Prisoner's Dilemma.<sup>48</sup> Say a given tract of land held in common can support a maximum of one hundred cows. Say further that one of those that use the common wants to add another cow. How might she reason? It is to the benefit of any one person to add an extra cow or two to her own herd, knowing that her wealth will increase by one cow while the costs (land degradation, malnourished cows, and so forth.) will be born by all.

The Double C–Double P Game also relies on the commons to work. It outlines a strategy that pervades Western institutions, a strategy that results in a breakdown of the good of order as ever more turbulent and uncertain operating environment are generated. For example, in North America, forests are considered as public land held in common by a government who then offers leasing rights to loggers at rates so low as to be ludicrous. Profits go to the loggers and lumber processors, private companies for the most part, while the costs of deforestation are born by all. The same holds true for air pollution and its companion, global warming, where companies

---

which we have no option but to fly. And, frighteningly, it is swarming with rivet poppers behaving in ways analogous to that just described. . . .

Rivet-popping on Spaceship Earth consists of aiding and abetting the extermination of species and populations of nonhuman organisms. . . .

The form of the catastrophe is, unfortunately, difficult to predict. Perhaps the most likely event will be an end of civilization in T. S. Eliot's whimper. As nature is progressively impoverished, its ability to provide a moderate climate, cleanse air and water, recycle wastes, protect crops from pests, replenish soils, and so on will be increasingly degraded. The human population will be growing as the capacity of Earth to support people is shrinking. Rising death rates and a falling quality of life will lead to a crumbling of post-industrial civilization. The end may come so gradually that the hour of its arrival may not be recognizable, but the familiar world of today will disappear within the life span of many people now alive.

Paul and Anne Ehrlich, *Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species* (New York, N. Y.: Random House, 1981), xi-xii. Ehrlich's italics.

<sup>48</sup> The "Prisoner's Dilemma", a classic in two-person game theory, goes as follows: The police present two suspects with the following alternatives: if either confesses while the other does not, he will receive two years in prison while the other will receive twelve; if neither confesses, each will receive four years in prison; if both confess, each will receive ten years in prison. This problem was devised in 1950 by Albert W. Tucker, Department of Mathematics, Princeton University. Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press. 1981), 452.

acquire personal profits by manufacturing or processing industries that rely upon a free dump for their by-products: the atmosphere. Then there's the interesting legality of limiting or exempting nuclear power producers from paying full reparation if something should go wrong; if not for this exemption, insurance companies would never cover them.

The Tragedy of the Commons is with us still, in treating the atmosphere as a common dump and the ocean as a common protean resource. It is in each country's benefit to continue to fish as hard and as long as possible, for the costs of doing so are collective while the gains are private. Collapsing fisheries around the world are the natural consequences of this course of action.<sup>49</sup>

After all:

Was there ever a poacher who was overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt when he was caught? It is doubtful. Shame, perhaps, but not guilt. The mind of the poacher lives in a past in which the abundance of resources justified the Marxist rule "to each according to his needs". . . .

Does the manager of a factory feel guilty when he is charged with vastly overloading a community sewage system for which his organization is not paying appropriately high taxes? Probably not. He will likely offer the justification that his business is "creating employment" and "stimulating community development." He will see nothing inconsistent in his overdrafts on the commons of the community sewage system while he praises free enterprise and condemns the welfare state.<sup>50</sup>

History will no doubt condemn us when, fifty or one hundred years down the line, our grandchildren and great grandchildren will ask, "How could they have allowed (this) to

---

<sup>49</sup> This mismanagement of the commons places a heavy burden on existing regulatory systems, given the stress that can now be observed in climatic change, species mutations and general deformities, genetic drift, dropping fertility rates, resource depletion if not outright elimination, population stress, and so on and so forth. Hence Sir Geoffrey's trap: human communities can no longer keep pace with rates of change that require regulations that can only be made real through changes in a society's appreciative system. Thus, one might expect the EU would learn from the collapse of the cod fisheries off Canada's Atlantic coast and close down the fisheries for a few years to allow recovery of fish stocks; but this is actively opposed by the fishing industry itself, with a far different appreciation of the reality of the situation. Or the problems due to radioactive fallout from Chernobyl, spread through deserted Russian cities that will remain uninhabitable for centuries, before moving through Europe and around the world to generate a "slight" statistic increase in the rates of certain types of cancer.

One strategy is to covert the commons into "private" property, as when individuals or groups are invited to buy an acre of rain forest in order to preserve it. Another is the emergence of world-wide regulatory systems such as the EU, or the growing trend toward standards for proper governance as dictators are found not only to destroy their own country but those countries around them, or the Nuclear Regulatory Agency that attempts to control the spread of nuclear weapons. But it is difficult to see exactly how much support such agencies will be given, given the substantial interests involved. Nuclear proliferation continues, because it is in the interests of "rogue" nations such as North Korea, Iran, or at one time Pakistan to pursue their procurement—if only as a matter of national pride.

<sup>50</sup> Hardin, *Filters* (1985), 104.

happen?”<sup>51</sup> When we come face to face with the Divine Mystery, knowing for the first time the reality of our lives—how then will we answer? Perhaps even more important, who then will we be?<sup>52</sup> In any case, there is a failure in our ability to imagine other possibilities or probabilities, either deliberately through the use of word magic<sup>53</sup> or inadvertently through a subconscious

---

<sup>51</sup> There are at least two major assumptions: 1) that future generations will have access to at least comparable intellectual capital, and 2) that the human race will still exist.

The first assumption is challenged by a succession of dark ages in human history, where societies and civilizations—unable to cope with either internal or external ‘jolts’—lose a collective memory on how things are done. In our own Western civilization, the collapse of the Roman Empire saw a reversion from civil society to institutions based on human intersubjectivity and a subsequent regression to a feudal state of affairs. North American Indians saw their own cultures devastated by the arrival of Western Europeans, as did the very cradle of civilization—the Fertile Crescent of several millennia ago now destroyed by centuries of overgrazing goats and inadequate drainage. The suggestion that our own civilization is at risk is found in Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004).

The second is conditional, dependent upon our collective ability to face threats to our very survival as a species. In their opening remarks to the importance of ‘natural’ capital, Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins write:

The climate debate is a public issue in which the assets at risk are not specific resources, like oil, fish, or timber, but a life-supporting system. One of nature’s most critical cycles is the continual exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen among plants and animals. This “recycling service” is provided by nature free of charge. But today carbon dioxide is building up in the atmosphere, due in part to combustion of fossil fuels. In effect, the capacity of the natural system to recycle carbon dioxide has been exceeded, just as overfishing can exceed the capacity of a fishery to replenish stocks. But what is especially important to realize is that there is no known alternative to nature’s carbon cycle service.

Besides climate, the changes in the biosphere are widespread. In the past half century, the world has lost a fourth of its topsoil and a third of its forest cover. At present rates of destruction, we will lose 70 percent of the world’s coral reefs in our lifetime, host to 25 percent of marine life. In the past three decades, one-third of the planet’s resources, its “natural wealth,” has been consumed. We are losing freshwater ecosystems at the rate of 6 percent a year, marine ecosystems by 4 percent a year. There is no longer any serious scientific dispute that the decline in every living system in the world in reaching such levels that an increasing number of them are starting to lose, often at a pace accelerated by the interactions of their decline, their assured ability to sustain the continuity of the life process. We have reached an extraordinary threshold.

Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown and Co., 2000), 4. Failure to understand and heed the empirical sciences on the part of powerful vested interests is, of course, one of the symptoms of decline noted by Jacobs.

<sup>52</sup> In facing the Divine Mystery, it is never a matter of what we think *per se*, but who we are. If we have become the sort of person who prefers the good even over our own well-being, even while acknowledging the depths of our own evil, then we will open ourselves to the “judgment” that comes from truly knowing the good. If we have been selfish, miserly, cruel—or even a good person just trying to get by—we will know ourselves for what we truly are and instantly reject this knowledge, instantly rejecting the good, for we have never depended on God to get us through the night, never acknowledge that we may have been in the wrong, are unable to accept that our judgment may have been less than perfect, that we may be less than gods, neither master of our fate or destiny.

<sup>53</sup> “The official function of language is to facilitate thought and communication. One of its unofficial functions, just as real, is to *prevent* thought and communication.” Hardin, *Ethics*, (1972), 66. Hardin’s italics.

reasoning that—if allowed to reach consciousness—would dramatically change the situation. So it is that the late David Low’s Colonel Blimp exclaims: “Gad, sir, reforms are all right as long as they don’t change anything!”

But first, a cautionary note: there’s a hidden assumption in all this that Kary Mullis, winner of the Nobel Prize in chemistry for inventing the polymerase chain reaction in biochemistry, graphically points out.

What happened in the 1980’s? We have brought something down on ourselves as expensive, although not quite as brutal, as a world war. Did everybody forget that we were just big ants? Did somebody convince us that just because most of our religions had lost their appeal, we ourselves were suddenly gods? That we were now the masters of the planet and the guardians of the status quo? That the precise climatic conditions that happen to exist on the Earth today in the Holy Twentieth Century, the Climatic Century of 001, the first year of human domination of all of Earth, should be here forever, *in secula seculorum*? *All the good species are here now*. None shall perish and no new ones are welcome. Biology is no longer allowed: the Environmental Protection Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are now in charge. *Evolution is over*.

I recall a cartoon. A caveman is raging in front of his cave glaring up at a flash of lightning and pointing an accusing finger toward his mate and the fire burning in the mouth of the cave, “It didn’t used to do that before you started making those things.”

The future of the Earth has got nothing to do with the creatures that live clustered along the shores of its great bodies of water. We are just here for the ride. And the ride is not smooth. It never has been smooth.<sup>54</sup>

An excellent reminder, should we get too full of ourselves. And so too, is the holocaust.

### The Holocaust

It appears that a black hole has opened in history that to date has swallowed numerous attempts to bring intelligibility to an underlying horror. Religious and humanist imagination both fail to come to grips with its reality. The credibility of both religion and humanism is cast into doubt, especially the organized realities of Christianity and Liberal Economics. All post-holocaust social and political thought, if not prematurely truncated, eventually enters its gravity

---

<sup>54</sup> Kary Mullis, *Dancing Naked in the Mind Field* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1998), 204–205. Mullis’ italics. This is of course blasphemy in the minds of those who believe the earth was created for humankind. The first great science-inspired religious upset started with Copernicus, who by insisting that the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa removed humanity from the center of the universe. The second great upset concerns an understanding of evolutionary development on our planet, which subjects human-kind to the same ecological processes as any other species—including the inevitability of our own extinction as a species. Individuals die; species die; and a higher level species may yet emerge to supplant our own as our own has supplanted many other species.



well as a great unknown that shakes humanistic idealism and religious faith to its core, a glimpse of an abyss disturbing our very foundations of who we are.

The destruction of European Jewry in 1933-45 did not take place as the result of the deeds of one man acting by himself. No person is omnipotent in this direct sense. Rather, power, including the power to destroy individuals, comes about through the control of social organizations in which numerous individuals participate. Among these organisations are the political party, the administrative bureaucracy, and the police and military branches of government. What binds each of these units into a monolithic force capable of carrying out the directives issued from the top is the reliable obedience of the participants. Obedience links individual men to systems of authority, cements individual action to political purpose.

And it is to the phenomenon of obedience that several commentators have directed attention in seeking to explain the Nazi holocaust. . . .

The Nazi extermination of European Jews is the most extreme instance of abhorrent immoral acts carried out by thousands of people in the name of obedience.<sup>55</sup>

While the depravity of human beings may not surprise historians or students of social behaviour, the reality of the Shoah<sup>56</sup> runs totally against any notion of an open society composed of mature, authentic human beings.<sup>57</sup> “We have met the enemy and he is us” (Pogo).

It is unfortunately essential to differentiate between different types of evil, just as we differentiate between types of good. If we do that, we can see a continuum from mass brutalisation through Genocide to Holocaust. Mass brutalisation began, in our century, with World War I and the massive murder of soldiers (by gas, for instance) that took place then. This appears to have prepared the world for the shedding of all restraints imposed by the relatively thin veneers of civilization. The next step is Genocide, and Holocaust is then defined as the extreme case, the farthest point of the continuum. It then becomes not only the name by which the planned murder of the Jewish people is known, but a generic name for an ideologically motivated planned total murder of a whole people. Holocaust-related events would then include the Armenian massacres.<sup>58</sup>

Massacres are nothing new in history. One has only to think of Rwanda in recent years, or the Killing Fields of Cambodia, or the Armenian genocide, or even the treatment of the Indians of North America to know that tribal warfare, resource conflicts, and group biases have all played

---

<sup>55</sup> Stanley Milgram, “Obedience to Criminal Orders: The Compulsion to Do Evil,” in Thomas Blass, *Contemporary Social Psychology: Representative Readings* (Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock, 1976), 175–184: 175–6. For another well-known study of social roles and authority see Philip G. Zimbardo, “Pathology of Imprisonment,” Blass, *Social Psychology* (1976), 295–301. In both cases, research in this area had been the result of a need to understand the Nazi “success” in exterminating nearly six million Jews for purely ideological reasons; “authority” had become problematic.

<sup>56</sup> The term “holocaust” stems from the Hebrew word “olah” meaning burnt offering. The Greeks translated this word from the Hebrew bible as “holokauston”, an “offering consumed by fire.” Although the term Holocaust has entered common usage, it is still a vile image to apply to the fiery furnaces of the death camps. Jewish scholars now prefer the term “Shoah”, a Hebrew word meaning “desolation.”

<sup>57</sup> For an analysis of the intellectual roots of totalitarian societies, see Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. 1, *Plato*, Vol. 2, *Hegel and Marx*, 5th ed., revised (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966).

<sup>58</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts, 1982), 332.

their roles in recorded history. But the Shoah has remained at centre stage for over sixty years. Bauer believes that the answer to the Shoah's persistence in human imagination lies in its historical uniqueness:

1. People were slain because they were descendents of three or four grand-parents of Jewish heritage; being born was their deadly crime.
2. Anyone of Jewish descent—as long as Nazi Germany could reach them—was targeted for murder. Genocide wasn't restricted to a particular nation or area of the world; it was to be a *total* eradication.
3. Although the totalitarian structure provided the means for eradicating all Jews, the reason was purely ideological, Hitler's "final solution" being the result of a disastrous outgrowth of close to two thousand years of Christian anti-Semitism.
4. The new highs or lows to which Nazis refined the notion of concentration camps, where elaborate and deadly levels of dehumanization were exercised through forms of control based on a firm knowledge of people's psychological needs.<sup>59</sup>

It is this very lack of a precedent for the Shoah that is beginning to be understood all over the world; a very special case of genocide took place here—one that was total, global and purely ideological. Having occurred once, there is no reason to suppose it might not happen again, not exactly with the same players but certainly taking the same form.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

<sup>60</sup> Who then will emerge to play the Nazi and who the Jews? In this context, it will be interesting to observe the "development" of the kind of extreme Islamic response to Western societies of the type represented by such super-angry and super-empowered individuals as Osama Bin Laden. Are we watching the early stages of an Islamic fundamentalist, ideologically driven resentment focused on the United States as the *Great Evil*, while trying on for size the Nazi mantle? And this is not limited to al-Qu'ida; the uncritical Arabic acceptance of that slanderous Russian forgery, *The Protocols of Zion*, does not bode well.

It is in this context that the possibility of a Nuclear Winter comes close to being reality. Ever since Fat Boy landed on Hiroshima in 1945, a war-weary Western world has had to face the possibility that there would be no winners in war; instead, war might well lead to the extinction of all. It was only the mutual respect for human life that kept both Russia and the United States within the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine even during such hair-raising times as the Cuba Missile Crisis. The problem is not that nuclear weapons have altered the course of war; they have. The problem lies in aggressive war posturing and the ultimate commitment to war that is inherent in the current practice human species, a problem made far worse when one of the protagonists believes they have nothing to loose and place no value on human lives. The presence of nuclear weapons only raises the stakes; they do not change the underlying human reality of idolatry. The Holocaust is only one—an extreme case—of the symptoms of this underlying pathology in human behaviour.

The roots of this pathology may run very deep indeed. One interesting theory is that the evolutionary development of Homo sapiens was not only very rapid, in evolutionary terms, but also incomplete: the addition of the neo-cortex to already existing reptilian and primate brains took place without a corresponding over-ride control on the part of the higher brain functions. The result is that we, as a species, tend to be led by emotional priorities that have their roots not only in the need for food, warmth, and safety (the domain of the reptilian brain) but the complex primate social patterns of grooming, status positioning, alpha male and female dominance, mating rituals, among others (the primate brain)—namely those

The credibility of Christianity has been questioned by Franklin H. Littell and A. Roy Eckardt: How can the murder of the Messiah's people in the midst of Christendom by baptized apostates be justified? The martyrs of the Church Struggle against Nazism and the Righteous among the nations are but a footnote to the Holocaust, which to some Christian theologians is a main theological crisis of the present generation. On the Catholic side, John Pawlikowski, Rosemary Ruether, and others grapple with the responsibility of Christianity for the Holocaust.

Littell, Eckardt, Pawlikowski, and I have suggested that an 'early warning system' be organized to detect in Western democracy the signs of totalitarianism, intolerance, and prejudice that breed genocide. The Holocaust would then become a tremendous warning signal to be addressed when trying to avoid becoming either perpetrator or victim.<sup>61</sup>

(This unlikely collaboration reveals one of the lesser known results of the Shoah, the creation of a point of intersection between Christian and Jewish history that over time may well revamp our understanding of Western history.)

Part of the problem that led to the Shoah lay in the fact that religion had been discredited. The crisis in valuation, the lack of imagination in the face of a confusing and turbulent reality, the misplaced trust in the Double C—Double P Game, all combined with religions that could no longer rely on obedience and tradition—given a public breakdown in trust and a general hermeneutics of suspicion—to leave us vulnerable to various forms of idolatry with which religions are very familiar. It is a question that, for Toynbee, plagues us today:

Had the fanatically positive Judaic religions been discredited beyond repair by the incriminating record of intolerance that had given the lie to their professions? Was there any virtue in the religious toleration into which a disillusioned Western world had subsided toward the close of the seventeenth century of the Christian Era? How long would Western souls find it bearable to go on living without religion? And, now that the discomfort of a spiritual vacuum had tempted them to open the door to such devils as nationalism and fascism and communism, how long was their latter-day belief in toleration likely to stand the test? Toleration had been easy in a lukewarm age in which the varieties of Western Christianity had lost their hold on Western hearts and minds, while these had not yet found alternative objects for their frustrated devotion. Now that they had gone a whoring after other gods, would eighteenth-century toleration hold its own against a twentieth-century fanaticism?<sup>62</sup>

By implication, Toynbee lays bare the primary difficulty in the crisis of valuation: it is not just a matter of arriving at a new consensus; it is a question of arriving at a new consensus under God that will allow for the formation of a new consensus on grounds not of man's own making.

---

complex intellectual demands that may have driven the development of a large brain. See Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (London: Pan, 1978), 5–20.

<sup>61</sup> Bauer, *History* (1982), 333–43.

<sup>62</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History: Abridgment of Volumes VII–X*, by D. C. Somervell (New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957), 314–15.

As usual, the devil lies in the details—one of which is that freedom makes moral and intellectual demands that closed societies do not.

Finally, lest we should be tempted toward a totalitarian government that “makes the trains run on time”, we should remind ourselves:

What did the Nazis leave behind? Where are their literary, their artistic, their philosophical, their architectural achievements? The Nazi Reich dissolved into nothingness. It left only one memorial: the ruins of the concentration camps and, crowning it, the only great achievement of Nazism—Auschwitz and the mass murder.<sup>63</sup>

What better symbol of utter decline could there be than one of the Nazi camps? Their presence can haunt the soul, leaving unease that if it could happen to them then it could happen to me. There are lessons there that need to be learned not as an academic work but out to need to understand how such a collapse into barbaric behaviour could have occurred. Or perhaps the question that remains unanswered is, How could other countries, other nations, not only let the Nazis rise to power but take over country after country without opposition? After all, there was no lack of warning of Hitler’s intentions.

### A Growing Need for Transdisciplinary Studies

Thomas L. Friedman, an Oxford educated twice Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign affairs columnist for The New York Times, provides a personal introduction to a growing transdisciplinary approach to understanding current affairs.

Being the foreign affairs columnist for *The New York Times* is actually the best job in the world. . . . I get to be a tourist with an attitude. I get to go anywhere, anytime, and have attitudes about what I see and hear. But the question for me as I embarked on this odyssey was: Which Attitudes? What would be the lens, the perspective, the organizing system – the superstory – through which I would look at the world, make sense of events, prioritize them, opine upon them and help readers understand them?<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Bauer, *History* (1982), 267. It is interesting to note that this particular passage was delivered on January 27, 1998, the German Holocaust Memorial Day, in a speech to the Bundestag—the German House of Representatives—a few years before the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. Al-Qu’ida left behind little more than the Nazis—a smoking hole in the ground—from an ideology that rejected not only Western culture but the ignominy of globalization “forced” upon a proud culture by the Americans.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, updated and expanded (New York: Anchor, 2000), 5. What is especially interesting about his analysis of current fundamental institutional changes on a global level is that it applies equally well to Christian believers. In many ways, the “Olive Tree” of

His answer is worth quoting in full, for it illustrates not only the degree to which the world has changed over the last two centuries, but the emerging need for transdisciplinary studies in order to orient ourselves during times of fundamental institutional change. It is clear to Friedman that traditional disciplines and cultures are no longer up to this task.

I learned you need to do two things at once – look at the world through a multilens perspective and, at the same time, convey that complexity to readers through simple stories, not grand theories. I use two techniques: I ‘do information arbitrage’ in order to understand the world, and I ‘tell stories’ in order to explain it.

What is information arbitrage? Arbitrage is a market term. Technically speaking, it refers to the simultaneous buying and selling of the same securities, commodities or foreign exchange in different markets to profit from unequal prices and unequal information. The successful arbitrageur is a trader who knows that pork bellies are selling for \$1 per pound in Chicago and for \$1.50 in New York and so he buys them in Chicago and sells them in New York. One can do arbitrage in markets. One can do it in literature. It was said of the great Spanish writer José Ortega y Gasset that he ‘bought information cheap in London and sold it expensive in Spain.’ That is, he frequented all the great salons of London and then translated the insights he gained there into Spanish for Spanish readers back home. But whether you are selling pork bellies or insights, the key to being a successful arbitrageur is having a wide net of informants and information and then knowing how to synthesize it in a way that will produce a profit. . . .

Today, more than ever, the traditional boundaries between politics, culture, technology, finance, national security and ecology are disappearing. You often cannot explain one without referring to the others, and you cannot explain the whole without reference to them all. Therefore, to be an effective foreign affairs analyst or reporter, you have to learn how to arbitrage information from these disparate perspectives and then weave it all together to produce a picture of the world that you would never have if you looked at it from only one perspective. That is the essence of information arbitrage. In a world where we are all so much more interconnected, the ability to read the connections, and to connect the dots, is the real value added provided by a journalist. If you don’t see the connections, you won’t see the world.<sup>65</sup>

---

Christianity, while useful in the formation of responsible characters, has yet to face the reality of the “golden straight jacket,” preferring to remain as a traditional cult or sect upon the world scene rather than face the value demands of an increasing liberty-orientated institutional scheme. Poverty may be a Christian value, but certainly not the levels of poverty that condemn an entire people to a dehumanizing and subsistence existence. I suspect that if Christians were to take their faith as seriously as a stock-broker takes his exchange, they would have to join in the collective drive toward authenticity and transcendent values that are part and parcel of any institution based on rational, rather than traditional, authority—after all bias quickly shows itself when faced with reality. Practical, common sense, down-to-earth people *have* to be open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, and responsible in deciding if they are to flourish in such an institutional reality and so avoid becoming road-kill.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 19–20. Thomas Friedman’s problem, however, is that his job restricts him to current participants and commentators, so he misses the deeper form of analysis of social and political realities that belong to well established social science traditions of thought and experience. In other words, his very note-worthy success as a journalist is also his failure as a diagnostician. Furthermore, his use of the phrase “golden straight-jacket” to symbolize contemporary urban and industrial schemes for generating wealth—far more wealth than any agricultural society could even generate—suggests a predilection for olive trees rather than Lexus. Once the transition has been made (and it is not an easy one, for it took Europe over three hundred years to make), middle class life offered an alternative from being dominated by a small wealthy elite while the remaining populace spent most of their lives in poverty. Agricultural societies have very limited excess wealth and what there is becomes concentrated in the hands of 1-2% of society who can afford to plan for the future; education is usually restricted to rote learning that doesn’t threaten the status

Friedman worked out his approach as a foreign affairs analyst. But the same need for a comprehensive understanding is felt in other areas of human endeavour. Take for example the far too often destructive practices of going for the immediate without taking into consideration other factors, a practice whose consequences quickly show up in unexpected and unwanted environmental changes. Decisions are often control driven and rather technically narrow, as in the case of the Russian financed 1969 development of the High Aswan Dam with its Lake Nasser head pond on the Nile where important environmental issues such as the rise of parasitic diseases due to year-round irrigation, the increased flow of silt-clear water that undermined bridges, rapid silt build-up in the head pond, excessive evaporation reaching as high as 40% of total capacity—and, in the Nile itself, the lack of silt being deposited to maintain an eroding delta—were all set aside as externalities and side-effects in favour of the undeniable benefits of power generation, irrigation, water supply and river control.<sup>66</sup>

---

quo; life-long learning and the continual training and retraining of urban citizens is not possible when the resources are not there.

In a sense, it is not a matter of a conflict between traditional and liberal cultures but a conflict between an emerging urban centered economic wealth generators that supersede the practices of resource limited agricultural schemes in the same way that hunter/gatherer societies were once superseded by the first great agricultural states of the Fertile Crescent. For a basic understanding of the underlying dynamics, see Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004).

<sup>66</sup> Norman Smith, *A History of Dams* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1972), 241–2. For a devastating critique of the Newtonian narrow-mindedness underlying the construction of the High Aswan, see Garrett Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 40–41.

It is also a sobering thought to remember that we are in the midst of the *sixth* massive species extinction in earth history—an event largely of our own making—and even if the *rate* of global population growth may be slowing down, populations are still increasing the current global population of over six and a half *billion* human beings with a current doubling time of thirty to forty years. (Exponential growth cannot be measured in absolute terms, only in terms of the number of years it takes to double an existing population; even a dramatic decrease in doubling time does not solve the problem of exponential growth, between the world's population *doubling* within a single generation or simply taking two generations.)

In an interesting slight of hand that suggests a certain lack of imagination—or an unwillingness to make public what is already well known to the UN: a recent report on global population growth by the population division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs offers a medium-case scenario of a rise from the current level of 6.3 billion to around 9 billion in the year 2300. As the BBC reporter noted: “One startling projection based on present fertility levels is for 134 trillion inhabitants [by 2300]—although the UN concedes this is an impossible outcome. . . . The 134 trillion figure is used merely as a demonstration that present fertility levels are unsustainable.” BBC, “UN warns of population surge”, BBC News report, 2003/12/09 05:36:04, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/s/2/hi/science/nature/3302497.stm>.

Any student of current affairs knows that she faces a bewildering wall of often strident voices, each speaking their own language, each seeking to be heard, each engaged in propaganda, each grounded in their own foundations and their own understanding of understanding. Even if the same words are being used, one cannot assume that the meaning is the same. But this is only the start of the problem. More than ever it is difficult to identify those bits of significant information that lead to accurate and reliable assessments of what is true or real. For example, trying to sort out the present complexities of the Middle East is a lost cause if all that one has to depend upon are reports by the media. Yet people support Hezbollah and Hamas “charities” and the EU provides billions of dollars in PA funding without adequate financial controls so that YasirArafat could siphon off billions to finance his complete elimination of Israel, actions that only serve to maintain, rather than resolve, Middle Eastern conflicts.<sup>67</sup>

But there is more to the need for transdisciplinary studies. As Hardin so often stresses, the one great thing that ecologists know is this: “*We can never do merely one thing.*”<sup>68</sup> This is the notion of system, of a network or a web that exists not only in the three dimensions of space but

---

The second interesting thing about these population extrapolations, explicitly made for economic forecasting, is that they ignore the possibility of a massive population collapse. As any first year student of species population dynamics knows, exponential population growth follows a characteristic “S” shaped pattern that starts with slow increases, enters a take-off phase of rapid growth with ever shorter doubling periods, which then can assume different end curves as resources and other constraints on population size come into play. There are two basic ways in which population growth ends: a gradual tapering off of the “S” curve so that the rate of increase slows down to zero and all further growth in population size ceases at significantly higher levels, or an overshoot of the resource base with a subsequent die off—a population collapse—until the population size is again in balance with its now sharply reduced resource base. The difficulty in the later scenario is the population may have so overshoot and devastated its resource base during its peak period that the collapse takes an apocalyptic form where the population is reduced to a mere fraction of its former size. The UN people are clearly placing all their bets on the first option.

<sup>67</sup> There are several highly illuminating books available to anyone who wishes to go beyond the media. For media bias, see Elliot M. Kramer, *Complicity: Terrorism in the News* (Self-published, to be re-released by Lafayette, Louisiana: Alpha, 2004). For conflicting claims over Palestine, see Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (U.S.A.: J. Kap, 1984); her study is especially interesting since she started from a strong pro-Palestinian position only to change her mind more than two years later when she found that historical data did not support Palestinian claims. For broader insights into Islamic relations with others, especially over an apparent European complicity with Islamic “militants”, see Bat Ye’or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, translated from the French by Miriam Kochan and David Littman (Madison, UK: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002). For insights into Arafat’s intentions concerning the elimination of the state of Israel, see Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Hardin, *Ethics* (1972), 39. Hardin’s italics.

the fourth dimension of time. Such webs or networks are very complex and to intervene at any point for whatever reason is to disturb the whole in ways that may be very unpredictable and even disastrous. A Newtonian mentality may seek to change the weather for the betterment of humankind without taking into account the consequences of doing so—for rain that falls in one area is water that normally would have fallen elsewhere.<sup>69</sup> Counter-intuitive solutions may be required, as in the case of a person running a high fever: the correct action is to increase the fever so that the healing processes can be enhanced (of course, if the temperature is *too* high, then the person needs to be packed in ice to lower the temperature as quickly as possible before brain damage can occur).

Another common distortion is to rely on vision, specifically photos taken by cameras. Such photos only hide the far more complex reality behind surface appearance. This became obvious when photos of city slums in the United States that led to the good-will endeavour of destroying slums in order to construct new housing only to destroy the true communities that lay behind the pictures. With this destruction of long-standing communities came an increase in crime, to the point where the new housing projects often had to be razed to the ground.

The Newtonian response to almost any social evil is to *buy hardware* in the hope that the problem will somehow be solved by the mere magnitude of the expenditure. It seldom is. The Darwinian response is to *think* before acting—i.e., to study and to analyze, on the assumption that we are dealing with a complex web of causes and effects, and that intuitive responses will probably do more harm than good.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> This brings up the interesting issue of “side-effects” as a potent form of word magic. “The Zambezi River in Africa was dammed, with World Bank financing, to create the 1700-square-mile Lake Kariba. The effect *desired*: electricity. The ‘side-effects’ *produced*: (1) destructive flooding of rich alluvial agricultural land above the dam; (2) uprooting of long-settled farmers from this land to be resettled on poorer hilly land that required farming practices with which they were not familiar; (3) impoverishment of these farmers and (4) the migration of many of them to city slums; (5) social disorder of uprooted, impoverished people; (6) creation of a new biotic zone along the lake shore that favoured the multiplication of tsetse flies; (7) trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) among humans; and (8) over-all diminution of protein supply of the region.” Hardin, *Ethics* (1972), 68. Hardin’s italics.

“*Definition*: ‘Side-effect’: any effect we don’t want, and the existence of which we will deny as long as we can.” Ibid., 68. Hardin’s italics.

<sup>70</sup> Hardin, *Ethics* (1972), 55. Hardin’s italics. The Darwinian worldview has now been superseded by Lonergan’s worldview of Emergent Probability, as the Darwinian approach has its own deficiencies. See *Insight*, 132–34.



The type of thinking that is involved must of necessity be transdisciplinary in nature, for it is only through the contributions of different disciplines to the analysis of the time-and-space-specific features of complex webs and systems that it is possible to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the complexities and interactions of the various interlocked and conditioned schemes of recurrence. Thus, Thomas Friedman uses a transdisciplinary approach of information arbitrage to understanding the essential recurring schemes in international relations. The same need also applies to the application of theological to time-and-space-specific situations, especially if these situations are characterized by the foundational discords arising from the breakdown in the process of valuation: without a transdisciplinary understanding of the web—of the multitude of recurring often conditioned schemes—policies and plans based solely on religious interiority are bound to have undesirable “side-effects.”

#### Living In the Midst of Noise, Turbulence, and Uncertainty

The same conditions that generate a need for transdisciplinary thinking also create a need to handle uncertainty, unpredictable events and mass confusion. An excellent example of confusion in a turbulent environment was the December 7, 1941 “surprise” attack on Pearl Harbour. Why, when there were so many clues about the outbreak of war, did the attack come as a complete shock, a complete surprise? “It is much easier,” writes Roberta Wohlsetter, “*after* the event:

... to sort the relevant from the irrelevant signals. After the event ... a signal is always crystal clear; we can now see what disaster it was signalling, since the disaster has occurred. But before the event it is obscure and pregnant with conflicting meanings. It comes to the observer embedded in an atmosphere of “noise,” i.e., in the company of all sorts of information that is useless and irrelevant for predicting the particular disaster. ...

In short, we failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones. Much of the appearance of wanton neglect that emerged in various investigations of the disaster resulted from the unconscious suppression of vast congeries of signs pointing in every direction except Pearl harbour. It was difficult later to recall these signs since they had led nowhere. Signals that are characterized today as absolutely unequivocal warnings of surprise air attack on Pearl harbour become, on analysis in the context of December, 1941, not merely ambiguous but occasionally inconsistent with such an attack.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Roberta Wohlsetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), 387–88. Wohlsetter’s italics.

But this is only the start.

There is a difference . . . between having a signal available somewhere in the heap of irrelevancies, and perceiving it as a warning; and there is also a difference between perceiving it as a warning, and acting or getting action on. These distinctions, simple as they are, illuminate the obscurity shrouding this moment in history.<sup>72</sup>

Or many other moments in history, one suspects. There is little doubt that the world we currently live in is full of sudden twists and turns that often arrive without notice. The ripples arising from al-Qu'ida's successful attack on the Twin Towers, their partial success of ploughing an airliner into the Pentagon, and their failure to utilize a fourth high-jacked plan as a weapon are still working themselves out in history, with border problems between Canada and the United States, a schism with "Old" Europe, the elimination of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, leaving China-Japan-Taiwan to deal with North Korea, planning to withdraw troops stationed in Germany, tightening homeland security, and so on. Then there are upsets due to climatic change combined with land degradation: a heat wave in Paris that kills thousands, floods in Europe as rivers overflow their banks, the possibility of a North-West Passage for world shipping as the Arctic ice sheet melts, routine flooding of low-lying Bangladesh as sea levels gradually rise, and the appearance of ungovernable states such as Somalia. There are the unforeseen "side-effects" of populations whose members are unwilling or unable to regulate their own population levels, "side-effects" such as the extinction of countless thousands of species. Then there is mono-cropping such as huge beef herds that are susceptible to single disease invasions, the quite predictable resurgence of drug-resistant diseases such as tuberculosis. There is a growing global economic system where traditional economic schemes—the welfare state, the full-employment for life state, the older hand-craft and manual agricultural schemes—come up against the juggernaut of the "golden straight-jacket."<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>73</sup> At the time of writing, the latest such shock is the growing realization that Iran is according to a few sources only months away from the point of no return in the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles to deliver them anywhere within a 3,000 mile radius. To all extents and purposes, the dream of nuclear non-proliferation, already interrupted by Israel, Pakistan and India, is about to be shattered. Given

The point is that changes sparked by the Industrial Revolution in Britain, subsequently exported to the world at large, have resulted in a far less secure, conflict-free, and threat-free planet. It is partly the break-down of the good of order in various parts of the world, a lack of predictability that is now part and parcel of our way of life. The breakdown of the process of valuation, the limitations of imagination for whatever reasons, the uncertainties exposed by the Holocaust, the lack of a comprehensive general theory of history with the corresponding lack of a truly transdisciplinary framework—all combine to create a turbulent and often confusing environment that truly makes the task of orientation a critical one for our times.

Finally, there is the problem of linguistic inflation, where language itself deteriorates.

Academicians are apt, by force of habit, to regard confused speaking and writing as unfortunate but not necessarily dangerous. The political zealots of the right and left insist that fervor is what counts and that *commitment*—which is usually taken to mean feeling strong emotions—is more important than making clear what one is *committed* to. Meanwhile, the ordinary citizen stops his ears and hopes that the clamor will die away. . . .

The plain fact is that the systematic deterioration of language in times of crisis prevents dialogue when it is most needed, and thereby contributes to the difficulty of obtaining the kind of concerted action necessary to cope with the mounting complexities of our day. Language, like currency, to which it is often compared, appears to be subject to Gresham's law that debased currency drives out sound coin. What we are now facing is a progressive linguistic inflation that in the long run may turn out to be a more serious threat than the monetary inflation we are experiencing today. Orwell's essay warns us explicitly against pretentious euphemisms, jargon words, and 'the inflated style' that 'falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details.'<sup>74</sup>

Control over meaning is now one of the fundamental issue of our times, and the first step to exercising such control is to objectify the tensions and conflicts in one's own coming to know, coming to do.

### *What is to be Done?*

#### Objectifying Subjectivity

The first step in this long drawn out process of self-orientation is not a philosophical,

---

the intense competition among different Islamic sects, it is unlikely that once Iran has the capability of launching nuclear weapons that others will not soon follow.

<sup>74</sup> Philip H. Rhinelander, *Is Man Incomprehensible to Man?* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1974), 35. Rhinelander's italics. Quotes from George Orwell are from a 1946 essay entitled "Politics and the English Language" in *A Collection of Essays* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), 162-77.

theological, or humanistic search for absolute truth but a series of experiments that bring to light the processes of conversion and authenticity—first in one’s own life and then by recognizing these movements in the lives of others. The point to keep in mind is this:

It is only through the movement towards cognitional and moral self-transcendence, in which the theologian overcomes his own conflicts, that he can hope to discern the ambivalence at work in others and the measure in which they resolve their problems. Only through such discernment can he hope to appreciate all that has been intelligent, true, and good in the past even in the lives and the thought of opponents. Only through such discernment can we come to acknowledge all that was misinformed, misunderstood, mistaken, evil even in those with who he is allied. Further, however, this action is reciprocal. Just as it is one’s own self-transcendence that enables one to know others accurately and to judge them fairly, so inversely it is through knowledge and appreciation of others that we come to know ourselves and to fill out and refine our apprehension of values. . . .

Such an objectification of subjectivity is in the style of the crucial experiment. While it will not be automatically efficacious, it will provide the open-minded, the serious, the sincere with the occasion to ask themselves some basic questions, first, about others but eventually, even about themselves. It will make conversion a topic and thereby promote it. Results will not be sudden or startling, for conversion commonly is a slow process of maturation. It is finding out for oneself and in oneself what it is to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible, to love. Dialectic contributes to that end by pointing out ultimate differences, by offering the example of others that differ radically from oneself, by providing the occasion for a reflection, a self-scrutiny, that can lead to a new understanding of oneself and one’s destiny.<sup>75</sup>

While it is relatively easy to expand upon one’s current beliefs, it is a far harder task to lay bare one’s foundational stance, one’s very self as a person, for it exposes varying degrees of conversion (and lack thereof) and the quality of one’s decisions when it comes to foundational choices—all in order to understand the consequences of one’s pre-understanding and pre-judgments within which we orient ourselves in a meaningful world. Even worse, objectifying one’s horizon is a reflexive act, which is to say that we can never step outside ourselves in order to “see” ourselves as another might; our ideas, our concepts of self and society create the reality that we use to understand ourselves. Even to experience another’s assessment of oneself is to understand that assessment within the context of our own horizon.

There is only one way to come to understand one’s own horizon and that is through the process of encountering the lived reality of another whose own horizon is similar to, yet also differs to some extent from, our own. Contrasts are highlighted, contradictions exposed, a step forward even though a complete understanding of who we are and what we stand for will forever

---

<sup>75</sup> *Method*, 252-53.

be beyond our capacity. Thus to objectify subjectivity is to make explicit one's horizons, foundational orientation and initial choices through an encounter with another, so that one can evaluate the current initial conditions in order to adopt a better, more productive, stance should that prove necessary.<sup>76</sup> An extreme example of this might be a secular humanist's encounter with the life of one of the recognized saints: if the encounter was an open one, then the secular mentality would have to confront the lived reality of a person whose life was dedicated to God. At the very least, it would clarify the humanist's foundational orientation.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Foundations are not to be understood as first principles or sets of axioms, but as the initial set of conditions upon which future developments unfold, in a process that leads away from darkness and into the light of conversion. Rarely—if ever—is a person's foundational stance adequate for the openness necessary for following the transcendental injunctions: to be open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable when it comes to judging what is true or real, responsible when it comes to deciding upon a course of action – and above all, loving. Most of human life is spent encountering the flaws in one's foundations, which then (hopefully) lead us to do something about them.

This process of redemption is not a conscious one and certainly not under the control of our intelligence. The difference is between living in a world of sight, where reality is encountered outside at some distance, and the world of the blind, where touch reigns supreme. Touches come with little or no warning; they are extremely personal, for they occur not at a distance, but where and when we are—we never know what lies around the corner, for it is impossible to see what is ahead, only to experience the touch when it occurs. Touches are highly differentiated, falling between the gentle brush of a feather and the smash of an unexpected door-jam. This is the realm of religious interiority, where often the only thing to do is to relinquish control, put all into the hands of the Divine Mystery, and experience the sometimes gentle and sometimes not so gentle work of the Spirit.

<sup>77</sup> Such was the experience of Jean Amery, one of the few survivors of Auschwitz. His own education as an intellectual turned out not only to have no practical use in the camps but certainly failed him spiritually as well. Even though he noted the ability of those with deep religious faith to retain their humanity in the face of the dehumanizing rituals and routines of the death camps, he himself remained to the end a humanist—disillusioned, eventually taking his own life. He could neither forget nor forgive; nor did he want to, believing as he did that the memory of that experience had to be kept alive. See Jean Amery, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*, translated by Sidney and Stella Rosenfeld, first published in German 1976 (New York, N.Y.: Schocken, 1986).

On the other hand, Ignatius Loyola—a contemporary of Thomas Müntzer in time but not in place (Müntzer lived in Germany, while Loyola, born in a Basque province, lived most of his life in Spain and in Rome). At first committed to a career in both court and military, his life changed after being hit by a canon ball while participating in the defence of the town of Pamplona against the French. He found himself at the age of thirty with a leg that refused to heal and had to be broken again without the benefit of anaesthetic. Convalescent, confined (and very bored), he asked for novels to read, but all they could bring was a copy of the *Life of Christ* and a book on the saints. This encounter changed the course of his life and, eventually, altered church history. His *Spiritual Exercises* is still a must-read for those seeking to deepen their understanding of religious interiority. For the life and times of Ignatius see Karl Rahner, *Ignatius of Loyola* (London: Collins, 1979). For an authoritative analysis of Ignatius' spiritual exercises see Jules J. Toner, S.J., *A Commentary on St. Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits: A Guide to the Principles and Practice* (St. Louis, Missouri: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982). For the exercises and communal spirituality see John J. English, S.J., *Spiritual Freedom: From an Experience of the Ignatian Exercises to the Art of Spiritual Guidance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, revised and updated (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1995).

The fundamental sources of many distortions are not in the working out of our beliefs, but in the horizons from which such doctrines and systems of theological thought are drawn during the mediated phase of doing theology—horizons that become personal statements of truth derived from an authentic subjectivity and illusion if that subjectivity is inauthentic and unconverted. This is a process of theological discernment that distinguishes between positions and counter-positions. While the self-appropriation of one's own rationality allows entrance into the realm of interiority, it is one's orientation that guides entry into the mediated phase of doing theology. For anyone engaged in the first of these mediated functional specialities—foundations—it is especially important to make explicit who it is that one is as a theologian. For there are different kinds of detectives, general investigators, and critical embodiments of lived Christian truths and one needs to know what kind one is.

At its real root . . . foundations occurs on the fourth level of human consciousness, on the level of deliberation, evaluation, decision. It is a decision about who and what you are for and . . . who and what you are against. It is a decision illuminated by the manifold possibilities exhibited in dialectic. It is a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world-view. It deliberately selects the frame-work, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective.

Such a deliberate decision is anything but arbitrary. Arbitrariness is just unauthenticity, while conversion is from unauthenticity to authenticity. It is total surrender to the demands of the human spirit: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love.<sup>78</sup>

The same holds true for the work of Thomas L. Friedman, Karl Mannheim, Sir Geoffrey, Roberta Wohlsetter, or any other person seeking to orient themselves—and to evaluate, and diagnosis problems—during times of radical institutional change. One's starting point, one's initial foundational stance, will have an impact on all that inquiring intelligence experiences, understands, and judges. These initial conditions direct the unfolding of intelligence, placing limits here and there, automatically assuming certain options are more probable than others—or even ignoring a possibility because it does not fit within their emerging reality.<sup>79</sup> What changes one's starting point is conversion.

---

<sup>78</sup> *Method*, 268.

<sup>79</sup> As a visual metaphor, horizons refer to our immediate world (our immediate interests), a more distant reality where things are not so distinct or so clear, and an unseen expanse beyond those mountains

Although conversion is intensely personal, it is not purely private. While individuals contribute elements to horizons, it is only within the social group that the elements accumulate and it is only with century-old traditions that notable developments occur. To know that conversion is religious, moral, and intellectual, to discern between authentic and unauthentic conversion, to recognize the difference in their fruits—by their fruits you shall know them—all call for a high seriousness and a mature wisdom that a social group does not easily attain or maintain.

It follows that conversion involves more than a change of horizon. It can mean that one begins to belong to a different social group or, if one's group remains the same, that one begins to belong to it in a new way.<sup>80</sup>

To understand Müntzer, then, is to understand his own contribution to the broader societal development that we in retrospect call the Reformation.<sup>81</sup>

Vital to an understanding of horizons, of intentionality of the individual or group to which an individual gives his or her allegiance, is the knower—and the epistemology that underlies that knowing. (To a pure empiricist, for example, the question of the existence of God is not even a question, for within their experienced reality “religion” is understood as an opiate for the masses, little more than a product of wishful thinking and mass delusion.) Never were these epistemological differences so clearly understood as when Lonergan worked out the dynamic operations of the human mind:

Empiricism, idealism, and realism name three totally different horizons with no common identical objects. An idealist never means what an empiricist means, and a realist never means what either of them means. An empiricist may argue that quantum theory cannot be about physical reality; it cannot because it deals only with relations between phenomena. An idealist would concur and add that, of course, the same is true of all science and, indeed, of the whole of human knowing. The critical realist will disagree with both: a verified hypothesis is probably true; and what probably is true refers to what in reality probably is so. To change the illustration, What are historical facts? For the empiricist they are what was out there and was capable of being looked at. For the idealist they are mental constructions carefully based on data recorded in documents. For the critical realist they are events in the world mediated by true acts of meaning. To take a third illustration, What is a myth? There are psychological, anthropological, historical, and philosophic answers to the question. But there also are reductionist answers: myth is a narrative about entities not to be found within an empiricist, an idealist, a historicist, an existentialist horizon.<sup>82</sup>

---

or beyond the curve of the earth that is not known nor may never be known. Now horizons are characterized in terms of the questions that are considered either legitimate (with answers), legitimate (with answers not yet known), legitimate (but impossible to answer) or not considered to be legitimate questions at all, i.e. regarded as pure nonsense at best or at worse the result of insanity.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>81</sup> Even though Müntzer and others of his ilk called themselves reformers, the “Reformation” as such had yet to be called into existence as an explanatory umbrella for understand the historical changes of the time. Ditto the notion of the Industrial Revolution. In both cases, those who sought to deal with their immediate situation did so without the benefit of the clarification of subsequent events, in the same way that the Day of Infamy at Pearl Harbor clarified previous weeks of noise. See Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor*, (1962).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 239.

Our horizons are rarely formulated or understood in any conscious fashion, having emerged out of a combination of cultural resources and a complex series of decisions when faced with the task of sorting between dialectic positions and counter-positions. To determine which are which—which are true positions and which are dubious or down-right false counter-positions—is to create one’s horizon, one’s foundational self, at a subjective level of existence. After all, “It is a person that takes sides, and the side that he takes will depend on the fact that he has or has not been converted.”<sup>83</sup>

This entire study is not only a protracted struggle to uncover my own inauthenticities but also an investigation into the implications of my own convictions when it comes to understanding the meaning and importance of doing theology during times of fundamental institutional change. It is an inquiry into the basic terms that are used to make sense of that which we experience. To do this, Lonergan makes clear the need for spiritual development when it comes to working in the field of foundations.

The functional speciality, foundations, will derive its first set of categories from religious experience. That experience is something exceedingly simple and, in time, also exceedingly simplifying, but it also is something exceeding rich and enriching. There are needed studies of religious interiority: historical, phenomenological, psychological, sociological. There is needed in the theologian the spiritual development that will enable him both to enter into the experience of others and to frame the terms and relations that will express that experience.<sup>84</sup>

Foundations arise out of the need to choose between opposing positions in the functional specialty of dialectics. For a long time, my horizon was set by the rational, secular, scientific-orientated world of environmental planning and policy-making—consistent enough in itself but also quite incompatible with religious expression and theological studies. Here lies my own dilemma: are these positions truly incompatible? Is there a way of integrating religious thought with the process orientated world of rational scientific thinking, a world that understands reality in terms of changing relationships and dynamic processes? Perhaps a shift to a higher viewpoint is required in order to put both positions into proper context.

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 290.



It is the latter upon which this study is built, for the higher viewpoint is the realm of interiority that permits an understanding of all human modes of knowing at the level of the objectified subjectivity of the individual through which doctrines are understood, theories systematized, and the results put into action at the level of communications. This higher viewpoint is used and through its use tested to find out if such an approach works. It is a test that involves an extensive personal encounter with the life of the radical reformer Thomas Müntzer set in the Reformation world of early 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany. The similarities are there and make such an encounter a possibility. Like us, Müntzer lived during a time of fundamental institutional change. He, too, faced problems of disorientation, misdiagnosis and evaluations, not to mention inaccurate estimates of the scope and constraints on action within what must have seemed an irrational world. Yet, *krank am Gott*, he sought to bring God to his parishioners in a deep and meaningful way, one that made sense to them within their own lives. By encountering Müntzer's life and allowing myself to be challenged by his aims, his intentions, his values, I hope to integrate these two worlds of mine, the secular and the religious, into a functional whole.

Finally, we are all works in progress. We will never know the totality of ourselves since that understanding falls only within the providence of the Divine Mystery. But we can develop the skills of an encounterer, refining our conceptual field and enhancing the operations that can be performed in the search for a better understanding of religious interiority. Even if we do not have the power to change in this way, we can at least decide to embrace the Divine Mystery's desire to enhance us as truly human and let this Divine Mystery do the work.

Deliberate decision about one's horizon is [a] high achievement. For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not advert to the multiplicity of horizons. They do not exercise their vertical liberty by migrating from the one they have inherited to another they have discovered to be better.<sup>85</sup>

In the objectification of subjectivity, there is not only a discussion of the six different realms of mind (common sense, theoretical, interiority, transcendence, scholarly and artistic),

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 269.

authenticity (open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, responsibly in deciding, and above all loving), conversion in all its forms (religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic), but a final decision of the terms to be used in bringing intelligibility to human experience—especially human experiences of the transcendental.<sup>86</sup> In short, objectifying subjectivity involves finding one's limits in each of these areas—exposing the flaws and distortions in who we are as theologians, but always with the intention of going beyond our initial set of conditions that direct and form our inquiries and in the end to deciding upon those terms that will be used to bring intelligibility in the functional specialities of doctrines, systematics and communications. This foundational awareness of our use of terms and concepts always arises out of the intentionality that is so much a part of our horizons. It is through these terms that we come to understand not only ourselves but others, and in so doing enter into their living reality, their incarnate meaning.<sup>87</sup>

### The Importance of Encounters

Only recently, in historical terms, has it been possible to carry out such a study.

In 1957, Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., published a seminal book on the nature of human knowing titled *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. Using a pedagogical method of raising questions through a series of higher viewpoints, he encourages the reader to objectify her own understanding of understanding. In doing so, Lonergan laid down the foundation of a truly transdisciplinary approach to one of the major problems of our age: the lack of a shared appreciative framework for understanding, judging, and choosing. In other words, his approach solved the problem caused by the breakdown of the process of valuation in society under the

---

<sup>86</sup> For the concept of psychic conversion see Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 42–63.

<sup>87</sup> How else are we to recognize people of good will, if we are not people of good will? The problem of trust—those who a person can rely upon and those who are essentially undependable—is one of the truly critical choices in the political and social arena within which professional practice is exercised. See Harold D. Lasswell, *A Pre-View of Policy Sciences* (New York: Elsevier, 1971), 79–81.

pressures of the industrial revolution and mounting population levels. He provided a stable rock upon which a strong position could be constructed.<sup>88</sup> This “rock” of Lonergan’s is his Transcendental Method, upon which his generalized empirical method, theological functional specialties, and entire philosophy is ultimately founded. In the end, the “rock” is not the cognitive operations of the human mind, but the existence of the transcendental as the major ground for human existence to which we are all drawn through the unrestricted desire to know.

This method provides a way to integrate the eternal truths of religious thought with the process-oriented world of scientific theory building, not by maintaining that one is better than the other but showing the uniqueness of each and their resulting complementarity. All come together in the realm of interiority with the authentic subjectivity of the individual, different differentiations of mind, of various forms of conversion, and of the intentions and interests of human beings. It is an understanding of horizons, first one’s own and then through this experience the horizons of others. It is the search for authenticity through encounter.

This study operates on three levels. The lowest or primary level is that of a dialectical encounter with the life and times of Thomas Müntzer—his social and political environment, values, defects in authenticity, drive toward transcendence, changing horizons, intentions, consequences of his actions, and all the other factors that make Müntzer Müntzer. The next level takes the data gathered through this encounter and uses it as the basis for carrying out a critical evaluation of my own objectified subjective foundations formalized to some extent before going into this encounter. At the top level, the entire process is presented as part of a parallel method in communications to illustrate the interaction of authentic and inauthentic subjectivity in human affairs as a means of facilitate policy-makers, planners, and assorted activists in their work.

---

<sup>88</sup> It may turn out that Lonergan’s work will be one of the major turning points in the development of human thought, comparable to Roger Bacon’s (1214–92 C.E.) initiation of the scientific era. But at this point in time the validation of his approach through dialogue with others is only starting and the implications of his achievement are just now being worked out. This process, if successful, may take centuries.

Chapter Two lays out my own pre-encounter foundational conditions by making explicit the fundamental choices I have made up to this point. In effect, there are three such choices: Lonergan's Critical Realism (already laid out in this chapter), Otto Friedman's Transdisciplinary Framework (Professional Practice), and a tentative "ideal" moral universe as precursor to a general theory of (Christian) history.<sup>89</sup>

Chapter Three starts with a shift to the functional specialty of dialectics to work out the basic conditions of Müntzer's time, with a special emphasis on the underlying circumstances for those conflicts involving Thomas Müntzer. This is especially important, for work in the area of foundations has its roots in the myriad of positions staked out by both the converted and the unconverted, clarified in the functional specialty of dialectics, and understanding these positions and counter-positions requires a basic understanding of the context within which they had meaning.

Theologians working in the area of dialectics have as their primary concern the clarification of the positions being espoused by primary participants. But this is only the starting point for anyone interested in foundations:

... *dialectic* stands to theology, as pull and counterpull stand to the spiritual life, and *foundations* stands to theology as discernment stands to the spiritual life where it sorts out pull and counterpull and does not permit counterpull to distort the pull or pull to let seep some of its dignity and worth on to counterpull.<sup>90</sup>

The refinement of positions follows the general method outlined by Lonergan in the chapter on dialectic. This starts with the assembly of historical material related to the life and times of Thomas Müntzer, adds evaluative interpretations for completion, compares the completed assembly to locate affinities and differences, locates affinities and antiphonies in other, not so

---

<sup>89</sup> The actual order in which they became part of who I am is quite different. My first deep interest was Friedman's Transdisciplinary Framework for Professional Practice, but to me this framework always lacked a solid theoretical grounding. Lonergan's Transcendental Method supplied the appropriate foundation, but also led directly to the question of the existence of God. Deciding that I preferred to live in a world with God rather than one without now changed the upper level context for all human events, which lead to the realization for me that the upper context was really the Triune God.

<sup>90</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., *A Third Collection*, (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985), 195. Lonergan's italics.

easy to recognize, disguises through reduction to their root causes, classifies differences according to their grounds, and selects those conflicts that have their opposition in horizons. In this final stage, one develops positions and reverses counter-positions by operating upon these fundamental dialectical conflicts, determining those that are compatible with religious, moral and intellectual conversion from those that are not. While it is impossible to do justice to such a program, it is possible to identify and sketch out those fundamental positions and counter-positions that preoccupied people of Müntzer's time.

Chapter Four shifts attention to Müntzer's own life. Once again, resource constraints do not allow for a full exploration of the meaning of the material that has come down to us. Instead, the upper blade of theory combined with the interests of Professional Practice allows for the selection of the truly important aspects—dialectic positioning and counter-positioning, the good of order and control over meaning—that form the key aspects of any encounter. The material of Chapter Three supports all three of these aspects of Müntzer's life.

Chapter Five starts when a conditional judgement is made concerning the incarnate meaning of Müntzer's life at the end of Chapter Four. Attention now shifts to the pull and counterpull of my own subjectivity with that of Müntzer's or, to be more precise, to hone in on the crucial differences and similarities between his positions and my own that enable me to objectify my own subjectivity. This is the story of my own engagement with Müntzer, my own attempt to understand his position (or counter-position), my own encounter with the values that are incarnated in his life. It is a record of the unfolding of my own foundations when challenged by the foundations of another whose religious life far exceeds my own and yet whose interest in enhancing the lives of his fellow human beings echoes my own interest in planning and policy-making. Once again, only the key features are laid out for inspection. But they are enough to outline my own foundational stance with some degree of assurance.

The notion of encounter underlies each chapter, for encounters take place in time—a diachronic phenomenon with initial conditions, engaging the other, and subsequent

transformations that are all part and parcel of conversion. Together, all five chapters belong to the functional speciality of Communications, for the subject matter focuses attention on the importance of conversion, differentiation of mind, and key features of professional practice—both in terms of my own growth as a theologian and as a deeper understanding of the methods and intentions involved in undertaking this kind of work. The latter work is incomplete, little more than an initial stab at a series of tasks that would require the work of far more than one person to be considered adequate. If anything, it represents a prototype, a possibility, an option for those whose background and skills exceeds my own.

Such a study may well be incomprehensible to some if not many of those active in academic intellectual life. For one thing:

Lonergan's emphasis on conversion as foundational reality is perhaps the most controversial element in his entire set of proposals for theology in particular, but also for the whole of the intellectual life. In some circles there is a resistance to the radical appeal that Lonergan has made to a complex process of conversion as foundational for everything else. As the appeal, so the resistance is intensely personal and existential. In Lonergan's own words, in many instances the option 'is a decision about who and what you are for and, again, who and what you are against . . . It is a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's worldview. It deliberately selects the framework, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective.'

Problems endemic to the academy automatically place such a foundation as Lonergan proposes outside the mainstream. The contemporary secular academy and any religiously affiliated institutions that ape it are the heirs of a modern nominalistic, then conceptualistic, then Machiavellian, then Cartesian, then Enlightenment decision to live an intellectual life in abstraction from the flow of existence in the Metaxy, the In-between, not only of time and eternity, history and transcendence, question and answer, world and God, but also of nature and the supernatural, reason and faith, and finally sin and grace. Lonergan's appeal to authenticity and conversion as foundational reality for the life of human intelligence, and so finally to grace as the condition of the possibility of a genuine life of reason, even as the life of reason is the highest earthly achievement of grace, is an attempt to reverse a fateful error of modernity that, if left unchecked, will head to a total destruction and final disintegration and decay of humanity's civilizational achievements.<sup>91</sup>

Strong words, these, but real enough; once intelligence reaches the conclusion that there is no such thing as truth and that all values are relative, society can no longer function as an expression and reservoir of the best of human effort. The notion of a civilized society with tested traditions, appealing standards and a strong sense of ultimate values, is lost—and with it that

---

<sup>91</sup> Doran, *Theology* (1990), 150. 1. Reference is to *Method*, 268.

civilization itself. Farfetched? Consider Himmelbarb's comments on the postmodernist philosopher of history, Hayden White.

For White, as for postmodernists' generally, there is no distinction between history and philosophy or between history and literature—or between history and 'antihistory,' which is why he can describe the psychoanalytic study *Life Against Death* as a brilliant work of 'antihistory,' and then insist that its author, Norman O. Brown, is surely worthy of consideration as a 'serious historian.' All of history, in this view, is aesthetic and philosophical, its only meaning or 'reality' (again, in quotation marks) being that which the historian chooses to give it in accord with his own sensibility and disposition. What the traditional historian sees as an event that actually occurred in the past, the postmodernist sees as a 'text' that exists only in the present—a text to be parsed, glossed, construed, and interpreted by the historian, much as a poem or novel is by the critic. And, like any literary text, the historical text is indeterminate and contradictory, paradoxical and ironic, rhetorical and metaphoric.<sup>92</sup>

Within these words of Doran and Himmelbarb lie both the hope and fear that led up to this work, i.e. the affirmation of living a life of abstraction that lies *within* the flow of existence wherein work can be done on the issues facing contemporary humans—those five critical features outlined at the start of this introduction—combined with the recognition that to many of my academically trained contemporaries such foundational work has no meaning, relevance, or purpose; it falls outside their horizons.<sup>93</sup>

It is not my role to defend or promote Lonergan's ideas, but to live out the implications of the kind of theologian that Lonergan represents.<sup>94</sup> In other words, I assume that, based on its usefulness in clarifying and grounding many of the problems outlined in the beginning of this introduction, his basic approach is sound. For me, it is now a matter of finding ways to put Lonergan's achievement into practice, thus increasing the probability of the emergence of a well

---

<sup>92</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Postmodernist History" in *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Vintage, 1994, 131-161), 140. Insisting that Norman O. Brown is a "serious historian" is cited in Hayden White, "The Burden of History," *History and Theory* (1966), 129; reprinted in Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 45.

<sup>93</sup> These realizations have led to the amusing supposition that I live in and work for a society that will only come into being about a hundred or two hundred years from now when the usefulness, if not the necessity, of such work is self-evident and no longer needs to be argued or defended.

<sup>94</sup> Why this is may be found in Part I: Initial State. Briefly put, all my training has been focused on practical tasks of design and then later on planning and policy-making. For me, Lonergan's work acquires its grounding not in the dialectics of theology or philosophy within groves of academia where both *Insight* and *Method* were conceived and written, but in the simple fact that his work fills a blank area when it comes to thinking about professional practice in the field of design, planning, or policy-making: the absence of a "rock" in a sea of positions and counter-positions where the breakdown in the process of valuation has led to a situation where there is no common means of distinguishing between good and bad, true and false.

grounded culture to succeed that of our own. Once the shift to a higher perspective has taken place, it is no longer possible to return to a more limited viewpoint without doing damage to one's own detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know.

### Improving Foundations

Objectifying one's foundations allows for if not demands an appraisal of one's horizon and intentions. While this aspect of the study is there in Chapter Five, it is only as a description of some of the unresolved tensions and inconsistencies that plague any person. Working out the incarnate meaning of one's own life is a long slow process of not only coming to know what you stand for but comparing your stance against the positions taken by another in the search for a better horizon and set of intentions. Unlike articulating the positions and counter-positions of others, improving foundations require personal choices. In the case of conversion, such choices start with falling in love with God. It is only through conversion that human beings can begin to meet the demands of the transdisciplinary injunctions. This means learning to live in the constant tension between recognizing one's sinfulness and responding to love by seeking that which God loves. An encounter with an authentic human being may bring an internal conflict highlighting our own limited response to what it means to be human. But it is only through an encounter with God that deeper meaning is given to any truly foundational encounter; ultimately this work is only valid if undertaken under the auspices of the Spirit.<sup>95</sup>

I may also ask myself the question, Am I a genuine Catholic or Protestant or Buddhist? I may answer in the affirmative and that answer may be correct. But it may be wrong. It is possible that there are a number of points with which I am in total agreement, according to the ideal of the tradition, but I have diverged from that tradition by paying attention to only a few aspects, by

---

<sup>95</sup> Does one have to be a saint to do theology? This would appear to be one lesson that could be drawn from Lonergan's work. But the requirement is not for a state of transcendence yet to be reached but to achieve an openness to a universal perspective that allows any theologian to be guided by the data where-even the data may lead. Acquiring this potential is a key feature of any encounter.



failing to understand what I do pay attention to or by failing to attend to an undetected rationalization. Encountering another helps in countering these normative drifts, but only if that other is a genuine open, understanding, reasonable, responsible and loving person who belongs to a tradition that is also open, understanding, reasonable, responsible and loving.<sup>96</sup>

As Lonergan puts it, the danger is a corruption of any authentic tradition:

What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian is is another, and I am unaware of the difference. My unawareness is unexpressed. Indeed, I have no language to express what I really am, so I use the language of the tradition I unauthentically appropriate, and thereby I devalue, distort, water down, corrupt that language.

Such devaluation, distortion, corruption may occur only in scattered individuals, and then there occurs unauthenticity in its minor [individual] form. But it may also occur on a more massive scale, and then the words are repeated but the meaning is gone. The chair is still the chair of Moses, but it is occupied by scribes and Pharisees. The theology is still Scholastic, but the Scholasticism is decadent. The religious order still reads out the rules and studies the constitution, but one may doubt whether the home fires are still burning. The sacred name of science is still invoked, but one can ask with Edmund Husserl whether any significant scientific ideal remains, whether it has not been replaced by the conventions of a clique. Then the unauthenticity of the individuals generates the unauthenticity of traditions. Then if one takes the tradition as it currently exists for one's standard, one can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity. Such is unauthenticity in its tragic form, for then the best of intentions combine with a hidden decay.

So it is that commonly men have to pay a double price for their personal attainment of authenticity. Not only have they to undo their own lapses from righteousness but more grievously they have to discover what is wrong in the tradition they have inherited and they have to struggle against the massive undertow it sets up.<sup>97</sup>

In the end, the only protection we have is to rely—like scientists—on a methodology designed to sift between truth and falsehood on a collective level. But lest we become too attached to the exercise of our own intelligence, there is Heschel to remind us of human frailty and divine inspiration.

The realization of the dangerous greatness of man, of his immense power and ability to destroy all life on earth, must completely change our conception of man's place and role in the divine scheme. If this great world of ours is not a trifle in the eyes of God, if the Creator is at all concerned with His creation, then man—who has the power to devise both culture and crime, but who is also able to be a proxy for divine justice—is important enough to be the recipient of spiritual light at the rare dawns of his history.

---

<sup>96</sup> In actual fact, if one or both are engaged in a quest for genuineness then the encounter becomes one of mutual correction and reinforcement within the general guidance of the Spirit. Such has been my experience in a two year plus slow read of Lonergan's *Insight* with three other participants, where each session ends with a sense of astonishment and amazement as new vistas are revealed, a mutual widening of our respective horizons.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., *A Third Collection*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985), 121.

Unless history is a vagary of nonsense, there must be a voice that says NO to man, a voice not vague, faint and inward, like qualms of conscience, but equal in spiritual might to man's power to destroy.

The voice speaks to the spirit of prophetic men in singular moments of their lives and cries to the masses through the horror of history.

The Bible, speaking in the name of a Being that combines justice with omnipotence, is the never-ceasing outcry of "NO" to humanity. In the midst of our applauding the feats of civilization, the Bible flings itself like a knife slashing our complacency, reminding us that God, too, has a voice in history. Only those who are satisfied with the state of affairs or those who choose the easy path of escaping from society, rather than to stay within it and to keep themselves clean of the mud of spacious glories, will resent its attack on human independence.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1955), 171.

## CHAPTER 2

### STARTING POINT

Man is not finished. One must be ready to develop, open to change; and in one's life an exalted child, a child of creation, of the Creator.

Paul Klee: *Notebooks*

What was my initial horizon, before going into this encounter with Müntzer? What things or objects did I focus on, that had meaning for me? What were my intentions? Who or what am I for? Who or what am I against?

#### *Key Features*

#### Elemental Meaning

Sean McEvenue, an expert in the Pentateuch with a Lonergan background, writes:

. . . the original and normative meanings of Scripture are literary in character: they do not affirm abstract doctrines or universal laws. . . . We have seen that they do affirm something subjective: the foundational stances of individual authors. We have called this elemental meaning. These stances are not explicit in the text. Rather they remain hidden or subliminal, and for that reason they have their maximum effect and are powerfully normative for readers and communities who read the Bible as a divinely inspired book.<sup>1</sup>

While there are many ways to recover this elemental meaning, he uses three specific questions that one should ask of any biblical text. These questions apply equally well to understanding the core meaning of any foundational stance including my own.

- 1) In what realm of meaning, or human activity (for example war, liturgy, family life, politics, sports, aesthetic activity, and so forth) does the Speaker expect revelation or salvation to occur?
- 2) In what precise way is salvation or revelation expected to be experienced by the Speaker/reader?
- 3) What demands upon the reader, what conversions and what practices, are implied and demanded by this foundational expectancy?<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sean McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 62. Note that the answers do not have to correspond with accepted doctrine, but only to the person's experience and understanding of salvation and/or revelation. Doctrinal understanding follows Foundations in Lonergan's functional specialities.

### *Realm of Meaning*

Where do we expect revelation or salvation to occur? When this question was raised before a small number of graduate students in Theological Studies, the most common answer in this admittedly small sample was in family life. There were two exceptions: one found revelation or salvation in asking questions; the other in planning and policy making. The latter response was my own. I expect revelation and/or salvation to occur in the realm of public policy, in the human activity of deciding on a terminal good and a plan or policy to make this terminal good real.

Essential to this response is the belief that human intersubjectivity although important is not as fundamental to recovery and redemption as the communal exercise of human judgment and deciding—a problem considering that the essential feature of Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus as the expression of God's love. And there is a profound difference. When family life is used as the primary realm of meaning for redemption/salvation, then the objects of one's attention are familial roles and the complex interplay of human intersubjectivity expressed through faith, hope and charity. What is not a part of such a foundational stance are the kinds of post-agricultural organizational relationships and the scientific mentality that grounds an ever more accurate appreciation of things as they relate to each other. After all, human intersubjectivity and the sensate world of human subjectivity relate things to us.

Another difference is that redemption/salvation becomes a communal effort involving collective authenticity. While individual spiritual development is essential for discernment and such discernment is essential for creating an authentic Christian world-mediated-by-meaning, such efforts are secondary to the kinds of group development that allow for the transcendental injunctions to be applied to a collective openness to experience, an intelligent cultural understanding, a reasonable communal affirmation of what is real and a shared responsible decision concerning society's terminal value—what we are *for*.

A third feature is that the focus is on making history, not understanding it. While understanding is an essential component for making history, it does not substitute for the personal

commitment, the given allegiance, to a position that sets one's orientation within the public sphere. Revelation/salvation is for me to be found in the processes that lead to a decision. The processes involve coming to understand and coming to decide on what is of true value; the decision is the outcome of this process, this making real what has been up to that time an intellectual—in a broad sense—effort. If done wisely and in accordance with what we know of the Divine Mystery, then redemption and salvation are made real and active in human affairs.

This elemental meaning of my foundational stance explains why for me both the conceptual and historical conditions of Chapter One are so important. Together they define my own world-mediated-by-meaning, my basic horizon, terminal values and to some extent my intentions.

### *Expected Form*

I expect revelation or salvation to be experienced as the reversal of decline and the restoration of cumulative and progressive development in human affairs. To be more exact, I expect the emergence of a good of order that can handle cases of egotism, group bias and common sense expedience—especially the latter, which excludes long-term theoretical interests from intruding on the business of the day. I expect the emergence of a terminal value for our culture that will allow for individual development as part of a greater movement toward making real a fuller sense of what it means to be a human being. I also expect that this will take a good many years, quite possibly centuries, and may never arrive due to the long term cycles of decline initiated by common sense bias that may bring human history to an end.

The first point is that time is conceived in a linear rather than cyclic fashion: there is a starting point, points of transition and some ending point as yet concealed yet potential in the here and now. Furthermore, there are stages in this development, as in the historical differentiation of human consciousness away from naïve realism and the domination of a non-differentiated common sense and toward the realm of interiority that reveals the broad outline of all that there is to know. Also, this development is dialectic, involving people in social interactions split along

different foundational stances—some authentic, some biased. This is a commitment to an evolutionary model, the only empirically based explanatory theory that explains differentiation in species as a consequence of genetic drift among isolated populations.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, this is a long-term perspective, less concerned with the immediate problems of the day than with the deeper structural changes. An understanding of fundamental institutional shifts is more important than an understanding of the political dynamics of a third world country, unless these political dynamics are a function of the dialectics of global institutional change. Ignorance of such long-term historical conditions can leave one fighting bush fires while a forest fire is about to bring all to an untimely end. The catch phrase is, “Think Global; Act Local.”

Third, creativity, imagination and artistic play are all very important factors that need to be fostered if post-agricultural economies are not to stagnate and decline through the lack of critical discernment and associated differentiated skills. Dialectics is very much a part of cultural development and without new often radical ideas people are not challenged to improve their capacity to discern between positions and counter-positions. Cultures on the move develop complex languages that allow for close distinctions and the new sets of operations that follow from them. Creativity and imagination allow for the development of new distinctions and new operations. While in the past alchemists used to distinguish between earth, air, fire and water as the essential constituents of nature, chemists now use the Periodic Table. The latter provides an articulate discernment between different elements and properties associated with them.

---

<sup>3</sup> This is now subsumed by the worldview of emergent probability. While evolutionary theory explains the differentiation of species, species are still things. What does change are recurring schemes of operations specific to different levels of genus. These recurring schemes are problematic in two senses: the probability of their emergence as part of a general trend toward higher schemes of order and the probability of their survival once they come into being. While higher order schemes regulate lower order ones, they are in turn conditioned by the existence of these same lower order schemes. This worldview of emergent probability sets the higher blade of theory that guides our expectations of what there is to be found.

Furthermore, not all societies are based on linear time. Fundamentalist Islamic cultures hold that Islamic law holds for all time and all places; there is no development, only obedience to the will of Allah. Fundamentalist Christian groups such as the Amish are similar, although their non-militant stance does not have the same kind of impact. And then there are cultures where change is so slow that it falls outside the life-span of any one person; there tradition not reason grounds practice.

The fourth observation is that reversing decline is not the result of one person but an emergent collective responsibility. While it is true that initiating the reversal of decline is always the result of one person's insight and decision, the actual work is a communal project. Expecting one super-hero to correct all of society's problems becomes a counter-position to be reversed. This position has interesting consequences when it comes to Christology, for such a foundational stance would reject as counter-position the glorification of Jesus as imperial ruler of all creation.<sup>4</sup>

### *Demands upon the Subject*

The first demand that this foundational stance makes is that the subject surrender totally

. . . to the demands of the human spirit: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love.

It is not to be conceived as an act of will. To speak of an act of will is to suppose the metaphysical context of a faculty psychology. But to speak of the fourth level of human consciousness, the level on which consciousness becomes conscience, is to suppose the context of intentionality analysis. Decision is responsible and it is free, but it is the work not of a metaphysical will but of conscience and, indeed, when a conversion, the work of a good conscience.<sup>5</sup>

To be completely open to these transcendental injunctions is of course impossible. But one can seek to expand the area of intelligence and intelligibility in human affairs and decrease the amount of bias that leads to decline, which means learning to live with the tension between transcended and transcending self. This means it is important to learn about conversion in all its different genetic and dialectic aspects, from psychic to intellectual, from moral to religious—including the types of bias, preunderstandings, prejudgments and errors that may come into play to interfere with the dynamic unfolding of the human spirit. Such is the first demand of my own elemental meaning.

---

<sup>4</sup> The implications of this foundational stance will be explored later in this chapter. But for the moment it may be enough to suggest the possibility that within the Trinity, Jesus is not the all-powerful father but instead an "elder brother" who, because of his divine birthright, has trod the path we have yet to follow. As an elder brother he is not too different from us as to be incomprehensible, yet as a member of the Triune God he is where we should be. In this sense, Jesus becomes the ultimate example of the fullness of human existence that we are encouraged to follow not in any slavish fashion but according to the dynamic human spirit in the time-and-space-specific genetic and dialectic circumstances of our own times.

<sup>5</sup> *Method*, 268.

The second is to become knowledgeable about the fundamental institutional changes that are taking place not only in our own times but within the context of a general theory of history. This includes knowledge of how cultures emerge, develop and eventually decline; knowledge of how dark ages come into being as a culture's institutions fail to manage internal or external shocks; and knowledge of how post-agricultural economies function, since given the size and density of contemporary human populations any return to a solar-powered agricultural economy represents little more than utopian thinking.

Such a foundational stance also demands a working knowledge of the realm of interiority, i.e., the complete self-appropriation of one's own rationality so that one is familiar with the polymorphism of human consciousness, basic metaphysical positions and counter-positions, and all the other factors sketched out in the section on theory in Chapter One. In the same way that calculus is the language of science, Lonergan's analysis of the dynamics of human understanding provides a language for understanding human beings grounded in the one thing that all human beings share: a cognitive structure based on experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and loving.

Finally, this elemental stance requires a transdisciplinary approach to understanding human affairs. Such a mind cannot be content with a partial understanding of reality offered by any particular discipline, even though such disciplines are valid and useful in their own right. Instead, this position not only demands an understanding of the range of explanatory disciplines and the relationships between them but an understanding of common sense intelligence as a necessary component in human decision making. It demands a methodology capable of combining such diverse examples of polymorphic human consciousness into a path that leads to a well-grounded plan or policy.



This methodology already exists in its essential form in the work of Otto Friedman.<sup>6</sup> His methodology has been extended to include Lonergan's generalized empirical method—all presented under the name of Professional Practice. The essential features of this notion are sketched out in the third section of this chapter, after the second section that inquires into the possibility of a general theory of history. But first it is necessary to objectify what or who I stand for, and what or who I am against.

### Fundamental Positions and Counter-positions

Since high school, my primary interest has always been to know what was really going on behind the superficial aspects of human living, what was really important.<sup>7</sup> This preoccupation exerted itself through a five year bachelor's program in Communication Design at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, and a four years interdisciplinary master's program in Environmental Studies (incomplete) at York University, Toronto.

The critical decision of who and what I was for, and who and what I was against, took place during those four years in environmental studies. The dialectical situation involved the nature of professional practice: were professionals only responsible for the exercise of their speciality for

---

<sup>6</sup> If anything, Otto Friedman has had a greater impact on my development than Bernard Lonergan—although there are signs in this study that there is a mutual fit between the two. Lonergan provides the general empirical method for doing transdisciplinary work that Friedman's work needed, while Friedman provides an excellent way for making Lonergan's work come to life in very practical situations. It is this need to put Lonergan to work, to empirically test his ideas through the tasks laid out by Friedman, that takes me beyond an amateur appreciation of Lonergan toward a more precise professional knowledge of his terms and methods.

All references to Friedman's work are through my own unpublished course notes working for two years as his teaching assistant while working on a Master's degree in Environmental Studies, York University, in the mid-1970s, where he was a visiting professor in the department of Sociology. Outside of a few symposium papers, he never published any major work; his primary interest was always in his own professional practice in organizational development.

<sup>7</sup> The seminal event occurred during my graduating year at high school. My class was rehearsing the graduation ceremony under the direction of the principal and one of the teachers. You can imagine that the potential for shenanigans was very high, but our principal had a steady hand and could control a class with ease. At one point the teacher suggested a course of action and he said no, that to do that would result in a loss of control. It was at that moment I realized that he was aware of a reality beyond my own. Ever since then, I've been in pursuit of that underlying reality that he knew and I did not.

the good of the client? Or did professionals have a deeper responsibility for the commonwealth? Being a technician had little appeal; being highly skilled, creative and responsible for the good of order did. So I made a commitment to the notion of professionals as responsible citizens whose special training brought with it the responsibility for the proper use of that training. Only later did I realize this decision was a decision for an open rather than closed society.<sup>8</sup> My terminal value became the good of order in society. The primary means of achieving this, an emerging notion of professional practice as responsible to a higher good. Working out the primary features of this notion became an on and off preoccupation for the next thirty years.

It was a decision, perhaps rashly made, to share in the burden of responsibility. As Karl Popper wrote in his preface to *The Open Society and Its Enemies*:

I see now more clearly than ever before that even our present [1966] troubles spring from something that is as admirable and sound as it is dangerous—from our impatience to better the lot of our fellows. For these troubles are the by-products of what is perhaps the greatest of all moral and spiritual revolutions of history, a movement which began three centuries ago. It is the longing of uncounted unknown men to free themselves and their minds from the tutelage of authority and prejudice. It is their attempt to build up an open society which rejects the absolute authority of the merely established and the merely traditional while trying to preserve, to develop, and to establish traditions, old or new, that measure up to their standards of freedom, of humaneness, and of rational criticism. It is their unwillingness to sit back and leave the entire responsibility for ruling the world to human or superhuman authority, and their readiness to share the burden of responsibility for avoidable suffering, and to work for its avoidance. This revolution has created powers of appalling destructiveness; but they may yet be conquered.<sup>9</sup>

To provide ready tools for those willing to share such burdens of responsibility is the primary objective of Professional Practice. Professional Practice affirms the commitment of Western institutions to rely on reason to justify any policy or institution. The counter-positions it denies is that of authority and power based solely on caste, on uncritical traditions or on the whims of those at the top of the social, political and economic heap.

---

<sup>8</sup> An excellent introduction to this issue may be found in Karl R. Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 1, *Plato*, vol. 2, *Hegel and Marx*, fifth edition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966). These volumes were written during the grave years of the Second World War when the future of open societies in the face of the growing power of totalitarian regimes was very much in doubt.

<sup>9</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. 1, *Plato* 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), ix.

About twelve years ago, this work on professional practice was subsumed under a higher perspective, one that now includes God. This transformation started in 1989 with my first graduate course in Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. Chapter Four of *Method* dealt with religion and Lonergan posed the question of the existence of God in such a way I had to have an answer. As it turns out, I decided to live in an intelligible world and so affirmed the reality of a Divine Mystery in human affairs that sublated the question of the good of order.<sup>10</sup> But now I had a new problem to solve: what changes in this notion of professional practice were necessary now that the affirmation of an active and vital Divine Mystery in human history had been made? One change was to make a priority the adequacy of my own prior foundational stance to make this transition to such higher viewpoint. It was this foundational question that became the predominate question when entering the master's program in Theological Studies.

Another change was to affirm the fundamental importance of creativity in human affairs, especially in complex post-agricultural economies where the need to keep up with the exegeses of the times demands not only a commitment to the dynamism of the human spirit to follow the transcendental precepts but the support and encouragement of innovators who not only understand these problems but are in a position to do something about them. It is the creative individual who develops the new routines, brings into being new things and sustains an active openness and responsiveness to the world around them. If such creativity is neglected by society as a whole, then progress slows to a halt, problems fester to create yet more problems, and the

---

<sup>10</sup> This event sheds light on the importance of dialectic in foundational decision making. Lonergan laid out two opposing positions: God did not exist, in which case there was no intelligible order to the universe and hence no moral imperative to do anything more than what power and authority would dictate; or God did exist, and there was an intelligible order to the universe and to the dynamism of the human spirit. The critical insight was an inverse insight into verification: asking for proof of the existence of God was not a good question, for any question of proof involved one's foundational stance and that stance could well preclude any logical extension to admit the existence of God. That inverse insight made it clear that the question of the existence of God could only be answered at the level of deciding rather than judging, and the grounds for making such a decision lay in the authenticity of the decision-maker. In effect, I decided to live in a world mediated by Divine meaning (position) in contrast to an unintelligible and hostile universe where might made right (counter-position). From that, all else followed.

good of order slowly fragments until some internal or external event exceeds the institutional capacity to respond and the culture slides into a dark age of forgetfulness.

Unfortunately, there's a myth about creativity embedded in the common sense use of the term that places the creative person at odds with reason—a myth especially prone in religious circles.<sup>11</sup>

Leaving aside the lower aspects of human nature, we may look to one of its highest, to the fact that man can be creative. It is the small creative minority of men who really matter; the men who create works of art or of thought, the founders of religions, and the great statesmen. These few exceptional individuals allow us to glimpse the real greatness of man. But although these leaders of mankind know how to make use of reason for their purposes, they are never men of reason. Their roots lie deeper—deep in their instincts and impulses, and in those of the society of which they are parts. Creativeness is an entirely irrational, a mystical faculty. . .<sup>12</sup>

A third change lies in refusing what Lonergan calls common-sense eclecticism as one of the methods that guides the search for wisdom.

Theoretical understanding . . . seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view. Neither its existence, nor its value, nor the remote possibility of its success is denied. Still common sense is concerned not with remote but with proximate possibilities. It lauds the great men of the past, ostensibly to stir one to emulation, but really to urge one to modesty. It remarks that, if there are unsolved problems and, no doubt, there are, at least men of undoubted genius have failed to solve them. It leaves to be inferred that, unless one is a still greater genius, then one had best regard such problems as practically insoluble. But emphatically it would not discourage anyone inclined to

---

<sup>11</sup> This is the core of my own problem with religious matters, given my background and commitment to the use of intelligence in human affairs. The problem is that the tools and methods of the social sciences cannot be used to both investigate what lies within human experience and what lies beyond it. Yet, true transdisciplinary work involves both. Solving this apparent incompatibility not only lies behind this study, it Lonergan's approach to human understanding and theological method is so important.

<sup>12</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, volume 2, *Hegel and Marx*, fifth ed. revised (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 228. The real mystery lies in the phenomena of an insight, both into data or into the potentials of a situation, for suddenly one knows what one did not know a moment before—and this knowing brings something new into the world. See Chapter One of *Insight*. But it is interesting to note that my own drive to rationality is itself irrational, based now on a desire to know the real as understood by the Divine Mystery, i.e., god-inspired rather than man-inspired.

It is the reality of a creative self in action, promoting progress and avoiding or reversing decline during times of fundamental institutional change, that lies behind the following notion of professional practice. A better title might be: *Enjoying the Creative Self: Design Parameters for Successful Planning and Policy-Making during times of Fundamental Institutional Change*. In what follows, the creative self—that reflective self-consciousness of those involved in making history through the active appropriation of a world-mediated-by-meaning that has self-directing value—is taken for granted. Rather, the question is: How can a self-actualizing, self-knowing, highly motivated, courageous and loving creative self find her way around organizations and societies that are rarely designed to facilitate innovative minds or their own collective self-renewal?

For the relationship between organizations and creative individuals, see John W. Garder, *Self-Renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1964). For the educational training of the creative self, see Moira T. Carley, *Creative Learning and Living: The Human Element* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2005).

philosophy. A recognition of one's limitations need not prevent one from studying philosophy, from teaching it, from contributing to reviews, from writing books. One can become learned in the history of philosophy. One can form one's reasoned judgments about the views of others. By taking care not to lose the common touch, by maintaining one's sense of reality, by cultivating balance and proportion, one can reach a philosophic viewpoint that is solidly reliable and, after all, sufficiently enlightened. For opinions are legion; theories rise, glow, fascinate, and vanish; but sound judgment remains. And what is sound judgment? It is to bow to the necessary, to accept the certain, merely to entertain the probable, to distrust the doubtful, to disregard the merely possible, to laugh at the improbable, to denounce the impossible, and to believe what Science says. Nor are these precepts empty words, for there are truths that one cannot reject in practical living, there are others which it would be silly to doubt, there are claims to truth that merit attention and consideration, and each of these has its opposites. List the lot, draw out their implications, and you will find that you already possess a sound philosophy that can be set down in a series of propositions confirmed by proofs and fortified by answers to objections.

Such . . . is the programme of common-sense eclecticism.<sup>13</sup>

Why is common-sense eclecticism a counter-position method in philosophy? First of all, common sense is subject to dramatic, egotistic, group and general common sense bias to the point where any uncritical examination of the integration of common sense and theory only muddies the water. Secondly, such eclecticism goes against the prime objective of philosophy, “. . . the integrated unfolding of the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know” (*Insight*, 418), for this method only provides yet another viewpoint. Eclecticism also stunts the development of philosophy, for its improvement is restricted to men of genius. But perhaps most important of all, it encourages a wide range of judgment without taking into account that understanding is an important component of judging. The latter is a real danger in professional practice, for it is easy to think that one's judgment is improved through developing a wide range of apparently eclectic bits of knowledge brought together without a suitable metaphysics and transdisciplinary framework to ground these bits in an explanatory worldview.<sup>14</sup>

### *A Moral Horizon*

Without some sense of history, one cannot know where one has been, where one is or where one is going. Yet, for the most part such histories are cultural artefacts, stories that give meaning

---

<sup>13</sup> *Insight*, 417.

<sup>14</sup> If the reader does not attend to this underlying upper blade of theory, then this study would appear eclectic indeed. This is why Chapters One and Two are so important: they outline the upper blade so necessary for guiding any encounter.

to the drama of human living, and not a solid general theory of history. Few people explore the entire span of human existence, from the beginning of our species to its end. Olaf Stapledon did, in his two novels *Last and First Men* and *Last Men in London*.<sup>15</sup> The only contemporary historian that I know of who attempted a comprehensive explanatory analysis of the rise and fall of human civilizations was Arnold Toynbee in his monumental ten volume work, *A Study of History*.<sup>16</sup>

To anyone educated in a traditional theological approach to Christianity, this section may seem rather pointless and certainly misdirected. There exists a fundamental difference between two realms of meaning, that of common sense intelligence and that of the empirical scientific-orientated theory, such that within common sense intelligence (the world as it appears to us as sensed “bodies”) it is proper to cease raising any other questions when an idea can be shown to work while in the theoretical realm where the concern is with ultimate explanation one has to keep asking the question ‘why’ until an ultimate explanation has been reached. The “moral horizon” rather crudely and roughly sketched out in this chapter represents one attempt toward an ultimate explanation of the universe.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men / Last Men in London* (published in one volume by Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972). *Last and First Men* was originally published by Methuen in 1930 reissued by Penguin in 1963. *Last Men in London* was published by Methuen in 1932. The first volume purports to be a history of human kind as written by the last of the humans, mentally and physically altered to live on Neptune in the dying days of the sun, having passed through a series of such modifications including the Second and Third human species, a remake into a winged species on Venus, and other such changes. *Last Men in London* provides a Neptunian ‘last man’s’ perspective on our 20<sup>th</sup> century world. Although both are works of fiction, the fiction is based on contemporary scientific and ethical possibilities.

<sup>16</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, abridgment of Volumes VII-I by D. C. Somervell (New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957).

<sup>17</sup> Of the three initial foundational pillars—moral horizon, Lonergan’s critical realism, and professional practice—this sketch of a moral horizon is and remains supposition. The notions of professional practice, with its primary questions and transdisciplinary framework, and critical realism, with its focus on the subject as knower, have been externally verified by others, judged as both real and true. This puts both of them on a completely different level of consciousness, where they function as the basis for deciding between different dialectical organizing principles to discern the truth in the functional specialty of Foundations. The same cannot be said of this imaginative and highly speculative conceptualization of a moral horizon constructed around an explanatory theory of general history. At this level, there is only one virtually unconditioned affirmation: the Divine Mystery exists as an ever present and ever functioning power in the universe.

Even so, there is “fittingness” to this model. Fred Crowe, in writing on Lonergan’s Christology, mentions that in theology one deals not with mathematical or scientific necessity but with possibility. “The notion of what is *fitting* is a favorite theme of Lonergan’s: theology deals with the possible, not with the necessary, and so it is satisfied to show that the incarnation was fitting, that it has its intelligibility without

This is not to say that I don't have an appreciation of the diversity, complexity, richness, and depth to be found in the unique, the individual, the penetrating quality of a Tolstoy or a Gibbons, or the beauty of religious community seeking God through common work. I would echo the beliefs of George Steiner, an authority in hermeneutics and life-long companion of both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*:

I have conducted my emotional, intellectual and professional affairs in distrust of theory. So far as I am able, I can attach meaning to the concept of theory in the exact and, to some degree, applied sciences. These theoretical constructs demand crucial experiments for their verification or falsification. If refuted, they will be superseded. They can be mathematically or logically formalized. The invocation of 'theory' in the humanities, in historical and social studies, in the evaluation of literature and the arts, seems to me mendacious. The humanities are susceptible neither to crucial experiments nor to verification (except on a material, documentary level). Our responses to them are narratives of intuition. In the unbounded dynamics of the semantic, in the flux of the meaningful, in the uncircumscribed interplay of interpretations, the only propositions are those of personal choice, of taste, of echoing affinity or deafness. There can be no refutations or disproofs in any theoretical sense. Coleridge does not refute Samuel Johnson; Picasso does not advance on Raphael. In humane letters, 'theory' is nothing but intuition grown impatient.<sup>18</sup>

The same does not apply to professional practice, whose standards and norms are established in the realm of interiority. All forms of professional practice occur in "times-and-space-specific socio/political situations". The idea is that each time a professional seeks to intervene, this intervention requires a personal reorientation to the specific circumstances, a separate diagnosis and evaluation of the problem(s), and specific estimates of the scope and constraints on rational action within this historically and geographically unique situation. Yet, all such interventions not only require precise and distinct ideas of what we mean by progress and decline but also a decision of what we—as a species—are *for*. Of the many answers that have been given, the Christian approach has perhaps the highest views and expectations on human beings. This is affirmed through Christian life, not theory, yet when one's culture is no longer what it was and the Church seems destined to be left behind in the dust-bones of history, theologians can help by

---

being necessitated. 'Intelligibility' does not mean simply the absence of internal contradiction; more positively, it means what divine wisdom, coextensive with divine power, sees as good and possible." Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Christ and History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982*, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005), 66. Italics are Crowe's.

<sup>18</sup> George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 5. To the extent that the humanities are a specialization of intelligence into the common sense of another time and place, Steiner is certainly correct: an appropriate hermeneutical methodology is necessary, but not any explanatory theory of the data.

starting to ask the question ‘why’ in an unrestricted fashion. Clarifying the foundations of Christian faith is in my mind essential to being able to function as Christians in a pluralistic world where common cultural norms no longer apply.

It may seem strange to lay out the beginnings of a general moral history without acknowledging the work of such intellectual giants as Arnold J. Toynbee, Teilhard de Chardin, or Saint Augustine.<sup>19</sup> Yet such a formal history misses the point. Each of us develops over time crude images of reality—social reality, past histories, future possibilities, and types of human beings, social norms, personal values, and so forth—constructed using available cultural tools. These are half-rational half-irrational images that share features with others in society but that also are uniquely our own. Conversion differs from person to person, resulting in a great deal of diversity in positions and counter-positions at play in society. What kind of moral reality have I constructed for myself at a time when traditions have broken down, a crisis in valuation holds supreme, and the only alternative is to seek firm foundations in order to discern correctly between different perspectives?

Although there are often dramatic conversions—sudden shifts in direction—deep changes take place over far long periods of time. For me, such changes may have started with the decision to follow the work of Otto Friedman, or perhaps more than twelve years after Friedman to follow the opportunity for intellectual conversion offered by Lonergan. It was then that a dramatic shift took place: for the first time I faced the problem of the existence of God. Chapter Four of *Method*

---

<sup>19</sup> Why in the form of a history? It is only in history that we can talk about progress and decline, the collective results of good and evil working themselves out in human life.

Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History: Abridgment of Volumes VII-I* (by D. C. Somervell. New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957). Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (translated from the French by Bernard Wall with an introduction by Sir Julian Huxley. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1959). Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (translated by Marcus Dods, D.D. with an introduction by Thomas Merton. New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1993).

Without a doubt, the best compendium relating to a moral universe is that found in the Christian Bible. It contains a record of the gradual evolution of positions and counter-positions concerning man’s relationship with God that spans at least two thousand years.



laid out the problem.<sup>20</sup> If God did not exist, then morality or intelligibility was a matter of the person or group holding the biggest stick. If God did exist, then goodness, moral truth, and an intelligent universe did exist independent of human passions.

There could be no middle ground.

Now, questions that require Yes/No answers are questions of judgment (true or false, real or unreal): evidence is collected and carefully weighted to determine the truth or reality of a statement or event. It took close to three weeks of desperate probing before I suddenly realized that the question was not one of reasonable judgment but of responsible deciding. In other words, no evidence could ever justify either a yes or a no answer; it was a matter of preference, a decision of ultimate value.<sup>21</sup> Now, framed in this matter, the choice was obvious: While living in a world where God exists might not change the apparent madness, insanities, and irrationalities of the world, the presence of God did offer hope, a way out, the possibility of a truly human world guided by divine inspiration.

The emotional elements of a religious conversion would not emerge for nearly ten years. But in the meantime, there was a major shift in intentions that I likened to a rainstorm transversing a watershed: on one side of a narrow ridge, the water would flow in one direction, while only a few meters on, the water would flow in a diametrically opposite direction. My decision had that aspect about it: one moment, without any change in circumstances or conditions, my attention focussed on what I wanted; the next moment, I started asking myself what God thought of things. Gradually, as this question took hold and unfolded over a decade or more of small insights and different perceptions of reality, a moral horizon started to emerge wherein I tried to make sense of

---

<sup>20</sup> This question gave rise to a pure form of the type of incompatible horizons that are found in the functional specialty of Dialectics: both cannot be true; one must stand while the other falls. Discernment identifies one as the true position, which is to say that a truly authentic person who is open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, and responsible when it comes to deciding issues of value will choose one of the two options as true while the other will be understood as being flawed. This decision lies in the functional specialty of foundations.

<sup>21</sup> Such a negation of the question is an example of an inverse insight. Inverse insights deny intelligibility to the question itself, thus initiating often radical changes in direction. See Lonergan, *Insight* (1957), 19–25.

all that I knew about myself and the world. By the time I had started this study, the initial conditions generated an initial moral universe, a moral horizon subject certainly in need of refinement but one that at least gave me a starting point.

While there were a number of elements incorporated into this model—evolutionary dynamics, cosmology, virtual realities, the multi-verse, and conversion—the key that pulled it all together was an insight into the reality of the Trinity as *the* defining characteristic of Christianity. Now, the notion of the Trinity is often downplayed in favour of an image of Christ as Messiah, Lord, ruler of all—an image that no doubt has its roots in the early days of Christendom when Constantine sought to use Christianity as a tool for social and political cohesion within the 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman Empire.<sup>22</sup> The divisiveness of the notion of a triune God, a concept difficult to understand that developed a few centuries after Jesus' death as Christians sought to understand the authority of his life ("Who do you think I am?"), has been a factor in the seeming innumerable discords and debates in Christian history. Yet, as a model for Christian living, the idea of the Trinity is regaining a place in contemporary Christian thinking.<sup>23</sup>

It is one thing to have a conceptual understanding of the meaning and importance of notion of Trinity, and another to have a personal experience, a personal understanding of what it represents.<sup>24</sup> The reality of the Trinity was brought home to me with the sudden realization that

---

<sup>22</sup> Charles Freeman, *The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason* (London: Pimlico, 2003). He includes a striking photo of a church ceiling above an altar, where Christ is sitting full frontal on a throne in majesty reminiscent of a Roman Emperor (church of Santa Pudenziana in Rome, circa 390).

<sup>23</sup> "In the face of the radical challenge to the Christian faith, help will come not from a feeble, general and vague theism but only from a decisive witness to the living God of history who has disclosed himself in a concrete way through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. . . . The God of Jesus Christ—that is, the God who gives himself to be known through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit—is the ultimate, eschatological and definitive determination of the indeterminate openness of man; he is therefore also the Christian answer to the situation created by modern atheism." Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, translated from the German by Matthew J. O'Connell (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 2003), 315. See also Walter Kasper, *God the Father* (New York: Crossroad, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the following comments on the Triune God are neither definitive nor based on any of the extensive literature that already exists. Rather, they represent an initial attempt to make sense of a primitive experience of the persons of the Trinity at a time when classical definitions have no meaning within my conceptual horizon. The following should be considered no more than an initial starting point to an understanding of the Trinity.

my own “prayer” encounters matched one-on-one with the three formal “personalities” of God. The Father of the Trinity corresponded with this immensely powerful entity who governed all, the final authority, the ultimate judge of all that was, is, and will be—powerful, lawgiving, yet also assessable, tolerant, patient—although one would not like to test that patience. The Jesus matched this “elder brother” of mine, someone who was ahead of me in life’s work yet not so distant I could not identify with him (human, yet divine). Then there was this vast oceanic space, cosmic in size and energy, full of movement, of currents that one could either fight and exhaust oneself or accept and float, to be borne wherever the currents would take you; sheer energy, light, movement, constantly dynamic yet always the same. Might this not correspond with the notion of the Holy Spirit?

#### Birth of the Triune God

It is totally beyond our human capabilities to *ever* understand the nature of God. Yet, we can understand a God that is true for us as human beings called to communion.<sup>25</sup>

I affirm without any doubt whatsoever the existence of a presence or force operative within creation that transcends all human possibilities and is ever a puzzle to human beings. This experienced presence or force is named Divine Mystery. This Divine Mystery is in itself an originating intelligent personhood, an entity, known to itself as such.<sup>26</sup> The originating intelligence is named a “Divine Mystery<sub>prime</sub>” (DM<sub>1</sub>).<sup>27</sup> Assigned to DM<sub>1</sub> are all the properties of

---

<sup>25</sup> This process, this orientation, this encounter with the Divine Mystery, allows for a pluralistic understanding of Christian life, where every culture, every community with its own religious, moral and intellectual horizons, can bear witness to the life of Christ in ways appropriate to them and yet still be considered part of the Christian church.

<sup>26</sup> Not only is personhood held in the highest regard by human beings, e.g., charismatic authority, the positional authority of kings, CEO’s, priests, and “alpha” males, but most of all because it is only individuals that experience wonder, awe and mystery, the source of all truly creative thought.

<sup>27</sup> The terms “Father”, “Son”, and “Holy Ghost” carry excessive cultural baggage for the abstract almost mathematical underlying pattern. In order to keep the same underlying idea and yet allow imagination to work in other channels, I have decided to use generic non-historical terms DM<sub>1</sub>, DM<sub>2</sub>, and DM<sub>3</sub>. This is far from being a satisfactory solution, which explains the occasional use of specific Christen terms.

isening.<sup>28</sup> All other properties of DM<sub>1</sub> are unknown and unknowable, except as an unlimited extrapolated of what is knowable by intelligent entities. Within the state of isening, DM<sub>1</sub> continually creates itself as the origin of all that there is, was, and ever will be.

Within this active state of isening, DM<sub>1</sub>'s "first" task is that of comprehending that which is most significant: itself. In comprehending itself, DM<sub>1</sub> conceives an image of itself as itself, thus in a sense bringing itself into existence in a reflexive manner. However, this image on the part of DM<sub>1</sub> is so accurate and so powerful that the image itself takes on a separate existence. DM<sub>1</sub>, as generator and procreator, takes the position of "Father"—keeping in mind that DM<sub>1</sub> as "Father"<sup>29</sup> refers to far more than its human equivalent. DM<sub>1</sub>'s image of itself, now a separate intelligent personhood within the isening, becomes that which is generated: DM<sub>2</sub>.

Within the isening of DM<sub>1</sub> and the DM<sub>2</sub> there is now a problem. These two entities, each possessing the properties of DM<sub>1</sub> (though one is generator and the other generated) encounter each other as most fascinating and attractive phenomena. Both desire contact, and it is through

---

<sup>28</sup> Popular conceptions of God have God existing outside time itself, having all the time there is—in the sense of an "eternity" of time. The author believes that the inverse may well be true, that god has *no* extension whatsoever in any dimensions of time or space. To convey this idea, I have coined the word "isening," a purely theoretical explanatory concept defined as existence with no extensions or dimensions whatsoever. Given this concept, it is easy to understand the classical insistence that God has no beginning: any entity existing in a state of isening cannot have causality as one of its properties. Thus it exists only because it exists; it is what it would be. For this reason, it is possible to conceive God as ever changing (from our perspective) and yet always the same (perfect and complete).

This term also helps to explain the experiences of mystics who seem to transcend time in their moments of contact with the Divine Mystery: such people participate, if only momentarily and very lightly, in that state of active beingness with no extensions of any kind other than perhaps a creative playfulness. The term has two separate yet related meanings: a formal definition of what is informally expressed as God being outside or above or living in "eternity" and that pale human experience associated with higher forms of communion where "All is well; all is well."

<sup>29</sup> "Father" is a relational term within a family situation that includes, at a bare minimum, "mother", son and daughter. As such, it belongs to the common sense realm of meaning, i.e. to the world as it relates to us as human beings. "Universal Being", on the other hand, takes the common sense notion of human beings as—at least to date—the best developed creature (to be a true human being is considered a rare achievement) and extends it into the theoretical realm of meaning. In this realm, things are not related to human concerns but to each other. Yet, even this notion of universal being is too specific for a high level formulation: it contains within it the assumption or presumption that a "being" is involved. While this may be true, it seems safer at this point in the argument to simply assert the dual proposition that human beings experience a potency outside that of the sensate world, that this potency is given form through the notion of divinity even though as transcendence it can never be truly understood, and finally both potency and form are affirmed through a deliberate and considered act of judgment. Hence, the bare minimum that can be affirmed is the existence of a Divine Mystery.

this desire for contact that a third intelligent entity is formed, namely the communicator, the moderator, the very embodiment of the language of Godhood, capable of handling the complexity of Godhood, and thus of necessity of equal value and nature as both DM<sub>1</sub> and DM<sub>2</sub>: DM<sub>3</sub>. Together, DM<sub>1</sub>, DM<sub>2</sub>, and DM<sub>3</sub> form the Divine community of mutual adoration and creative exuberance that collectively we know as the Divine Mystery and designate in Christian circles as the Triune God. This community is both multiple and one, that is, there are three distinct “personalities” or self-aware “beings”, yet only one *being*.

The Trinity constitutes the totality of the Divine Mystery, expressing within itself all aspects of Divine life. No other such community is possible; no other component entity can of necessity exist. These three encapsulate all there is of Divine life, lacking nothing, needing nothing, full and present in themselves, operative within the state of isening.<sup>30</sup>

At the core of such communal life is the active state of anamesoning.<sup>31</sup>

### Creating Creation

The joy, pleasure, and sheer exuberance of the Trinity are given expression through acts of creation.

---

<sup>30</sup> One might argue for continual regression, but in fact the dynamics of the three are in themselves so stable that any further regressions of imaging would pale beside the original.

<sup>31</sup> “Anamesoning” is a parallel concept to isening that is used to describe not only the form of communal life within the Trinity but the various stages that lead up to it. Constructed from the Greek ἀνὰ μέσον, meaning “among”, “in the middle”, or “between”, it is a sociological variable running in a continuum from basic human intersubjectivity to a yet to be known state of existence to which all intelligence entities are invited to share. Even if we will never fully understand this state of existence until we experience it, we can still work out many of the properties of this state and use this knowledge to direct our intelligent inquires into how we can evolve (or transform) from a purely animal existence into the kind of entity that has the capacity to join the life of the Triune God. For example, it seems clear that the human intersubjectivity, a sense of identity with another operative at a preconscious level that emerges particularly during parental bonding with children or the automatic rescue response to another person’s distress, is a primitive form of anamesoning. More complex human forms of anamesoning are involved in different forms of religious, moral and intellectual conversion, shifts that in effect bring an entity closer to sharing in the life of the Divine Mystery. The term itself states the purpose of the existence of any intelligent person or entity in the grand scheme of things and thus not only provides a model for evaluating time-and-space-specific social and political conditions but aids in the diagnosing of critical inter- and transdisciplinary problems at the very practical level of professional practice.

Since the primary joy and pleasure of the Trinity lies in sharing in the anamesoning of the whole, the single and only supreme form of creation of value to the Trinity would be that of creating independent entities capable of joining in communal life of the Trinity. All else would be trivial.

What we know as Creation not only reflects in itself the joyous, explosive exuberance of the Trinity, and therefore requires respect for that which it indicates, but can only have as its fundamental design criteria the emergence of entities with this potential of evolving into ever higher and more complex states of anamesoning. All higher forms of anamesoning are characterized by hope, delightful anticipation, awe, mystery, beauty, and a sense of we-ness.

Freedom is also another fundamental characteristic of high-order anamesoning. All entities created with the potential of sharing the life of the Trinity must of necessity be free to choose to do so.<sup>32</sup> If they were not free to choose, there would be little joy on the part of the Triune God in having such entities participate in their divine life. For this reason, the Trinity as a whole or in part cannot be present in full glory to any of the creatures thus created. To reveal themselves would be to deny any possibility of free choice.

Neither can there be any direct evidence of the Trinity's creation of Creation, for such evidence would also act as a bias in the development of such creatures.

Furthermore, Creation itself cannot share in the isening of the Trinity, for within the isening there is only is-ness, total and complete within itself. Given the need to exercise discernment through choice, any entity must exist in a state where there is a collective mediating knowledge of experience (the past), opportunities to discern and choose the good (the present), and to conceive

---

<sup>32</sup> There are at least two ways to conceptualize freedom: (1) being unconstrained by any external force or pressure to choose one option over another (this concept of freedom requires both a range of choice and the lack of any coercive force to choose one over an other), and (2) having no constraints when it comes to doing what is right and necessary in the eyes of God (thus it is possible to lived chained in a small jail cell with no options other than to accept or rebel and yet be perfectly free). The first rather crude definition depends upon being free of any coercion, while the second involves a joyful acceptance of a divine attraction we express as "being in love." The former belongs to the realm of human beings, a rather humanistic belief in the need for human beings to be free to define themselves as masters of their own fates, while the latter frames human beings within the divine community where to be free is to be released from bondage in order to join in the celebratory anamesoning of the Triune God.

and imagine possibilities and probabilities of what could or should be (the future).<sup>33</sup> Without a universe demanding decisions of such entities, such entities would not recognize the need for a divine power in their lives nor exercise the skills necessary to come closer to the Divine Mystery. The only possible design for Creation is a universe capable of self-evolving, which is to say things should start off no-where no-when and gradually take on higher degrees of complexity and order. This is accomplished through the world process (worldview) of emergent probability.<sup>34</sup>

Creation must start as pure potential and only gradually take shape through the emergence of ever higher schemes of recurrence in the world processes of emergent probability. The universe evolves over time into systems of every more complex recurring schemes of maintenance and transformation in ways that are both predictable and unpredictable, combining both stability and novelty.<sup>35</sup> At each level of complexity, there exists a set lower conditioning level without which

---

<sup>33</sup> “God’s time is an eternal present, extra-territorial to the passage of past-present-future. Yet it is only ‘in time’ that we perceive human experience. It is only by virtue of temporal sequence that essential motions of spirit such as remorse, responsibility for consequent action, prayer, and resolution can assume meaning.” George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 149.

<sup>34</sup> The worldview of emergent probability is the successor of such worldviews as Aristotelian, Galilean, Darwinian, and Indeterminism. It is a heuristic structure laid out by Lonergan for organizing intelligent inquiry into the empirical world that combines both classical systems of laws and the stochastic approach of contemporary statistics. The primary concept is that of schemes of recurrence, system constructs whose operation is governed by empirical laws but whose existence and maintenance is a matter of probability. Schemes emerge from the operation of lower schemes, and when they do they subsume the operation of lower schemes as well as look to the emergence of even higher schemes. See Lonergan, *Insight* (1957), 103–139.

<sup>35</sup> Within any particular universe, creation starts as a single point at the beginning of time itself, a point that contains all the matter and energy that there will ever be, the “big bang.” Within a few billionths of a second, the first differentiations emerge, which—in a matter of seconds—results in a hyper-expanding universe where the first nuclear particles come into being soon followed by the first atom: hydrogen. As the universe expanded and cooled down, forces pulled these atoms together into vast clouds that then condensed and ignited forming stars. Complex atoms such carbon, oxygen, iron, lead, gold, uranium, and so forth were formed within these nuclear furnaces, which, when fired out into the universe in massive quasar explosions, coalesced into clumps that eventually would be called planets. Within these new conditions, these atoms could and did combine with others to produce not only simple molecules such as water but also more complex chains of amino acids. And so it went, with each emerging system provided the bases for the emergence of even higher-order schemes of recurrence until the flow of sun energy created standing waves of life on planets that could support such schemes.

It seems silly (if not an act of hubris) to suppose that we are the only intelligent creatures in our universe. Even if the emergence of intelligence has an extremely low probability, the sheer *size* of our own cosmos virtually assures the existence of other entities than us. Then there is the question of multiple selves contained in the multiverse, *the* explanatory theory of quantum physics. Of course both these possibilities presents culturally normative Christians with certain problems—another instance of a crisis in valuation.

the higher level could not exist and a higher level of complexity within which the current schemes are themselves organized. Such holons are both conditioning and conditioned, in the sense that the human body depends upon and hence conditions the complex chemical and electrical sub-schemes that regulate such things as body temperature and automatic responses while at the same time seeks integration into a higher scheme of things, specifically into the social and political affairs of a human community and ultimately—unless constrained or restrained—the Divine Mystery.<sup>36</sup> Intelligent species turn not only to human created social and political schemes—tribes, communities, nations, institutions, for example—but to an even higher recurrent scheme: the Divine Mystery now understood as the Triune God. We are invariably drawn to something greater than ourselves:

The life of men is made up of many and varied activities. Deep in the heart of men is the longing, fitfully glimpsed and but half realized, to gather up all these strivings into an intense pursuit of one all-embracing objective worthy of the toil and tears and devotion of the human heart. Such is the half-shaped dream; but the reality is a picture of heaped-up activities, where the trivial jostles the less trivial, and less trivial elbows the important things, and there is no unity of design, nor any intensity of single, concentrated purpose. There is no real perspective of values: what is essentially trivial but immediately urgent looms large and commands attention; while what is essentially important, but not immediately urgent or insistent, is relegated to the hazy recesses of the background. But the thing of greatest importance is not always what is demanded by the needs of the moment.<sup>37</sup>

Such yearning only provides the emotional need to turn our face upward to the only thing that might satisfy such a longing: the Divine Mystery, the Transcendent, the “Attractive Mystery” of Javier Prades.<sup>38</sup> In other words, creation demands a choice between all that belongs to the Trinity and all that belongs to immediate sensation, i.e., a value change toward the transcendent Trinity and away from the immediacy of creation itself. The attractive mystery is the Trinity: the ideal of perfection, truth and judgment.

---

<sup>36</sup> The term “holon” was coined by Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (London: Pan, 1978). “All complex structures and processes of a relatively stable character display hierarchic organization, regardless whether we consider galactic systems, living organisms and their activities, or social organizations.” Ibid., 31. Koestler’s italics. Each level of such a hierarchical structure constitutes a quasi-autonomous whole. But it is a whole that is “Janus-faced. The face turned upward, toward the higher levels, is that of a dependent part; the face turned downward, towards its own constituents, is that of a whole of remarkable self-sufficiency.” Ibid., 27.

<sup>37</sup> Karl Rahner, *On Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press/Deus Books, 1958), 7.

<sup>38</sup> Javier Prades, “The Attractive Mystery,” *TRACES – Litterae Communionis*, no. 8, (1999): 23-4.



If progress involves a shift toward conversion and if the Triune God is the ultimate attractiveness for initiating conversion, then decline starts in the idolatrous decision to elevate and adore a lesser “god”—some “golden calf”—in the place of the Trinity. For example, there is the egotist, the affective centre of the universe, who puts his or her needs, wants, and demands above those of anyone else. Then there is the ideology of group bias, where one ones’ own group is in effect given divine status and whose members thus feel perfectly free to ignore or dismiss the well-being of any other group.<sup>39</sup> Finally, common sense bias—general bias—places expediency above all else so that the most important thing is to do is what is immediately practical without taking theoretical or long term factors into consideration. In all such biases, idolatry takes root in the hearts of men and women that only serves to misdirect human affairs into untimely and unproductive matters. Time, when combined with the necessity of deciding between options, requires Creation to be both capable of, and based on, progress and decline.

Creation must contain within itself all possibilities, all options. Thus, in the “mind” of DM<sub>1</sub>, the universe of all possible schemes of occurrence constitutes the Multiverse.<sup>40</sup> It is only within one time-live “universe” of the multiverse that freewill is in fact possible. Progress brings intelligent order among the randomness of the universes comprising the multiverse; decline reduces intelligent order to random variation. Within a particular universe, the decisions we make—or refuse to make—affects the emergence of order across the universes of the multiverse and increases (decreases) the probability of progress (decline) in the universes that continues our own time-dated sequence of temporal snapshots. The multiverse is Creation; universes within the

---

<sup>39</sup> Group bias has its interesting corollary, ideologies such as Humanism, Nationalism, Communism, or Totalitarianism whose function in human societies is to allow a relatively small group of people to control the behavior of large otherwise intractable groups of human beings.

<sup>40</sup> The notion of a multiverse derives from experiments in quantum mechanics where the only possible explanation for the data is that parallel universes exist which interact faintly at the quantum level. Time itself is considered as a quantum concept, hence the notion of a “snap-shot” of time. In the framework used here, this ‘snap-shot’ represents an instant of isening where only the time-stamp associated with each frame allows for the kinds of logical sequences that constitution our universe. For an excellent and readily assessable presentation of the explanatory world of quantum mechanics, evolutionary epistemology, and the virtual realities of computational theory see David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality* (London, England: Penguin, 1997).

multiverse provide those time-and-space-specific circumstances that allow not only for stability but also novelty and change. In such a universe, decisions of value are required of any intelligent species; it is those decisions of value that lead to the Divine Mystery—unless that processes is sidetracked or blocked by one means or another. Yet, barring utter catastrophe, it is only a matter of time before circumstances reassert demands for liberty so that human beings are free to follow a higher power in the universe.

Our particular universe is just the way it should be, given where we have come from and where we are going; yet there is a constant need for change.<sup>41</sup> In a strange way, not readily understandable to time-based entities, the isening of the Trinity is different for each “moment” or quantum of time, yet for each such snapshot it is perfect. So it might be argued that the Trinity is constantly changing as the situation in Creation changes, and yet remains totally changeless and utterly complete in its perfection. There is no causality within isening, only the joyful reflexive creation of self in community. This continual joyful creation of self in community also includes Creation.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> “Respect . . . denotes . . . the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. Respect means the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is. Respect . . . implies the absence of exploitation. I want the loved person to grow and unfold for his own sake, and in his own ways, and not for the purpose of serving me. If I love the other person, I feel one with him or her, but with him *as he is*, not as I need him to be as an object for my use.” Eric Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1956), 23–24. Fromm’s italics.

<sup>42</sup> The splitting of the isening of Divine life into a temporal stream has implications for any time-based entity that goes beyond the (imposed) need to make decisions, and in making decisions having to work out what is really of value. As time-based entities, we are highly limited in both time and space. In addition to such limitations, we tend to focus on changes rather than fixed constants. Yet this means that an entity may be undergoing substantial changes over a long period of time, but the changes have taken place so slowly that the entity is not aware of any change. Conversely, some changes may occur so quickly that we are not even aware of the change having taken place. In the political sphere, such rapid changes as the shift from Stalin as ally to Russia as deadly enemy after the WW II took place with very few recognizing the radical break being made.

Then we may mistake the lack of change over our life-span with a seemingly strong political or social situation only because we lack sufficient historical understanding to realize how fragile such structures may be. The fall of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century is a case in point. One suspects that Abram Bergson and Herbert S. Levine, editors of *The Soviet Economy: Toward the Year 2000* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1983) never envisioned the possibility the Soviet Union would cease to exist by the end of that very same year.

## Emergence of Self-Aware Entities

At some point in the emerging complex high-level stabilizing recurring schemes that make up the universe, entities come into existence having the potential to join in the life of the Trinity. This potential is indicated by the capacity to distinguish between what belongs to the Trinity and what belongs to creation (in the sense that the mediating influence of the DM<sub>3</sub> lead such entities to discover a discord between what they do and what they should do). This, in human history, is marked by the development of shame, self-pity, resentment, fear and other emotions that arise from what in general is known as knowledge of good and evil.

To say that the Trinity engaged in the creation of Creation for the purposes of evolving an entity capable of accepting or rejecting an invitation to join with them in community does not imply that Creation will be discarded once its objectives have been met. Creation is very much a part of such entities and is very much a beautiful artefact in its own right. I expect that Creation as such will remain an important part of life as such life joins in the mutual joy and happiness of the Trinity.

Homo sapiens may be considered one such evolutionary species. Each individual of the Homo sapiens has the potential for joining in the life of the Trinity and hence has the capacity to choose the Trinity. In all of creation there may well be many such intelligent and aware species. Each such species would be subject to the same emergent dynamics.<sup>43</sup>

Homo sapiens are subject to the same principles of emergent probability as the rest of Creation. Our species evolved from far simpler life forms with no capacity for independent thought and choice, forms that themselves developed over hundreds of thousands of years. There

---

<sup>43</sup> This implies that each such species would require a similar “sacrifice” on the part of the DM<sub>2</sub>. This model suggests that in the isening of the Triune God, there is only one “sacrifice,” but this one sacrifice may be given any number of expressions or extensions within Creation. One might think of this as a recording: there is only one musical concert but this performance may be captured on audio or video tape, digital recording devices, or any other medium capable of replicating the original event. This gives a special meaning to such sacraments as the Eucharist: one event replicated again and again throughout history.

is to reason to suspect, given the nature of this world of emergent probability, that we are the be all and end all of creation.

We are not necessary the end point or even the highest achievement in Creation.

We may well be evolutionarily flawed, inasmuch as the development of the neo-cortex in the human brain was a rather sudden and recent development and hence not fully integrated into human consciousness. To all extend and purposes, we have three brains: a reptilian brain at the base, which handles many of the survival mechanisms that we require, a primate brain, responsible for the complex social dynamics of primate communities, and a rational brain—the neo-cortex, the frontal lobe—that handles much of our rational thinking. Unfortunately for our species, the neo-cortex was never given override or veto control of the two sub-brains. When combined with the initial period of helplessness and dependency in our first few years of life that often leaves us susceptible to conditioning, an excess capacity for fanatical devotion, frequent submersion in a group mind where he or she is at the mercy of rhetoric, and finally the discovery of death with which the human mind is not constructed to handle, the result is a history of violence, irrationality, and stupidity that is hard to accept as our own.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, at the same time it has been a history of development, of increased understanding, of democratic beliefs, of the importance of every human life, of great thinkers and magnificence doers who have challenged us to our very roots. The good news is that it is all too easy to notice the errors and mistakes we make and ignore the much longer spans of deep development that has in fact taken place. Cities like the Greater New York, Hong Kong, Calcutta, Tokyo, etc. each contains millions of people who, despite their close proximity to each other, have avoided killing each other off in sectarian battles. The human sciences—the “soft” sciences like anthropology, social psychology, or the humanities—have given us considerable insights into the way people actually behave. We have at our fingertips books, articles, documentaries that would have been inconceivable during the Middle Ages or even to the Romans.

---

<sup>44</sup> See Koestler, *Janus* (1978), for a discussion of these four factors.

Sufficient to say that as a species we are prone to keep our eyes and ears peeled for disasters and the adrenalin surge they provide, a point not lost on the news media.

This evolutionary incompleteness, combined with other factors mention above, set the conditions for what in essence is often called “evil” in non-differentiated minds. Individual egotism, a group bias that elevates the object of devotion to one’s own group, a common sense bias that places practical action above all else, a non-differentiated mind, a lack of subjective authenticity: all these distortions of our coming to know and to decide have their roots in our evolutionary past and our developmental present.

The probability of emergence of conscious intelligence in the universe is very high, given the presence of intense energy emitting suns and an evolutionary trend to high energy mobile life forms that have to forage and hunt for a living. The complexity of these tasks when combined with the significant informational processes required for the social interaction of primate groups gives a high probability of survival of any intelligent entity once it emerges into the world. Such development may be delayed, as when for example the reign of the dinosaurs incorporated all available resources into there own physical forms. But when these resources were freed in a mass extinction event (a 10-kilometer asteroid struck 65 million years ago creating the Chixculub crater in the Gulf of Mexico), other species including our own primitive ancestors had an opportunity to modify their own schemes of recurrence in support of their higher energy levels of a fuller form of existence.

This decisive evolutionary point was reached when it became possible for primate brains to undertake the essential cognitive operations that together make up the mentality of any intelligent entity: experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. In order for any intelligent entity to survive, it has to be able to operate effectively and efficiently in these four areas. In long-term stable environments, tradition can form the basis for intelligent action. But in rapidly changing conditions, it becomes necessary to understand these operations themselves as a precondition to survival—hence the innate emergent drive in the universe toward self-aware intelligent entities.

The presence of intelligent entities reduces the role of pure random chance in human affairs, replacing coincidence and accidental mutations with planned intelligently organized schemes. Such schemes can be pre-understood and pre-evaluated through the application of classical and statistical modes of understanding to the problems at hand.

This evolutionary pressure, if given the right circumstances, leads to an understanding of human understanding—an awareness of the realm of interiority—with the consequent differentiations of mind as well a realization of the importance of conversions in human affairs. Unless interfered with for a number of reasons, this constitutes the next evolutionary phase for Homo sapiens—or for any intelligence species for that matter.

This next evolutionary step is made possible only through the attractiveness of the Divine Mystery, the isening of the Trinity, and the work of the DM<sub>3</sub>, for it is only through such work that true conversion is possible.

This evolutionary step is expressed and passed down as a cultural achievement through the development of a world-mediated-by-meaning whose terms and structure evolve always with an attention to the meaning of the whole and the careful control over meaning itself. This implies that mankind's primary skill, as a species, is not our capacity for using symbols but the formation of communities through the use of such symbols that hopefully embody wisdom, creativity, trust, and so forth. In other words, our skills in symbol using (conceptualizing and formulating, testing and judging) are not ends in themselves, but tools that enable the creation of communities that are capable of—or directly participate in—the isening and anamesoning of the Triune God. While each generation needs to rediscover for itself its own conversionary history in order to building upon it (the alternative being a loss of meaning, a de-evolvment of meaning, a limited understanding or distorted understanding of what could only be understood given a deep authenticity of those involved, the vehicle itself is the language within which authenticity is expressed – a language that itself is changed in an evolutionary epistemology that eventually sorts out the true from the false, the real from the imaginary.

### An Open Invitation

Although the DM<sub>3</sub> has always been present, as indicated by the low level of anamesoning we perceive as basic intersubjectivity, our species has been allowed to make its own choices as it develops. More often than not, decisions are forced by events; but there are times when—at the level of deciding—choices are made as to what is really valuable. The immediacy of creation tempts human beings to select themselves as most important (egotism), or decide that the group they belong to is more important (group bias), or to ignore the need to make such decisions by remaining only within the world of the practical (common sense bias). No matter what the bias, the result is the same—the reduction of the probably of survival, that is, decline, as the transcendental injunctions are ignored in favour of a less transcendent value.

Any such emergent self-aware species expresses the Trinity's own creative facility within the isening: innate curiosity, joy, and wonder. This sense of awe and mystery may arise when all basic needs for food and shelter have been satisfied. Then man's wonder is turned loose upon himself and upon his world.

At first, such questioning is very primitive and very confused. The Trinity is not understood, nor understandable, because it takes time and guidance to realize that the Divine Mystery is not bound to rocks or mountains, that gods do not rule the elements, that man himself is more than brute creature. For a long time the human mind remains undifferentiated, with all aspects of experience and understanding operative only within the dramatic and aesthetic intentionality of common sense intelligence.

Yet even in these early beginnings, man's cognitive operations and the injunctions associated with them are in play. There is—again of necessity—a structure to such inquiry that starts with experience, moves on to understanding, checks that understanding through judging, and finally—understanding correctly what is or is not, what is true or not—makes a decision about what to do or not to do. It is these four levels of cognitive operations that allows for the

possibility of choosing the Trinity. They allow people to incorporate the anamesoning of the Trinity into their own lives, an influence transcending all else as representing the wishes and dreams of a higher level organizing system.

Creation itself is not flawed. It is the way it is, as intended by DM<sub>1</sub>, and as such is the perfect vehicle for creating the type of creature desired by DM<sub>1</sub>. It could be nothing else. However, self-aware entities project their fears against loss of self or group upon Creation, so that the world becomes a hostile, dangerous, unpredictable, and evil place. The world is not this way because this is the nature of the world. The world is a terrifying place for the simple reason that men and women have chosen over millennia to perceive themselves and their environment in this way. This perception of the universe as twisted and evil is the direct result of not putting the Trinity in its proper place in human decision-making, choosing instead self, group, and/or common sense bias as primary values. In trying to force the world to his or her own designs, for his own ends, all Creation appears to conspire against them.

Fear becomes *the* ultimate trap, for through fear our sense of self is intensified. If the “self” feels threatened, even low levels of intersubjectivity are lost and the individual is cut off from the influence of divine anamesoning. This closed system of fear/self is highly stable, with a high probability of survival, unlikely to be broken up from within. The ego protects itself whenever it feels threatened (we are never more aware of our “selves” when we feel threatened). When we do not feel threatened, we forget ourselves in the joy and creativeness of the universe.<sup>45</sup>

Through millions of years of linguistic development, there have emerged a series of cultures that combine both progress and decline, the good emerging from the isening of the Trinity and the bad from unfettered sensate drives. In this confusion of values, of evaluation, mankind finds itself

---

<sup>45</sup> For an excellent analysis of the underlying dynamics from a psychological perspective see Foundation for Inner Peace, *A Course in Miracles*, second ed. (Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992). As for me, ego can be understood as the artificial and inanimate systems-totality of affective conditioning that an entity fully identifies with and to which the entity has become firmly attached. Due to the complexities and overwhelming need to belong to a group, ego is integrated virtually seamlessly with the social and political realities of the day, so that the two really form one consistent scheme of recurrence.



trapped, unable to move forward on their own efforts because these efforts are marred by previous failures to be attentive, to be intelligent, to be reasonable, and to be responsible. Instead of an intelligible institutional structure, we inherit an ill-coordinated set of institutions founded in different worlds of meaning, whose goals are often in direct conflict with each other. Competition and conflict become the norm; success is defined in terms of the largest and most powerful. Thus the ego is solidified, given a reality of self-identification that is both inappropriate and out of place.

DM<sub>1</sub> has no intention to punish human beings for any transgressions they fear they may have made. Instead, creation has been set up so that failure to understand and mistakes in deciding lead to discomfort at best and disaster at worse. God does not “cause” such disasters, but he also doesn’t save us from the consequences of our own actions. Man is perfectly free to do as he would do, but there are natural consequences to whatever is done—and ecological systems or the cosmos are not amenable to persuasion.<sup>46</sup> This may seem brutal to any entity valuing its skin above all else, but is far from thus when the rewards of joining in the anamesoning of the Trinity are brought into the equation. We may rant and rave at the injustices of the world, but in the end we have literally only ourselves to blame.

This does not mean the Trinity allows us to be punished for mistakes any self-aware species is bound to make in its slow and gradual groping toward the Trinity; the Trinity uses these errors for further good. But it does mean that we are subject to natural events not of our own making, a major motivating factor in bringing such species to choose insights rather than oversights, responsible decisions rather than irrational and biased plans and policies. Punishment is itself a concept created by the ego’s need to maintain itself in the presence of a Divine Mystery that—from the ego’s perspective—would destroy it. Hence, the single most important feature inspired

---

<sup>46</sup> The same cannot be said of the Divine Mystery, the Triune God, which seems to be unusually receptive to persistent human prayer and more than delighted at even our smallest attempts to reach out to this divineness of being.

by the isening of the Trinity is the loss of fear—the waking up from a nightmare world projected as reality rather than in all its divine beauty—a nightmare that falls away in the higher levels of anamesoning as a falsehood.

In every snapshot of (quantum) time, at every “point” of isening, the Trinity not only sends DM<sub>2</sub> to invite us into the divine life of the Trinity but also the support of DM<sub>3</sub> as the ultimate embodiment of anamesoning. In reality, the life of the Trinity surrounds all intelligent entities, only for most of the time we are not aware of this: we have eyes but do not see, ears but do not hear. “All is well; all is well.” Entering into the life of the Trinity is something left not only to the future but is also assessable through the immediate moment.

While there are many different kinds of personalities, and perhaps ever more cultural types, the range of response to the DM<sub>3</sub>’s invitation largely falls into two groups: rejection (for example, refusal to hear, distortion through nose, inability to remain silent, living in terror, or a harsh image of God), or acceptance (drawn toward, attracted by, enjoying, being at peace, doing the right thing, and so forth). This suggests a basic divide between all people, tending to separate all humanity into two camps. One camp is filled with those who reject the invitation, in which case they are left to their own devices and the natural consequences of their actions that may eventually lead them to ask if there is a better way of living. The other camp consists of those who pick up their ears to the invitation, are intrigued by it, and take steps to follow the inner voice of the DM<sub>3</sub>, but who may fall back as the ever-subtle ego reasserts itself. To these people the DM<sub>2</sub> is available as a person guide and the DM<sub>3</sub> comes to empower the whole, doing more than any individual can do on their own, bringing good out of the mistakes that we continually make out of our own incompleteness, redeeming our errors in the spirituality of our imperfections.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham, *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Journey to Wholeness* (New York, N.Y.: Bantam, 1992). One should not make too much of this “two camps” duality. Better to think of these as two poles with a wide range of possibilities lying between them.

While there is a great deal of diversity in each camp, from hard-core to testing the water, the criterion for deciding is the person's response to the Divine Mystery. Where sensate values reign supreme, the lightest touch of the DM<sub>3</sub> is experienced as a drop of water on a sizzling hot pan; the DM<sub>3</sub>'s delicate touch is both painful and disturbing. For those in search of the Divine, the touch of the DM<sub>3</sub> is felt as the coolest drop of refreshing water, to be relished and appreciated. "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (*Matthew 11:30*).

At any moment in time, our lives are the cumulative results of all the rejections and acceptances that have taken place. At some point, our physical presence in this time-line comes to a close, enabling further development to take place without the burdens of the past. At that point, such an entity faces DM<sub>1</sub> in all its glory, sharing in the isening of the Trinity. Now, each entity will truly realize the nature and meaning of their lives, the sum total of all that they have done and been. Within the isening of the moment, each entity can only respond in one of two ways: flee or plea. There are no other options. Would this entity be willing to stand before the Trinity, knowing the mess that this entity has made of all the opportunities offered them in Creation? Or would this person flee in a blind panic, to run away and hide from that "punishing" gaze, that moment of self-recognition? If the former, then you would be willing to enter into the life of the Trinity; if not, then you place yourself in "hell" forever (in the isening) apart from the Divine community.

#### Freedom to Respond

Unfortunately, there is a limit to how such entities can respond to the invitation of the DM<sub>3</sub>, a limit that makes it impossible for us to ever enter into the life of the Trinity on our own efforts—even if helped by the DM<sub>3</sub>'s anamesoning. Human reasoning, based as it is on experience, has no experience of the Trinity and hence no way of coming to understand the nature of the DM<sub>3</sub>'s invitation to join in the Trinity's communal life. The idea of "God" being in fact three entities in one, the idea that God is "love" (anamesoning), is not open to rational calculation; indeed, such ideas seem to defy rationality. Otherwise, the best a person can do is to

come up with a concept of love based on biological realities, without understanding the roots of the “love” in the Triune God’s anamesoning.

As humans reach out to the Divine—attracted by its beauty, drawn by a need for completion, or simply tired of making painful mistakes over and over again—the Trinity reaches down to man in order to let man know the nature of the invitation being made. Revelation of some sort is necessary for the bridge to be brought into being. But how is the message to be carried so that desired results are obtained? The obvious solution in retrospect is to have DM<sub>2</sub> become human. As a human being, DM<sub>2</sub> could live life as it should be lived within the Trinity, letting people know of the Trinity, its communal existence, and the open invitation for mankind to join in the “Kingdom of God.”<sup>48</sup>

There would be countless such incarnations across the universes of the multiverse. But in each case a “recording” of DM<sub>2</sub> makes manifest DM<sub>2</sub> within each of the relevant universes. Each manifestation would be different, due to the precise and very unique circumstances of each incarnation and each individual universe; yet in each case the “Christ” figure would be the true

---

<sup>48</sup> The situation is a bit more complex. There are at least two fundamental barriers to the human appreciation of the communal life of the Trinity: the human tendency toward social hierarchies (status realities) and the finality of one’s own death. If the transcendent becomes so transcendent that the gap between human beings and god cannot be bridged without mediation, than people either find god irrelevant or seek various forms of mediation to appease or persuade a more powerful being. If the finality of death means the end of everything (at least for the individual), than fear of oblivion plays havoc with the human mind’s ability to live. In both cases, the incarnation and resurrection of DM<sub>2</sub> confronts human beings with a paradox, a contradiction, that cannot be resolved within the framework of the sensate world: if God became man, than there must be something about human beings that is very precious indeed; if that man died and returned from the dead, than there must be more to reality than the birth to death sequence of sensate experience.

The early Christian’s encounter with life, death and resurrection of Christ raised both questions. The answer to both of them requires an inverse insight that in effect goes against the “natural” order of things. The first, expressed in the psalms and wisdom literature of the people of Israel, was the idea that the Son of Man came to empty himself, putting aside his transcendent nature for a human body; this reverses the whole question of the natural order of the universe, for rather than omnipotent ruler god became suffering servant; human beings could not be *that* bad, if God was willing to do this.

The second inverse insight involving the resurrection is that death has no meaning for those who are truly alive, who are part of this divine life—or in other words, in dying to ourselves, we are truly alive. This also goes against common sense, where death has a physical and mental presence that is “obviously” real and, in the sensate world, final. As the wag said, ‘The question is not whether there is life after death; the question is, is there life before death.’

Both inverse insights are required, the first to give significance to the second, the second to reinforce the first. Together they result in a vertical shift in a person’s horizon, a radical change to a new order of things that places each person within the communion of saints.

and authentic presence of DM<sub>2</sub> continually generated and regenerated in the isening of the Trinity.<sup>49</sup>

The great advantage in doing this is that it is not God's "awesome" conversations from burning bushes that would only compel obedience, but a fellow human being. This allows DM<sub>1</sub> to present a living example of how a truly human life spent within the DM<sub>3</sub> and thus within the Trinity would appear for others to imitate and follow as best they can. It is only the DM<sub>2</sub> who could do this, as both human and divine, for this reaching into the core of anamesoning would forever be beyond any mortal human being. The message of such an incarnation would be expressed in the concepts and experiences of the time in such a way that the message would have a personal meaning to all those who encountered the presence and the teachings of the now-human DM<sub>2</sub>.<sup>50</sup>

But there is one great disadvantage: how to assure people that this revelation was in fact from "God"? After all, whenever communication goes on, each recipient must assess the validity and reliability of the person communicating. What reasons would people have in believing, especially when the stakes were so high, the message so improbable?

---

<sup>49</sup> The general idea is that a musical performance can be captured and recorded on a variety of media, from video tape to wax spools of early phonographs, from digital signals to the human brain itself. In each case, the physical expression of the performance is different, and yet it is the same performance in each type of recording.

<sup>50</sup> The key issue seems to be related to the difference between Scotus's and St. Aquinas' approach to God. At a very crude level, Scotus understands God as not having to obey his own laws, while Aquinas considers that human beings can reach up to the divine as part of their own exercise in intelligence. It is a question of the need for transcendental (divine) knowledge. If God is pure *fiat*, then we can only know what God reveals to us; if we are creatures that can reach up to the Divine Mystery, then anyone can reach up to God and Jewish law and Christian new covenant are not necessary.

On way to resolve this issue is to postulate that we can reach up to God, but are so disorientated, distracted and confused from the evolutionary process of becoming a new species and developing our own worlds mediated by meaning that we could only acquire the correct answer to the meaning of life if someone simplified it all and presented us with the correct data in the proper order. We still have to have the insight, but now it is far easier because all the discordant and misleading data is set aside and attention is focused on the key question. And the key question, for those that encountered Christ, was posed by his very life: "Who am I?" The need to answer this question, combined with the dialectic between expected Messianic behaviour and Jesus' apparently total lack of success (the data), creates the conditions for an insight to emerge. Once that insight into Jesus' life takes place—an insight grounded in the twin ideas of incarnation and resurrection—then a new world-mediated-by-meaning emerges as a higher order perspective on human affairs. The paradox is resolved: God does have to intervene through revelation, but his intervention operates through our own unrestricted desire to know.

For humans, the reliability of any given communication depends upon trustworthiness of the person as demonstrated over time. But this in itself is not enough; the message is so unexpected, so revolutionary in human history, that something more drastic and thought-provoking is required. What is the person willing to do for his or hers beliefs? The ultimate item of value in human society in one's life, one's self. If someone is willing to give up their life for their beliefs, then we might stop whatever we are doing to pay attention to those beliefs. If one not only gave up their life, but did so in a particularly horrible manner—despised, rejected, and tortured—then what that person stood for would have even more respect and consideration.

All this is still in the realm of human experience, so DM<sub>1</sub> “needs” to go one step further: to restore to life the one who had so given himself, not as resuscitation—for the manner of death would make that impossible—but through the restoration of a body, a resurrected body, that could be seen and felt as real by those who had experienced the events of his death.<sup>51</sup> This resurrected body had to have been real in itself, as a body, given the nature of Creation itself as the work of the Trinity. The universe was not created by the Trinity as a training camp for spiritual life, to be discarded once its function was complete. It was created as a place for entities to exist, transformed in the DM<sub>3</sub> of the Trinity, resurrected by DM<sub>1</sub> under the direction of the DM<sub>2</sub>.

### Climbing the Ladder

Human reality starts with experience; it is only through our senses that we have any awareness of a world existing independently of ourselves.

That there is such a world to know it is revealed through our own actions: when we kick a rock, more often than not the rock “kicks back.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> It is only then that fear can be erased, and any convert gradually eased into the anamesoning of the Triune God. In this way, the “death” of the ego, the self, is reframed as unreal, given a totally different meaning in the life of those affected by the resurrection.

<sup>52</sup> “Although solipsism and related doctrines are logically self-consistent, they can be comprehensively refuted simply by taking them seriously as explanations. Although they all claim to be simplified world-views, such an analysis shows them to be indefensible over-elaborations of realism. Real entities behave in

The human mind creates and maintains a world of meaning, a virtual reality that represents the best symbolic representation of the “real” world that our brain can generate, a world that is known only through the electrical discharges of sensory nerves within the brain. It is within this mental construct that we live out our lives. Our senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and seeing—plus a kinetic sense that tells us where our limbs are at all time—provide the only feedback that something has happened when a rock was kicked. Working out what happened and why is a function of the cognitive operation of understanding. This mental activity of bringing intelligibility to our sense input creates this world of meaning, which in turn filters the sense data that are allowed or permitted into consciousness. This process takes the form of an evolutionary epistemology, where the best fitting ideas find support in our conceptual ecology while those that are less useful in understanding what is going on and predicting what is to be are allowed to slip away into oblivion.

This process of selection belongs to the next level on that ladder of cognitive operations: judging. It is in this intellectual task that the sorting through of various theories and positions takes place in order to creating and maintain a world of meaning that consists of what is both true and real. No longer is it a question of understanding but a question of judging the reliability of that understanding. This is another level of existence, another step up the ladder of being, that lays the necessary foundations for the next question: what to do? This is the question that engages the mind in questions of value, for the need to choose between different courses of action requires some way of establishing priorities. Setting priorities is a matter of deciding on questions of value.

Deciding on questions of value rests only in that which is of ultimate value: the Divine Mystery. But that is not where the human species starts. We began in our evolutionary past, where the important things were to keep warm, have a full belly, tell a good story around the fire,

---

a complex and autonomous way, which can be taken as the criterion for reality: if something ‘kicks back’, it exists.” David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality* (London, England: Penguin, 1997), 97.

mate, and raise children. Yet even at such an immediate level of existing, the reality of death posed its own problems for the evolving human mind. Faced with the prospect of death, human beings seek ways out through ritual, appeasement, and whatever else that was understood to make a difference. Primitive religions were religions of natural forces outside of human control, forces driven by animal gods or capricious divine beings with who it was important if not crucial to keep on their good side. In a sense, these primitive animalistic spirits—and the later development of gods and goddesses—were the objectification of rudimentary value systems. Both were set aside when human beings achieved significant control of natural forces.

The mission to climb the ladder toward the divine took a major step when religions were brought into being whose *raison d'être* had to do with liberating humankind from the pains and sorrows of the world. These were momentous events in the history of human valuation: for the first time people were given a choice between obeying purely human authorities or putting themselves under the liberating influence of a Divine Mystery that, in Christianity, was known as the Triune God. This ultimate question of value opened human beings to the influence and reality of a transcendent and liberating God, creator of the universe, whose anxious concern for human well-being as creatures of the divine ran counter to the constraining regimentation of human beings whose only purpose was to serve other human beings.

The final decision involves a choice between putting one's life in the hands of God or to devote one's life to the will of powerful human beings and lesser "gods." It is a choice between religion (in this liberating sense, given full expression as a living community in the reality of the Trinity) and ideology, between devotion to a higher cause or regimentation within some dominant ideology: Nationalism, Individualism, or even (although now partially discredited), Communism.<sup>53</sup> The final step on this ladder that stretches to the divine is not a matter of truth,

---

<sup>53</sup> Although communism fell with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the need for—the demand for—justice in human affairs has not disappeared. The very power that was given to this ideology will no doubt bring about another ideology to fill its place—or the major religions will regain the trust of humankind after years of inter and intra warfare that lay waste to their claims to human compassion and love of all people.



that is, of judgment; it is a matter of choice, of making a personal decision as to what one's life is to stand for.

This is the incarnate meaning of one's own life.

### The Need for Faith

Any created creature will lack the capacity to truly understand the nature and functioning of the Trinity; the only entity capable of understanding would have to be Divine in nature.

Created creatures, who cannot direct themselves along the proper path toward the transformed/resurrected state that is the end-path of the entities existence, have to be shown the way by someone who is not only trustworthy but who demonstrates that truth in their own life.

The incarnated  $DM_2$  fulfills the requirement of trustworthiness when it comes to demonstrating the truth of the Trinity, and knowledge of the transformed/resurrected state that brings us to the end stage of human endeavor.

The Trinity provides humans with evidence through the  $DM_2$ 's encounter with the  $DM_3$  and the God-Father by exposing for all to see the hermeneutical changes that occurs through the transformation/resurrection of the  $DM_2$ . Our evidence to assess the reliability of the stories passed down through time is not only the life of the incarnated  $DM_2$ , but the evidence passed down as to the impact the incarnated  $DM_2$  has on those who encountered him.

Both sets of evidence hint at the nature of the transformations being required of the entities, but provide little knowledge of the end state. Lacking the capacity to understand such a state without actually experiencing this resurrected state, we have no criteria to assess the importance or value of anything in our lives. Neither can we set a program to initiate such changes, for without knowing the end state we cannot determine in any truly meaningful manner the necessary steps for achieving such a state.

The result of all this is that we have to take on faith all that we are being told about the incarnated  $DM_2$  and those who encountered him in his brief existence in Creation. We are asked

by the Trinity, in a number of overt and covert ways, to assess the evidence that has come down to us, to search our own inner feelings, to listen to the still, small—but oceanic—voice of DM<sub>3</sub>, and over time come to trust the evidence that has come down to us.

Without faith, little is possible. The reason for this is that we will have to rely upon ourselves, on our own distorted, ego-ridden, group biased, and general common-sense bias, to assess where we are, where we need to go, and the proper route between the two. With such discordant personalities and cultural inconsistencies, such entities will only get themselves into deeper trouble. Problems will be misdiagnosed; situations will be misevaluated; prognosis will turn out to be unreliable at best.

With faith, with willingness, we will take unlikely and sometimes down-right strange suggestions, even with misgivings, knowing that we don't really understand what is going on or what is being demanded of us. To be continually in a state of doubt is to destroy the very tool of intellect that enables us to function as human beings in the first place.

Faith is absolutely necessary, for the paths suggested by the ways of the world—mired down by the evolutionary roots of our species—are virtually the opposite of the paths suggested by the DM<sub>3</sub> and demonstrated to us in the life/death/resurrection of the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub>. Egotism is prized by those of the world, while definitely a hindrance to the work of the DM<sub>3</sub>. Group survival is very important to beings of the world, while defining the survival of the group as being of highest value gets in the way of any communion with the Trinity. When limiting choices only to what is possible in a given situation, we lose the advice of the DM<sub>3</sub> that may suggest an apparently unrealistic path that in the end is the only real reasonable path.

Faith is not an all-or-nothing thing, but is acquired gradual over time through a series of graduated tests and responses. Situations arise that require facing one's sinfulness, or one's insufficiencies, and it becomes necessary to put the situation in the hands of the Divine Mystery. At first, these are relatively small things, but as faith is developed in small matters before long we find that the DM<sub>3</sub> sets us up for bigger opportunities to steady and strengthen our faith. It is only

through experiencing our own commitment to the Divine Mystery that we come to know the depths or shallowness of our own faith. After all, if we really had faith in the goodness of the Divine Mystery, and believed that this Mystery had our own well-being at heart, what could we fear?

Faith in an unknown and unknowable transcendent God is essential, yet faith in itself is not enough. Such entities need to do that which is necessary for the transformations to take place, if only to freely allow themselves to undergo whatever the DM<sub>2</sub> asks of us. Faith is undercut, or not real, if we groan and grunt at every smoothing of our rough edges. No, joyful acceptance and peace of mind free of fear, unattached to anything in Creation, is also part of that training that is required of us. So is silence, for we only hear the faint voice of the DM<sub>3</sub> when the noise we create in our minds is left aside.

Faith is only the starting point. It is out of an intrinsic inability to listen for long periods of time—indeed, to stay still for more than a few minutes—that we experience the need for continual reminders so that our attention can be refocused on important matters allowing critical subconscious changes to slowly take place. The sacraments are such reminders, not only positioning ourselves (orienting ourselves) to the Divine, but enabling us for a brief moment of time to be brought into contact with the isening of the Trinity. In this moment of contact, going on behind the “human” aspects of the sacramental situation, that the force and power of the Trinity’s anamesoning can be eased into our daily existence in a long transitional process of preparing us for life within the isening of the Trinity.

### Opening the Door to Mystery

The originating Divine Intelligence, in its state of isening, first imaged itself and through this imaging brought about the existence of *the* community: the Triune God. Then, in the Trinity’s exuberance, they brought into being Creation as the primary way of enhancing their communal life through the emergence over time of self-aware entities capable of joining them. Finally, the

DM<sub>2</sub> became incarnate in history in such a way as to bridge the gap between such entities and the Divine Mystery, enabling creatures living any time or place to be transformed so that they can share in the Trinity's divine life.

But this is not the end of the matter. Having evolved as part of Creation, mankind has identified their experienced existence in Creation as being themselves. This mental decision to equate ego with self perpetuated an image of the world as threatening rather than supportive, of being evil rather than the product of a loving and caring DM<sub>1</sub>. Fear of loss or damage to ego is the primary protective mechanism of the ego. Any additional fear only strengthens exactly that which needs to be given up in order to accept the Trinity's invitation. This is the next problem in the chain of difficulties facing the Trinity.

How can the Trinity encourage the loss of ego without adding to the very fears that create and maintain that ego?<sup>54</sup> This problem is compounded by the likelihood that the necessary transformations are painful, i.e., they involve suffering, pain, or other forms of discomfort. From the Trinity's perspective, we humans live a nightmare—a world we think is real but is not—from which we need to wake up.<sup>55</sup> “Be still, and know that I am God.” Good advice in order to wake up, to become aware, from the Divine Mystery, for our nightmares keep us tossing and turning in endless night sweats. The key to opening the door to mystery, and thus to the Trinity, is awareness: to know reality as it is and not as we would have it be for our own peace of mind.<sup>56</sup> One of the first things that we need to know, to become aware of in a very personal way through our own experience, is that each one of us is a tyrant trying to force the world to become the way we would like it to be for our own convenience. We have become people of violence, not only

---

<sup>54</sup> We are never so aware of ourselves then when we face danger; we are never so free of ourselves then when we spontaneously help other who are in need. Concentrating on the needs of others, we find ourselves transcending ourselves within the anamesoning of the Trinity.

<sup>55</sup> It would be truer to say that we humans have created a nightmare world of our own, and we have identified this nightmare as “reality” when it is in fact illusion. The members of the Trinity are aware of this, as we in the main are not. It is only when we “wake up”, when we become aware, that we can realize that this nightmare full of unknown fears and strange terrors is only that: a nightmare.

<sup>56</sup> Mystery is closely tied up with the Trinity in ways beyond the Trinity being “attractive” or “good.” The very central aspect of anamesoning is the sense of mystery each entity in the Trinity has when encountering each other member of the Trinity: the Other, one who is like me and yet not me.

toward each other but toward ourselves as well—constantly trying to change and arrange things to how things “should” be. Of course, like any child we seek to make the world over for our own convenience rather than undertake the more difficult and time-consuming task of allowing our inner selves to be changed by the DM<sub>3</sub> to fit reality.

We identified ourselves with all sorts of things that then become essential to our happiness, including identification with our egos that cause many of the problems in the first place. We tell ourselves that without this or that we cannot be happy. The source of all suffering lies in such identifications, such attachments. If we were not attached to anything, if we did not identify our “self” with anything including our own ego, than the loss or possible loss of the thing to which we are attached would mean nothing. At that point, we would be at peace not only within ourselves but with others. All these attachments are idolatrous.

Giving up the things to which we are attached is painful; becoming aware of reality as it is, can come as a shock. It can also come as a great relief. Waking up involves the stripping away of all illusions, all the things that to that point have given our lives meaning within Creation. We face ourselves and each other as we are: creatures consumed by ourselves and our own well-being. “I am a tyrant; you are tyrant”—that is reality. It means facing our one lone-ness, realizing that there is nothing or no-one in all of Creation that can bring us happiness and a sense of contentment, realizing that even when we are with others we are in fact alone, solitary. Even our nightmares seem preferable to such a state of non-attachment, such knowledge of our own flawed reality behind the “nice” facade we seek to hide our true actions behind.

Yet it is only when we accept that we have gone astray and drop all our attachments that we truly become aware of Creation and all the mysteries that Creation holds. Instead of wishing we were somewhere else, instead of worrying about some possibility in the future or regretting an action of the past, we can live fully in the now, the only moment of isening that is open to us through the Trinity. Being still within, trusting in the goodness of the Triune God, we can enjoy the countless wonders and possibilities that exist in each moment of our existence. We can leave

behind things of the moment, letting them slip into the past with no regrets or nostalgia. We can drop our anxieties and fears for the future, for we have nothing of any value to lose. Only then can we enjoy the sights and sounds, feelings and smells, of existing. Only then can we become aware of the reality of the Divine through which we live out our lives.<sup>57</sup>

Only then can we sense the beginnings of anamersoning through the community of the Trinity in all of our existence.

### Experiencing the Trinity

Each entity capable of forming a relationship with the Divine Mystery, the Trinity, forms a different relationship with each member of the Trinity. Each relationship is unique for each entity, and varies over the life-span of each entity. Yet, because of the Triune nature of the Divine Mystery, and this Mystery's involvement with its Creation, there are similarities.

Not all entities are capable of forming a relationship with the Divine Mystery. Entities can be lost because of the noise created in their minds by the intensity and immediacy of the sensate world. Such people cannot be found by the DM<sub>3</sub>, though not DM<sub>1</sub>, even though pressures deriving from the need to exist and function within creation combined with an inbuilt need for the Divine to achieve completion may eventually bring them to the point of being silent and acknowledging the Divine Mystery in their lives.

We have no direct relationship with the Father, DM<sub>1</sub>, except through the DM<sub>2</sub>. It is the DM<sub>2</sub> who has revealed to us the need for us to call DM<sub>1</sub> "Abba," not because we are actually justified to do so but because in "putting on DM<sub>2</sub>" we can pretend that we are DM<sub>1</sub>'s DM<sub>2</sub>, and what is at first pure pretense may in time come true. DM<sub>1</sub> is pure transcendence of all that is; Creation reflects in a limited way what is given full expression only within DM<sub>1</sub>. In placing ourselves in the position of dutiful DM<sub>n</sub> son or daughter, we express our faith in the Divine, and thus put

---

<sup>57</sup> "I laughed when they told me that the fish in the sea were thirsty." Thus starts a Hindu mystic poem. Like fish seeking water, we seek the divine—not knowing that the divine is already there in all that we do and are. (Source unknown.)

ourselves in a position where the DM<sub>3</sub> can help. In the face of DM<sub>1</sub> we experience only awe of DM<sub>1</sub>'s overwhelming majesty; all else pales before comparison. Creation is also due this respect, as a distant reflection of the majesty of DM<sub>1</sub>.

Having the assurance of the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub>, we now know in faith that DM<sub>1</sub>'s anamesoning applies equally to such entities as man. So to we are capable in part of experiencing the isening of the Trinity, a state of timelessness in which the very molecules of the air cease to move, in which all is exactly as it should be, and in being that way is perfect as it is. Such moments are capable of becoming emotional reference points for the more "normal" conditions of "tedious" life, enabling entities to measure their current situation against something far vaster and more important than their immediate situation. A sense of awe and mystery descends from DM<sub>3</sub>, and this sense of majesty infuses all such entities may or may not do.

It is quite possible for an entity to live within Creation and yet maintain strong connections with the isening of the Trinity. To do this requires the total relinquishing of self as manifested in evolutionary creation, including all traces of connections with the past (good memories, disappointments, regrets, and resentments) and all expectations of the future (goals, objectives, purposes, and aims), to live totally and completely in the moment in such a way that the isening of the Trinity infuses the entities experience of each moment, and in so doing guide the entity in ways that the entity itself could not possible do. Such entities cannot relate to DM<sub>1</sub> in any other way. But this does not mean we do not have, or have been given, alternative ways to enter into the isening and anamesoning life of the Trinity. A second such way is offered us through the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub>.

While DM<sub>1</sub> provides the ultimate in attraction, it is through the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub> that we find a member of the Trinity to which we can readily relate. Because the DM<sub>2</sub> has experienced what it is to be a man, and undergone the types of transformations necessary to bring such an entity to the Trinity, he represents someone we can identify with, who can also give us advice on how to do what he has already done. The DM<sub>2</sub> is not so far removed from us as DM<sub>1</sub>, but has gone before us

to show us the way. Indeed, the God-father has proven through his resurrection of the DM<sub>2</sub> that the whole enterprise is not only real but accomplishable.

For this reason, we experience the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub> as co-conspirator, an elder brother, the one person in the Trinity who can bridge the gap between created entities and the Divine Mystery. It is the DM<sub>2</sub> who presents DM<sub>1</sub>, who can make the Triune God real to us while at the same time interceding for us with DM<sub>1</sub>. This is a task he has been asked to undertake by DM<sub>1</sub>, and DM<sub>1</sub> has given him all the power he needs to perform this task.

This intermediary task is not open to DM<sub>1</sub>; nor can it be assigned to the DM<sub>3</sub>. In the first case, DM<sub>1</sub> as generator of all that was/is/will be (isening) could not reduce his own grandeur and majesty to fit within a human life while still maintaining DM<sub>1</sub>'s function as origin of all. In the latter case, the DM<sub>3</sub> is communicator, essential for conveying the essentials of isening and anamesoning to human-kind as far as we willing to allow this, but not for acting as facilitator to bring us to this point.

The DM<sub>3</sub>'s presence permeates Creation as the source of all impulses, emotions, needs, and concerns relating to both isening and anamesoning. Present in the probabilities connected with a cosmos of emergent probability, the DM<sub>3</sub> operates from the very minuteness of existence to the most complex of entities, revealing itself to all according to the all's ability or capacity for reception. The DM<sub>3</sub> acts in such a way as to promote ever higher levels of evolutionary development in DM<sub>1</sub>'s reach for entities capable of joining in the life of the Trinity. With entities such as man, the DM<sub>3</sub> acts in the most gentle of ways, so as not to add to man's self-created nightmare existence, in order to bring about the occurrence of those events that will enable the entity to make the necessary transformation. It is this transformation that brings completeness to such entities, and it is the DM<sub>3</sub> that makes such completeness possible.

DM<sub>1</sub>, the once incarnated DM<sub>2</sub>, and the supporting DM<sub>3</sub> complement each other in such a way that together they create, enjoy their creation, and bring their creation to fulfillment within their own Triune community. This is their highest achievement, indeed the highest achievement



possible for them, to bring their own creations, their own creatures, to a point where they can share in the Divine communal life of the Trinity.

### The Community of Saints

One enters into the life of the Trinity through joining in the anamesoning of the Trinity. This is inspired by the activities of the DM<sub>3</sub>, and directed by the only person truly capable and entitled to guide us along the journey—the incarnate DM<sub>2</sub>. Anamesoning receives its partial expression in human history by the revealed injunction to love DM<sub>1</sub> with all that we are, and to love each other as ourselves. This expression, while full to us as created entities, is only a partial revelation of the true immensity and complexity of anamesoning within the communal life of the Trinity. Reaching the full expression of anamesoning requires of created entities the full realization of what is possible within the “testing” and “resting” of Creation, the over-riding value of what is offered by the Trinity, the chipping away of such obstacles as egotism, group bias, and common sense bias, the death of all that we are in Creation, and the final Divine transformation/resurrection of our selves in an embodied form.<sup>58</sup>

From the world’s viewpoint, such a journey seems full of back-steps, reversals, meandering side-trips, long periods of activity punctuated with rapid change, mistaken paths that once seem promising but turned out to be dead ends, and so forth. The trip may seem harsh and cruel, full of tragedies and hardship, seemingly devoid of human comfort and ease. “God’s treatment of His friends is terrible, though they have really nothing to complain of, as He did the same to His own Son.”<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> To “die” to Creation and to self is a misnomer, for to “kill” self only adds to the many fears that keeps our identification with the self. “Dying” in this sense is more a process of understanding the true nature and consequences of such attachments, and through awareness to let them drop away. We do not have to “do” anything, other than to become aware of the reality of our own situation. In forgetting ourselves we find ourselves.

<sup>59</sup> Tessa Bielecki, *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Writings* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1994), 115. Quoted from a letter Teresa wrote to Gracián when John of the Cross was being imprisoned and tortured in Toledo. “In some profound way, suffering makes us ‘ready’ for God by hollowing us out and increasing

From the perspective of the Trinity, this same journey seems most gentle, most tender, added and supported by the Trinity at each moment along the way. If the entity truly knew what the final “reward” was to be, all else would pale; she would treat the most difficult of human experiences as something to cherish as the only way to reach such a state so as to join in the Divine anamesoning. Once again, faith is necessary to allow us to be guided along the path of the DM<sub>3</sub> when that path seemingly goes against all that we have been taught.

In itself, suffering has no value and can even embitter a person. But for those of faith, suffering is transformed and transforming. Trials and tribulations are no longer dreadful things to be avoided at all cost; they can be cherished as a gift from the Trinity make us more human and holy by reminding us where we went gone wrong, what we need to work on, and that the Triune God cares for us as a good and reliable friend who has our own best interests at heart.

The Trinity’s own intense involvement in anamesoning becomes reflected in the believer’s need to form communities. It is in communities that the full activity of the DM<sub>3</sub> can operate for the benefit of all. The only individual effort of the DM<sub>3</sub> is to bring each entity to such an initial state of limited anamesoning that we can actually be capable of joining in the type of community that is compatible with the community expressed in the Trinity.<sup>60</sup>

The true development of such entities lies in community. While it is individuals that are transformed and/or resurrected, it is the community formed by such entities that truly carries and expresses the life of the Trinity in the limited world of Creation. The individual entity achieves purpose and direction within the community, a community that transcends the physical community present at any one time and place. In the culture created by community, the wisdom of the past is guarded and passed down; so too are the mistakes of the past. For us, the great cultural project is that of shifting through our entire cultural world, choosing that which is worth

---

our capacity for the divine. Those who experience God deeply are those who have been prepared by trials. Suffering places us in a crucible, and like gold, we emerge refined, purified, and strengthened. ‘Afterward these trials that seemed unbearable become small, and one wants to return to suffering if the Lord will be more served by it’” (Ibid., 115; sources are not given for the inner quotes of Teresa).

<sup>60</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, that we evolved as social animals.

while from all that which is not. The true community of such entities lies with all those who have chosen to accept the Trinity's offer through the DM<sub>3</sub>, both past and future, for this community properly exists and has meaning only within the isening of the Trinity. It is a community of "saints."

This community of saints, the set of all DM<sub>n</sub>'s, is constantly in flux. Conversion is never assured. New members are continually responding to the call of the Divine Mystery and those once close to God can lose touch and fall away. Those who have accepted the invitation, undergone transformation, and have died have been and will be in the isening of the Trinity final members. Yet, in the isening of the Trinity, *all* entities belong to this Divine community; for it is the common destiny of all those created by DM<sub>1</sub> to find themselves ultimately as one, as the Trinity itself through multiple is in fact one. The intense anamesoning sets up conditions wherein even one entity untransformed and "unresurrected" affects the peace of mind of the whole; all suffer, including the Trinity, when potential members are lost. All rejoice when one lost entity returns to the Trinity.

Yet, within the isening of the Trinity, all is complete; all is exactly as it should be. While one may grieve at those lost to the Divine life of the Trinity, all within rejoice in participating in the great anamesoning. Even within the Divine life, it is still necessary to accept the free will of those still existing in time—especially since no rock is left unturned in the effort to attract entities to what is truly worth while.

#### Entering the Triune Communion

History has a beginning; it may or may not have an end. The Multiverse and all the universes within it were created in an original act of creation. Each universe has within it an inbuilt drive toward complex higher level systems, the result of fundamental laws of the universe combined with random chance mutations and conjunctions. Eventually, a higher order level will be reached that in itself is stable and capable of no further development. Such a high level of order will

subsume all lower levels, including entities capable of entering into the life of the Divine. At that point, all higher level development will no longer be possible; all that will be possible are lower level changes that still maintain the higher level functions. Anything else would lead to breakdowns, catastrophes, diminishment, and increasing levels of disorder.

The highest level of systematic operation is possible only within the Trinity. When potential entities are transformed and later resurrected within the communal life of the Trinity they will in effect form the highest level of systematic operation of which Creation is capable.<sup>61</sup> We do not know, and will never know until that point is achieved, what form such a high-level stable system will be. All that we have are hints given us through the incarnated DM<sub>2</sub>'s words that sets us on the path of inquiry by asking us the question of where it is all going and how does the Trinity play into this. Without the DM<sub>2</sub>'s revelations, such questions would not be asked in the present form that they are asked. Without these questions, in these forms, we would not have the type of inquiries that are now carried out, or the possible answers that are starting to emerge.

Such an end state does not imply the end of history, only the end of egotism, group bias, general common sense bias, and other forms of disruption and discord that have crept into human history and that have become so much a part of human existence. Celebration, thanksgiving, gratefulness, awe, respect, and all other components of anamesoning will finally have their full expression in human society as part of the Trinity's own isening and anamesoning. We would then be distinct from, yet very much a part of, the life of the Trinity—as the members of the Trinity are distinct from each other yet together make up Divine Mystery we call “God.” Such a

---

<sup>61</sup> There arises the question of what is to be “resurrected” at this time. The Greeks postulated the idea of man as having an immortal soul, but this postulate is not required in this model. Instead of an “immortal soul” we rely on the Father's magnificent and detailed “memory/image” of each human life as the ultimate container of all that was and is to be passed down. Unlike the DM<sub>2</sub>, who is the perfect image of DM<sub>1</sub> except for the knowledge of being generated, images of human beings are not generated by DM<sub>1</sub> as such, but are the form of our lives that we have and are living/creating. Each of our decisions is “reflected” in DM<sub>1</sub>'s image, within the isening of the Trinity, and in so doing is at the same time purified. This purified image then reflects back into our lives, bringing about in part the necessary transformations required for created entities to join in the anamesoning of the Trinity. It is the DM<sub>2</sub> that mediates this process, and the DM<sub>3</sub> that empowers it. It is this “image” that is brought into being as resurrected. It is this “image” that is all that we are in the only way in which are lives make sense – as a transformed self participating in the isening and anamesoning of the Trinity.

transformed and resurrected life would only be the start of true human history, and not the end. There is no end in the isening of the Trinity, as there is no limit to the anamesoning of  $DM_1$ , the  $DM_2$ , and the  $DM_3$ .

These are the “Last Days,” the eschatological hope of Christians, made manifest in the “kingdom of God”, that is, in the Triune God being the supreme organizing principle. But these “Last Days” may in fact not be the last days, even once the highest systematic level of the Trinity is reached. For lower recurring schemes can be reduced in the probability of their survival, thus freeing resources for new conditioned schemes of recurrence. Hence, the creative possibilities of Creation are far from being exhausted even when the highest recurrent scheme—the communal life of anamesoning within the isening of the Trinity—has been established within Creation.

### *Reflections*

The above is only a preliminary sketch of a model, an “ideal model” if you will, and is very dependent upon the existing state of knowledge and the degree of authenticity manifested by its creator. As in any such model, it can be enhanced through further experience, through deeper understanding, and through more reasonable judgments. Or the same activities may lead to discarding the model as failing to aid an inquiry into the Trinity, and the Trinity’s relationship with us. Such a model can help us in our inquiry by revealing the underlying inauthenticities—failures to be attentive, intelligent, and reasonable.

It turns out that our two possible foundational concepts—isening and anamesoning—may have a fruitful role to play in foundational studies, for together they help us to understand a bit better the possible types of relationships between us as time-and-space based creatures and the Divine as unlimited in both time and space. These concepts also help us to understand the underlying drive of “love,” expressed differently among members of the Trinity and among human beings, but having the same roots in the concept of anamesoning.

In effect, these notes for a model are only the quick sketch made by a person half-wake from a “significant” dream, attempting to capture this dream before it vanishes into the depth of the psyche. Yet, it leads to three overriding affirmations of my own moral horizon. In an age where the deconstructive post-modernist study of literature and history seems to possess scholarly minds, and relativism reigns supreme in ethical debates, I affirm that:

—*history has meaning*

—*the universe has purpose*

—*the answers to both these questions may be found in the Christian experience of Trinity*<sup>62</sup>

### *Professional Practice*

The problem in trying to follow the transcendental precepts—be aware, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love—is not only that one has to learn to live in the tension of genuineness between who we are and who we might be but one has to learn how to live in a society that seems increasingly dysfunctional and absurd. The transformation of who one is as a theologian and as a person also involves an evaluation of the authenticity of the culture or society to which we have given our allegiance. It is hard enough to work on one’s own authenticity in this call to love, this “dreaded call to holiness” as Lonergan once wrote, but it is just as hard to live in a society evaluated through this shift to a higher perspective. Yet this is nothing new. Anyone in love has two somewhat contradictory attitudes: they love the other as they are, but at the same time if that person can become a better person? Helping a culture to become a better culture is part of any conversion experience.

The following notion of Professional Practice was designed to meet that need on the part of those engaged in various forms of conversion to live in society in such a way that inauthentic

---

<sup>62</sup> The reader may be forgiven for thinking that we have come so far for so little. Yet, had these three components of a foundational position been given at the very beginning, they would not have had the wealth of meaning they should now possess.

cultures are nudged away from those practices that lead to decline and promote those healing, restoring and redemptive practices that lead to cumulative progress towards an ever fuller being.<sup>63</sup>

Each profession, each world-mediated-by-meaning, has its own set of objects and questions that are in the foreground of attention while other things are either not experienced at all or relegated to unimportant status; so to do the converted. Section one of this chapter explored the broad field of objects and concerns when it comes to anticipating the form salvation or redemption might take, given my own foundational stance. The second section outlined in an almost mathematical way a moral universe in a genetic and dialectic developmental form given meaning through the existence of the Triune God. In this section a more detailed description of the primary objects of which I am aware and which guide by intelligence are given. Like a medical doctor who “sees” the medical health of any person she meets, or the Freudian psychologist who is aware of the dynamics of id, ego and super-ego, I too have my world-mediated-by-meaning. Professional Practice describes that world. It is the way in which I orientate myself in reality. It is the world that I live in.

It is one thing to have a general sense of the moral universe and history, and quite another to know how to make history—not history in the sense of great men and highly significant events, but history as the story of progress, decline and recovery in a multitude of human societies. My own position is that historical events start with the insights of one person who at first is viewed as a crazy radical only to have her ideas turn into orthodoxy in a few years or decades. The question is, How to train creative and innovative people in the methods appropriate not only for recovering situations in decline but to promote progress in human affairs? My tentative answer, based on the

---

<sup>63</sup> Although “Professional Practice” is grounded in Lonergan’s method and Friedman’s framework, it is not in itself an explanatory theory. At its core, it is a way of bringing together relevant knowledge not for planners and policy makers nor the creative self as such, but for those who have an interest in or are engaged in politics. For over two hundred years now we have been studying ourselves with the same dispassionate intelligence as any physical scientist. Even in its embryonic form, we know so much more about how we actually behave at an explanatory level where the things are not related to our needs but to each other. Yet, very little of what we know about ourselves as a species ever gets to the planning and policy-making stage. Professional Practice is designed to organize relevant knowledge in ways useful to the politically minded so that the insights of creative and innovative people can actually add to the human good

work of Otto Friedman and grounded in the Transcendent Method of Lonergan, is Professional Practice.

This version of professional practice is one revised a year or more ago as part of ongoing work at the Lonergan Centre for Ethical Reflection. As such it includes the two primary needs to control meaning and place development in an historical context that are now understood in the former as the need for intellectual conversion and the latter as a general theory of history that includes the work of God. These areas are still works in progress, dependent upon a decision concerning the viability of my own horizon and intentions to incorporate such data into this work. Does this foundational stance have the potentiality to expand into a universal viewpoint? If it does, then with the appropriate feed-back, training and reflection the task of bringing the Divine Mystery into this notion of Professional Practice is possible; without it, it is not.<sup>64</sup>

Professional Practice is designed to enhance a person's understand of what is going forward and to help make that vertical shift to a higher viewpoint that allows for truly responsible action based on the clear position and counter-positions. Fundamental to this process are the various forms of conversion in response to God's love and to the transcendental injunctions that emerge from the innate dynamism of the human spirit to experience, understand, judge, decide and love.

---

<sup>64</sup> What follows may seem strange to anyone raised in a normative Christian culture where the emphasis is on faith seeking reason, but it represents a perfectly normal approach to theology mediating between religion and a cultural matrix if the religion is core Christian beliefs and the cultural matrix is a contemporary Western science-orientated world-mediated-by-meaning. This notion of Professional Practice is one of a number of ways theology can be relevant in our current cultural matrix by bridging the gap between religious and secular modes of thinking.

What will also seem very strange is the lack of interpersonal relationships, especially to the Divine Mystery through Christ. This approach does not deny the importance of such a personal involvement with the Transcendent God, or the importance of Christian community as an expression of God's love for each of us and for each of us with each other; such relationships are foundational. Yet within the intellectual pattern of experience where things relate to each other and not to us as human beings such relationships do not establish an explanatory theory with sufficient strength to ground human history. A far stronger foundation may be found in the Christian notion of the Triune God, a notion that grounds interpersonal relationships as operative within the Trinity. The key difference is that a personal commitment to Christ is a highly emotional and intensely personal one, though mediated by Church, while any involvement with the intellectual pattern of experience demands a dispassionate intelligence. As long as it is possible to difference between these two realms and gives each their appropriate place, there is no problem.



The general approaching to developing this idea of professional practice is a top down structured one characteristic of high level computer programming. Such an approach defines the overall objective or purpose of the program, and then breaks each section down into its subcomponents, which in turn are broken down into their subcomponents. The process is somewhat similar to the upper blade of theory, which anticipates what there is to be known and then used various methods to provide the actual data. It is similar to starting with Foundations, defining Doctrines, working out Systematics and ending in Communication.

If the objective is to improve the quality of decisions being made when it comes to planning and policy making during times of fundamental institutional change, then there are three primary steps that need to be taken:

1. Orientation (OR): an objectified foundational stance where shifts to a higher perspective are encouraged.
2. Diagnosis and Evaluation (D&E): an explanatory theory that not only states what the real problems are but provides well-thought-out and verified explanatory reasons for these problems.
3. Scope and Constraints (S&C): learning how to work in the context of one's common sense time-and-space-specific socio-political circumstances.<sup>65</sup>

The most important point to keep in mind is that planning and policy making is always time-and-space-specific, hence is conditioned by historical and geographical factors unique to that time and place. Orientation, Diagnosis and Evaluation, and Scope and Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental change are non-theological functional specialities each defined by the questions they pose and related to each other as the necessary sequence of steps necessary to arrive at a reasonable and responsible decision. They are carried out with unique time-and-space-specific situations and within the general social science paradigm of symbol or social interaction.

---

<sup>65</sup> Otto Friedman, from my own course notes.

As it turns out, Orientation corresponds roughly to the intentionality analysis and discernment of Foundations, Diagnosis and Evaluation to the explanatory realm of theory (metaphysics and ethics, all a part of Systematics), and Scope and Constraints to the exercise of common sense intelligence (Communications). Furthermore, the entire process involves an understanding of the past as the means for taking a personal stance for creating the future, something built into Lonergan's eight functional specialities. This interplay between the two not only enhances Professional Practice but facilitates the self-appropriation of one's own rationality so essential for entering into the realm of interiority.

There are four other important questions: how to establish control over meaning, how to operate within a clearly defined general theory of history, how to employ the higher blade of metaphysics and ethics, and how to develop a taxonomy of transdisciplinary variables and the way they relate to each other.

### Being in the World

Within this approach, the primary mode of being in the world is that of the creative self engaged in a wide variety of social interactions that facilitate progress while avoiding or reversing decline. Orientation (OR), Diagnosis and Evaluation (D&E) and estimating Scope and Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change (S&C) correspond to three distinct realms of meaning: OR with the intentionality analysis of a foundational theologian working in the realm of interiority; D&E with the theory building and verification characteristic of the explanatory realm of meaning; and S&C with common sense intelligence that knows how to get things done is a unique time-and-space-specific situation. They are interrelated in as much as working on one's orientation always comes first, if the idea is to take a rational approach to change, while the explanatory realm provides the detailed explanatory understanding of the root causes of decline and the nature of the remedial actions necessary to turn the situation around, and common sense intelligence knows what can and can't be done given the existing situation.

This is the creative self engaged not only engaged with the world but with her own conversion.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> David Dery, Hebrew University political science professor and head of the Delta Leadership consultancy firm in Tel Aviv, maintains that the true leaders are innovators challenged by the times to alter what already exists, that without such questioning nothing new would ever be created, that leadership is not to be confused with power, popularity or expecting short-term gratifications in the form of results and that the real results are due to long-term processes. Integrity and positive values are more important than power and control, an essential feature of the authentic creative self operating in society, and it is only after many years that we can start to see if event was good or bad.

One particular myth he challenges is that to be a leader one must have followers.

## Orientation

Orientation is the primary stage of investigation when seeking to create something new in the world at a time when our capacity for good decision making is stretched by the kinds of historical conditions noted in Chapter One: a breakdown in common valuation, a lack of imagination, the “black hole” of the Shoah, the lack of grounded transdisciplinary work, and the problems of regulating ever more complex, noisy and turbulent societies and organizations.<sup>67</sup> The problem is that good intentions are not sufficient to justify any course of action that takes into account the interdependencies and complexities of the existing good of order of post-agricultural economies and the political and social institutions that support them. This is the area where right solution may be counter-intuitive, e.g., when the “obvious” solution to countering global warming by mandatory reduction of green-house gasses through international treaties may only lead to an increase in the very same gasses when a counter intuitive solution may be to forget the whole thing and concentrate on problems such as the loss of fiscal accountability and subsidiarity in governments. Perhaps if these two local problems are solved, the global one will take care of

---

*According to your definition, there might be leaders all over the place who are completely anonymous—not running the country, with no followers.*

I do not hold with the school of thought according to which without followers there are no leaders. Again, it’s an issue of long-term processes. What about the leader, for example, whose followers haven’t been born yet? Vincent Van Gogh died a starving painter because his followers were born much later.

Ruthiee Blum, “Chasing Windmills” (*The Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 15, 2005), 13. Italics by Blum.

<sup>67</sup> There is one other condition that has not been mentioned because they form an operational subset of the breakdown in valuation, namely the overriding distortions due to ideological and utopian thinking (the other operational subset is a form of tacit knowledge, when for example everyone “knows” that the emperor has no cloths but everyone is too fearful to say anything; often what is *not* said is more important than what *is* said).

Ideologies and utopias are part of any socio-political situation; they serve to bring people together in a common “common sense” cause. But problems arise when an explanatory diagnosis suggests a course of remedial action that runs counter to ideological commitments. To propose a decentralized market place to regulate production within a communist centralized ideology is to distort language by having to argue that decentralization is in fact a form of communism—a current problem for Chinese leaders. The same difficulties apply to the United States whenever the situation demands some form of centralized control but the ideology is one of government non-intervention and a self-regulating market economy. Canadians run into the same problem when it comes to our dominant ideology of multi-culturalism. These, along with other socio-political factors, are sketched out in Appendix II: A Transdisciplinary Framework.

itself. Who knows? And how can you tell? The very fact that these questions can be raised sheds doubt on any knee-jerk reaction to an “obvious-out-there” problem.

The primary goal in OR is to encourage transcendent conversion through a dialectic encounter with the Practitioner herself, as someone engaged in falling in love with the Divine Mystery, through exposure to the positions and counter-positions of others as expressed through history, and in the exercise of a dispassionate, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know.<sup>68</sup> The reason for this is that primary errors are often not conscious but the result of preunderstandings, prejudgements and a variety of biases that interfere with planning and policy-making. Thus situations are misjudged, explanatory forms of knowledge are rejected, and more often than not attempts to add to the human good by minds not capable of neither reaching up to the fuller potentiality of human living or being able to expand to fit the potentiality in the data lead to disaster. Mastery of the realm of interiority is essential if one is to navigate among various positions and counter-positions. And so too is the objectification and enhancement of one’s own subjectivity through genetic and dialectic encounters with other people.

McEvenue’s questions are one way to objectify one’s orientation. There are others. For example:

Where are you? In time? In Space?  
Who are you?  
What do you stand for?  
What are you against?  
What do you intend to do, and why?  
Is there a genuine willingness? A sense of collaborative wonder?  
And if a call to holiness, your response?  
What are your group affiliations and allegiances?  
Who is your peer or reference group?  
What drives you?

---

<sup>68</sup> History also has an important point to play in understanding the range various transdisciplinary variables can take and the variety of relationships that are possible between them as given expression in different unique time-and-space-specific socio-political situations. History also provides insights into the mistakes people and cultures have made and the costs incurred in correcting such situations—if indeed they were correctable.

Where do you place your emotional life?

Then there are the questions that can help to extend that “other eye”:

What kind of civilization is likely to follow this one? (a way of easing away from our cultural assumptions, preunderstandings and prejudices).

“What do you see?” (a way of training the mind to experience what is there and draw meaning from that experience).

It is important to note that all these questions consider the world as it relates to me, personally, and not the explanatory world where things are related to each other. This is the subject of the next section.

### *Diagnosis & Evaluation*

For the most part, people are familiar with the general dynamics of OR: it is something that we do, often unconsciously, every moment of our lives—for the simple reason that to be disorientated or lost is not only to be exposed to unknown dangers and risks but to fail to adapt to the ever changing socio-political reality within which we live. In OR, this is made a conscious process. But even though OR is necessary to understanding how our appreciative system comes to chose problems, it is a shift to the explanatory realm of theory that grounds diagnosis and evaluation.<sup>69</sup> In D&E what is important is not the common sense reality that relates things to our

---

<sup>69</sup> To evaluate is to assess the state of well-being of some thing, be it a biological entity like a human being, an ecological entity of a species or the well being of a commonwealth. Professional Practice divides this assessment up into two distinct phases: the common sense understanding of well being in Orientation and the explanatory theory of well being in Diagnosis and Evaluation. But behind both lies the foundational stance taken in OR, for it is this combination of a specific horizon with committed intentions to act for some position and against what is believed to be counter-positions that grounds discernment between good and evil—not in any abstract sense but as it relates to the here-and-now of human living.

To those of us who believe Jihadists are evil, who are averse to human beings being trained as bomb delivery systems, who are amazed when Saddam Hussein is treated as a hero when in fact he has led his country into two wars, virtually eliminated the Marsh people for rising up against him and subjected his subjects to far greater levels of torture than that carried out by the US, who cannot understand why Europeans are so dead against the only democracy that exists in the Middle East, who are disturbed when the news agencies prefer “militant” over “terrorists” when recounting the latest “suicide bomber” (except when it comes to terrorists actions on their own turf, where the use of the term “militant” to one of the London bombers is an affront to intelligence)—well, the list goes on.

To a relativist, one position is as good as another and one cannot speak badly about another tradition, even if that tradition includes slavery or genital mutilation. But Lonergan’s functional speciality of Foundations deals with the grounds for discernment; indeed, he sets the criteria for authenticity in the transcendental injunctions built into the dynamism of the human spirit. The point is that checking the

own interest, but knowledge of how things relate to each other. To evaluation the health and well being of the good of order of any time-and-space-specific situation may start with human intentions, but if is to be anything more than common sense bias in action it is necessary to understand this other rational way of understanding the world. Hence there is a need for a general theory of history, for a grasp of the structure of the human good, for a general theory of moral development, and for an understanding of the different levels of intelligibility and the way things and explanatory conjugates are conceived and verified according to such canons of empirical method as:

*Selection:* where insights are confined to the data of sensible experience.

*Operations:* where the accumulation of insights is through the application of scientific method.

*Relevance:* where the focus is on the intelligibility of the data and further inquiry into the instrumental use of such knowledge is left for the applied sciences.

*Parsimony:* where the scientist is to affirm only what he as a scientist knows, i.e., that is verifiable and in fact verified.

*Complete Explanation:* where all data must be explained.

---

authenticity of one's foundations in OR is not an impossible task, given the theological and intellectual methods we now have. Neither is the working out of yet another explanatory theory to better understanding what is going forward. And low levels of discernment are always dangerous, always leading society into decline, always posing challenges that existing institutional structures find hard to meet, simply because the world-mediated-by-meaning that they give rise to is simply unreal, imaginary.

If Bat Ye'or is correct, i.e. that Europe is now Eurabia with Europeans having already accepted dhimmitude status, then the question is, Why do they not perceive the danger to themselves and their way of life? It could be the folly of politicians blindly pursuing a course of action to restore ancient glories—a lust for power that amplifies inauthenticities and compounds common sense bias—or it could be a form of bureaucratic protective stupidity where policies are continued because this is the safest course of action (there is too little time for those in government to develop a solid understanding of the problems). But it's also possible that the prevailing secular orientation in Europe has no place—no word even—for evil and because of this limited horizon cannot “see” the evil around them and in them. For a continent that spawned the barbaric ideology of the National Socialists, now imported wholesale into Arabia, one would think the Shoah would have been a wake-up call.

See Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005). Also by the same author, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, translated from the French by Miriam Kochan and David Littman, (Madison, UK: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002). For a history of Islamic experiences of Jihad free of utopian bias, see *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, edited by Andrew G. Bostom, MD, foreword by Ibn Warraq (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2005). What is particularly interesting about the latter, which includes “Shiite and Sunni, classical and modern, Qur'anic commentators and Islamic jurists and philosophers” (p. 20), is that this scholarly work was researched and written by a non-historian. For whatever of reason, any critical study of Islam is treated as a taboo subject among intellectuals.

*Statistical Residues*: where one is not to assume that all data can be explained through the classical laws, that there exist statistical residues that can only be explained through statistical laws.<sup>70</sup>

The worldview is that of emergent probability and different successive explanatory levels running from quantum mechanics, atomic theory and chemistry up to and including sensitive and rational psychology. In fact,

As one moves from one genus to the next, there is added a new set of laws which defines its own basic terms by its own empirically established correlations. When one turns from physics and chemistry to astronomy, one employs the same basic terms and correlations; but when one turns from physics and chemistry to biology, one is confronted with an entirely new set of basic concepts and laws.<sup>71</sup>

The goal of any evaluation of a time-and-space-specific situation is to arrive at an accurate and reliable appraisal of the general health and well being of the commonwealth not based on a common sense understanding of reality, which may well include the biases of an unauthentic tradition, but on verified explanatory systems operative within the worldview of emergent probability and given meaning through the careful weighing of empirical evidence. What is to be avoided are arm-chair diagnosis and evaluations made without benefit of the data inherent in the situation and often prone to the distortions of an uncritical foundational stance, premature closure and flights from reality. Only that which has been formulated and tested can be said to be real; all other hypothesis remain unverified forms, and the data itself unformulated potential.<sup>72</sup>

As a rough analogy, medical practitioners continually evaluate their patient's health and, if problems arise, undertake a series of tests based on an explanatory understanding of how the body works to diagnosis the source of such problems. When it comes to evaluating the collective well

---

<sup>70</sup> *Insight*, 70.

<sup>71</sup> *Insight*, 255. This is why a methodology suitable to understanding the physical world is not suitable for understanding the human, especially when it comes to incorporating the Divine Mystery in human affairs.

<sup>72</sup> There is an interesting problem when it comes to giving expression to such verified knowledge:

The perennial source of nonsense is that, after the scientist has verified his hypothesis, he is likely to go a little further and tell the layman what, approximately, scientific reality looks like! Already, we have attacked the unverifiable image; but now we can see the origin of the strange urge to foist upon mankind unverifiable images. For both the scientist and the layman, besides being intelligent and reasonable, also are animals. To them as animals, a verified hypothesis is just a jumble of words or symbols. What they want is an elementary knowledge of the 'really real', if not through sense, at least by imagination. (*Insight*, 253)

being of the good of order, of the commonwealth, then the goal is the same but the methods and the explanatory theories will be different. The symptoms and causes of decline are quite different at this collective cultural level, as are the kinds of remedial action required to reverse or at least ameliorate reductions and regression in the body of human good available in a given society.<sup>73</sup>

### *Estimating Scope & Constraints*

Any rational explanatory theory explaining symptoms and identify their causes may set the right direction, but it is existing circumstances that determine what is and is not possible. For example, different societies and cultures vary according to their degree of development, which means that what might be possible in a more developed society may be impossible in the more chaotic and undisciplined environment of a lower form of the good of order. This is especially true when it comes to a general willingness based on a careful attention to the following the transcendental injunctions: if people are not willing, then not much is likely to happen. The same goes for the degree to which members of a society can differentiate between primary realms of meaning: if such discrimination is not possible, then any plan or policy that requires such differentiation cannot be brought into being.

Knowing what can and can't be done, knowing the right way to go about getting things done, is a matter of common sense intelligence that has verified through experience what does and doesn't work. Such knowledge is time-and-space specific, and while certain general principles of action may apply across the board, the details of who to talk to and who to avoid, what can be said and what remains an untellable common secret, of how to approach an

---

<sup>73</sup> It is here that for me so many contemporary churches fall short. While the collective wisdom of the church includes the dynamics of religious conversion and hence a strong understanding of the intersubjectivity that exists between human beings and between human beings and God, the collective wisdom of explanatory theory at the level of social and political progress, decline and reversal is often lacking. So many Christians rely on solid foundational stances within Orientation to diagnosis social and political problems as a guide common sense action in Scope and Constraints. But without an understanding of explanatory theory, they bypass this necessary theoretical stage to good decision making, going directly from perception to action.



influential person and how to avoid powerful people or groups whose well being would be threatened by change—all this and more can only be known by people who live and work there.

The second important point is that traditional societies have little use for either the creative self or the deliberate making of human history as cumulative and progressive insights into a deeper and fuller understanding of human existence. It is only when a society is experiencing fundamental institutional changes that the scope for new initiatives and new insights arises. And even here it is important to distinguish between those institutions that are prospering and those that are going into decline and may soon face extinction—and the difference may be hard to tell at the common sense level. Superficially, everything may look great—plans are made, projects initiated, money is spent on improving the lives of people, and yet things don't work out as expected. Furthermore, there is a drift in society due to the fairly short life spans of human beings when compared to the time scale of the changes going on. For example, we have forgotten the kind of society where one could leave one's door unlocked for those who experienced such a society are long gone; the yearly incremental retreat of a glacier may be imperceptible to those living close by while a previous resident returning after an absence of thirty years may wonder that the glacier has shrunk to a fraction of its former self.

The purpose behind an analysis of the scope and constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change is to maximize the use of available resources to do as much as possible, while minimizing the risk of all going to waste as these plans and policies are diverted or blocked by more powerful and influential people. This is to eliminate or at least reduce two kinds of waste: the opportunity costs due to the underutilization of resources where greater things could have been accomplished if those involved could have known, and the loss of resources allocated to a project that fails—resources that if applied to a project with a higher chance of success could have been used to add to the commonwealth.

This is not to say that efficiency is the primary value. It is only the primary value when it comes to S&C. The objective is set in D&E—all S&C does is make the maximum use of

resources to meet the demands set by the diagnosis and evaluation. This is an important point: it may be that the one thing that has a low probability of success—encouraging psychic, intellectual, moral and religious conversion through a methodology such as this for example—is exactly the sort of thing that needs to be done to reverse long-term decline, whereas working on the easy more manageable problems may only contribute to further the demise of an organization or a culture.<sup>74</sup>

### Establishing Control over Meaning

To control meaning is to create, maintain and enhance through method a world-mediated-by-meaning that fits the upper blade of explanatory theory while keeping intact those specialized realms of meaning that contributes to the polymorphism of human consciousness. There are two stages to this process, the first being to expose those errors and counter-positions that plague our culture while the second is the build upon this base to include new insights into the good of order and the emergence of a fuller way of living, of being. Both stages require an understanding of the major components in grounding meaning.<sup>75</sup>

Given the multiplicity of epistemologies, of positions and counter-positions, of contrary and contradictory foundational stances, it is no wonder that one of the primary problems in Professional Practice is to establish control over meaning. Establishing such control is a matter of

---

<sup>74</sup> Mastering *Insight* is another good example of this. From my own foundational stance, Lonergan's approach provides the only reasonable way to explain how progress can be promoted, why decline can dominate a society or a group, and how decline might be reversed. He provides a solid ground for dismissing the deconstructionist mentality and moral relativity of much of contemporary Western thinking, counters a naïve realism that expects reality to be affirmed through looking, and grounds transdisciplinary thinking in a methodology based on his Transcendental Method. It is long slow work, never really complete and with little anticipation of immediate academic or financial rewards, yet in my opinion the work needs to be done if a collective response to decline is to be put in place. Such is my own diagnosis and evaluation of contemporary needs.

<sup>75</sup> What is not explicitly included but definitely implied is a theory of errors that forms the basis of any diagnosis and evaluation. Arriving at a well-grounded explanatory reason for socio-political problems involving planning and policy-making requires an understanding of socio-pathology; a theory of errors grounds such an understanding of how human affairs go wrong. Control over meaning while carrying out a variety of inquiries into a time-and-space-specific situation is essential not only to guide research but to assess the diagnoses and evaluations (positions and counter-positions) of other participants.

recognizing that adult human beings live in a world-mediated-by-meaning and that the meaning we attribute to the world is a function of the human mind not only seeking intelligibility in the data of experience but seeking the unlimited and unconditional results of the dynamism of the human spirit to follow the transcendental injunctions. It is also a matter of recognizing the polymorphism of human consciousness. But most of all, it is a matter of understanding how we come to understand—and that is a theory of cognitive operations whereby successive higher levels of consciousness and control are achieved through experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and loving.

While churchmen and scientists both affirm a reality independent of human beings, they do so in quite different ways. According to David Deutsch, the primary dispute between Galileo and the Church of the Inquisition was an epistemological issue, a question of what constitutes a “fact.”

How could a dispute about the layout of the solar system have such far-reaching consequences, and why did the participants pursue it so passionately? Because the real dispute was not about whether the solar system had one layout rather than another; it was about Galileo’s brilliant advocacy of a new and dangerous way of thinking about reality. Not about the existence of reality, for both Galileo and the Church believed in *realism*, the commonsense view that an external physical universe really does exist and does affect our senses, including senses enhanced by instruments such as telescopes. Where Galileo differed was in his conception of the relationship between physical reality on the one hand, and the human ideas, observations and reason on the other. He believed that the universe could be understood in terms of universal, mathematically formulated laws, and the reliable knowledge of these laws was accessible to human beings if they applied his method of mathematical formulation and systematic experimental testing. As he put it, ‘the Book of Nature is written in mathematical symbols’. This was in conscious comparison with that other Book on which it was more conventional to rely.<sup>76</sup>

The resulting argument is similar to that made by Creationists.

The Inquisition did not care where the planets appeared to be; what they cared about was reality. They cared where the planets really were, and they wanted to understand the planets through explanations, just as Galileo did. Instrumentalists and positivists would say that since the Church was perfectly

---

<sup>76</sup> David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality* (London, England: Penguin, 1997), 74. Deutsch’s italics. The consequence was the total deadening of scientific discussion among Christians. As Jacob Bronowski put it: “The result was silence among Catholic scientists everywhere from then on. . . . The effect of the trial and of the imprisonment was to put a total stop to the scientific tradition in the Mediterranean.” Jacob Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (London: BBC, 1973), 218. Lonergan’s Transcendental Method provides an entry into the realm of interiority, where such discussions can be laid bare.

The interesting thing about Lonergan’s approach is that it restores legitimacy to scientific work for Christians: scientific inquiries can be as much a part of Christian spirituality as biblical studies, Christology or Ecclesiology, for all contribute to an understanding of interiority and the drive toward fuller being.

willing to accept Galileo's observational predictions, further argument between them was pointless, and that his muttering 'eppur si muove' was strictly meaningless. When they denied the reliability of scientific knowledge, it was precisely the explanatory part of that knowledge that they had in mind.<sup>77</sup>

But according to Deutsch, there is a fatal paradox in the Inquisition's explanation of planetary movement, a theory that in effect stated that:

. . . the Earth is in fact at rest, with the Sun and planets in motion around it; but that the paths on which these astronomical bodies travel are laid out in a complex way which, when viewed from the vantage-point of the Earth, is also consistent with the Sun being at rest and the Earth and Planets being in motion.<sup>78</sup>

The problem is a lack of elegance combined with the kludge factor necessary to make the Inquisition's position work. It is useful to pursue Deutsch's argument, for it says a lot about the Church and the general failure to account for scientific knowledge—especially in the area of the social sciences. There is a lot that we know about how people actually behave—from the simple techniques of brainwashing to the brains constant need for sensory input, from fundamental neurological differences in the way men and women's brains are organized, from an understanding of the destructiveness inherent in human beings as well as in an over-reliance on the transcendent, from the complex social and symbolic interactions that define our place in society, from the pragmatics of human communication to the subtleties of kinetics, from the physicist's notion of the multiverse to the ecologist's rule that you can never do merely one thing, from the social tendency of any group to fragment and to the demonization of the enemy—the list goes on. But precious little of this scientific derived knowledge makes it way into Christian thinking.

To understand planetary motions in terms of the Inquisition's theory, it is essential that one should understand [that the Earth and planets merely look like they are circulating the Sun], for the constraints it imposes are the basis of every detailed explanation that one can make under the theory. For example, if one were asked why a planetary conjunction occurred on such-and-such a date, or why a planet backtracked across the sky in a loop of a particular shape, the answer would always be 'because that is how it would look if the heliocentric theory were true'. So here is a cosmology—the Inquisition's cosmology—that can be understood only in terms of a different cosmology, the heliocentric cosmology that it contradicts but faithfully mimics. [In short] . . . one cannot understand the Inquisition's theory unless one understands the heliocentric theory first.

If the Inquisition had seriously tried to understand the world in terms of the theory they tried to force on Galileo, they would also have understood its fatal weakness, namely that it fails to solve the

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 77.

problem it purports to solve. It does *not* explain planetary motions ‘without having to introduce the complication of the heliocentric system’.<sup>79</sup>

Deutsch continues on with the observation that the Inquisition’s position:

... has this in common with solipsism: both of them draw an arbitrary boundary beyond which, they claim, human reason has no access—or at least, beyond which problem-solving is no path to understanding. For solipsists, the boundary tightly encloses their own brains, or perhaps just their abstract minds or incorporeal souls. For the Inquisition, it enclosed the entire Earth. Some present-day Creationists believe in a similar boundary, not in space but in time, for they believe that the universe was created only six thousand years ago, complete with misleading evidence of earlier events. *Behaviourism* is the doctrine that it is not meaningful to explain human behaviour in terms of inner mental processes. To behaviourists, the only legitimate psychology is the study of people’s observable responses to external stimuli. Thus they draw exactly the same boundary as solipsists, separating the human mind from external reality; but while solipsists deny that it is meaningful to reason about anything outside the boundary, behaviourists deny that it is meaningful to reason about anything inside.<sup>80</sup>

The interesting thing about Lonergan’s position is that for him the human mind has an unlimited capacity for asking questions. We reach God through the unrestricted desire to know, for ultimately knowing can only be grounded in a Transcendental Being. Placing limits on the questions we ask—be it for the aggrandisement of the self or the protection of one’s group or simply refusing to accept the reality of explanatory theory in the common sense drive to get on with the business of the world—is to block oneself from the dynamic drive of the human spirit to live in an intelligible universe. To place arbitrary boundaries on such questioning is to draw away from God, perhaps by limiting one’s experience of God’s universe, perhaps by an unintelligent grasp of what exists, perhaps by cutting off questions having to do with the making of dispassionate and reasonable affirmations about reality, or perhaps by refusing to transcend one’s own transcended self when called upon to do so.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>81</sup> If all intelligibly is grounded in the Divine Mystery, than any failure to reach up the divine world-mediated-by-meaning is to fail to attend to some facet of reality. When human beings were relatively powerless, this failure to attend to reality had only limited consequences. But now we as a species have too much power for the degree of control that we have, so not only do we reel from one crisis to another without taking the time to think things through but we face the real possibility of our own extinction in a not too distant future.

### *Differentiation of Mind*

Now meaning can be established by fiat, as in the old saw that it is the victorious who write history. It can also be established through common usage, though common usage is usually specific to people living at a particular time in a particular place. It can be established through empirical studies where verified explanatory theories grounded in human beings following the basic heuristic structure and canons of empirical method are expressed in mathematical formula. Meaning can be set by the most basic features of human intersubjectivity, i.e., the relationship between mother and child, or by reflective intelligence doing its work.<sup>82</sup>

When one or more of these different realms of meaning are mashed together in an undifferentiated mind, the result is common sense intelligence taking control of meaning according to its own verifiable intelligence. But common sense intelligence is verified through common usage, certainly not the research methods of explanatory theory or an appeal to the realm of interiority of our own knowing, and hence emaciates science and ignores interiority—reducing science to those applications that have immediate economic benefits and stultifies any human understanding of the polymorphism of human consciousness and the importance of conversion in human affairs.

Cultivating a differentiated consciousness is thus one of the first steps toward controlling meaning. But there is a precondition: the subject must have appropriated her own rational consciousness to the point that she affirms herself as a knower with a full knowledge of what this means. What it means is first of all a working verified knowledge of one's own cognitive operations, something achieved by analyzing how different realms of meaning have emerged each with their own specialized forms of knowing, i.e. she must know what it means to be a

---

<sup>82</sup> That meaning can be communicated from mother to child even at a very early prelinguistic age is known through the phenomena of paradoxical communication. As has already been noted, a mother can create discordant conditions in her child by convey two contradictory messages at the same time: a soothing voice to comfort the child while expressing a harsh disliking through rough and abrupt touches. For an analysis of these and other pathological forms of communication, see Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York, N.Y.: Norton & Co., 1967).

knower and then affirm through an act of reflective consciousness that she is a knower. Secondly, there are metaphysical, ethical and transcendent implications that stem from this decisive act of self-affirmation.

### *Cognitive Operations*

A failure to understand how we understand—from an firm cognitive theory, to an epistemology, to a metaphysics—leaves meaning open to a variety of flawed counter-positions. Literally, naïve realists, empiricists and idealists conceive reality in such different ways that each are talking about different objects even when they are using the same (common sense) word. Furthermore, inadequate cognitive theories lead to an understanding of reality than anticipates forms that are not there when contrasted with the reality revealed through Lonergan's transcendental method. Philosophical positions such as deductive methods based on mathematical analysis, the method of universal doubt by Descartes, the empiricist approach of Cartesian dualism, or the common-sense eclecticism of philosophers who refer back to common sense intelligence, are distortions—especially when the methods used to verify such positions are drawn from the desired position itself—a procedure only begs the question.

Aside from the philosophical implications of an empirically grounded explanatory theory of cognitive operations, there is the normative injunctions associate with each of the respective levels of consciousness. Each individual and each culture can be said to be authentic if they live up to the demands of these injunctions, but are unauthentic if they do not. But what happens when they don't? The answer is a skewed perception of reality embedded in a world-mediated-by-meaning that considers things real when they are not and discounts the real when these things are real. Foundational stances focus on the unreal and the untrue; diagnosis and evaluations are conditional to the extent that the mind that formulates and verifies such things is not up to the task. Finally, scope and constraints are affected as people react to a substantially imaginary

world. No wonder situations dominated by unauthentic planners and policy-makers go into decline.

Control over meaning is established to some extent when the researcher or professional practitioner is capable of distinguishing between authentic and unauthentic people and cultures—something that can only be achieved when conversion based on a love of the Divine Mystery is operative as the core of the dynamism of the human spirit. So the spiritual dimension of discernment of spirits is especially important.

### *Patterns of Experience*

Meaning also varies according to the common sense realm stream of sensations to which we relate on a habitual basis. Not only do we experience sensations but we direct them along certain channels, certain dynamic patterns of experience

. . . nor it is difficult for us to say just what we mean by such a pattern. As conceived, it is the formulation of an insight; but all insight arises from sensitive or imaginative presentations; and in the present case the relevant presentations are simply the various elements in the experience that is organized by the pattern.<sup>83</sup>

Lonergan suggest four basic forms that we use to mould “sensitive or imaginative presentations”: biological, aesthetic, intellectual and dramatic. Each represents a distinct direction, striving or effort—a variable intentionality. As Lonergan puts it,

Thales was so intent upon the stars that he did not see the well into which he tumbled. The milkmaid was so indifferent to the stars that she could not overlook the well. Still, Thales could have seen the well, for he was not blind and, perhaps, the milkmaid could have been interested in the stars, for she was human.<sup>84</sup>

The biological pattern of experience in animals, as opposed to more sedentary plants, involves quick adaptive responses to rapidly changing situations full of peril and potential. Predator and prey lock together, and we attribute to both flows of experiences not unlike our own. Furthermore,

---

<sup>83</sup> *Insight*, 182.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



Outer senses are the heralds of biological opportunities and dangers. Memory is the file of supplementary information. Imagination is the projection of courses of action. Conation and emotion are the pent-up pressure of elemental purposiveness. Finally, the complex sequence of delicately coordinated bodily movements is at once the consequence of striving and a cause of the continuous shift of sensible presentations.<sup>85</sup>

Since *Homo sapiens* evolved as a communal species, the primary focus of the biological pattern of experience is on the every changing hierarchical structure of human relationships—social interactions using power, authority and influence to change one's position and status in society. This explains the acquisition of goods and services that go far beyond any one's capacity to use: they are markers of caste and rank that provide tangible benefits in the ongoing game of convincing and being convinced, of being in a position to dictate the actions of others rather than having to adapt through changing one's own beliefs.

When human beings have nothing else to do they may ask questions—but they also may play. They may engage in sports not to stay in shape but to express the sheer joy of living, they may seek experiences simply for the sake of having new experiences. This joy of living belongs to the aesthetic pattern of experience, where:

The artist exercises his intelligence in discovering ever novel forms that unify and relate the contents and acts of aesthetic experience. . . . Art is a twofold freedom. As it liberates experience from the drag of biological purposiveness, so it liberates intelligence from the wearing constraints of mathematical proofs, scientific verifications, and common-sense factualness. For the validation of the artistic idea is the artistic deed. The artist establishes his insights, not by proof or verification, but by skilfully embodying them in colours and shapes, in sounds and movements, in the unfolding situations and actions of fiction. To the spontaneous joy of conscious living, there is added the spontaneous joy of free intellectual creation.<sup>86</sup>

The Aesthetic pattern of experience is especially important when it comes to the creative self, freedom and symbolic expression of preconscious psychic phenomena. It is worth following Lonergan's comments on these matters.

The aesthetic and artistic are symbolic. Free experience and free creation are prone to justify themselves by an ulterior purpose or significance. Art, then, becomes symbolic, but what is symbolized is obscure. It is an expression of the human subject outside the limits of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal. It seeks to mean, to convey, to impart something that is to be reached, not through science or philosophy, but through a participation and, in some fashion, a re-enactment of the artist's inspiration and intention. Pre-scientific and pre-philosophic, it may strain for

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 182-83.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 184-85.

truth and value without defining them. Post-biological, it may reflect the psychological depths yet, by that very fact, it will go beyond them.

Indeed, the very obscurity of art is in a sense its most generic meaning. Prior to the neatly formulated questions of systematizing intelligence, there is the deep-set wonder in which all questions have their source and ground. As an expression of the subject, art would show forth that wonder in its elemental sweep. Again, as a twofold liberation of sense and of intelligence, art would exhibit the reality of the primary object for that wonder. For the animals, safely sheathed in biological routines, are not questions to themselves. But man's artistry testifies to his freedom. As he can do, so he can be what he pleases. What is he to be? Why? Art may offer attractive or repellent answers to those questions but, in its subtler forms, it is content to communicate any of the moods in which such questions arise, to convey any of the tones in which they may be answered or ignored.<sup>87</sup>

The artistic sense is not limited to what we think are the "arts", i.e., music, dance or painting, but is an essential feature in any creative endeavour including the creation of one's own self. Training in this area provides a freedom of imaging making and imagination that otherwise would be constricted by the purely biological stream of consciousness, and as long as the distinction is made between form and act—between imaged and verified—the exercise of imagination along aesthetic lines, there is no problem.<sup>88</sup> What is a problem, an issue of control over meaning, is that the curtailment of this aesthetic imaginative sense truncates the expression of the fullness of human being. Control over meaning doesn't apply only to clarifying different realms of meaning and avoiding confusion between them, it also applies to the unrestricted exercise of the cognitive operations of the human mind. This is the advantage of a method that not only keeps separate realms separate but also allows the mind and spirit full expression to play and to create knowing that there are procedures that will keep us from straying too far from reality.

If it were not for the sense of awe and mystery that arises from this aesthetic stream of experiences, we would not ask those purely explanatory questions that give rise to the intellectual pattern of experience. The world of the scientist, the mathematician, student of political science or environmental studies, the scholar engage in recovering the common sense of another time and place depends on a prior decision to be. It is a decision of great depth:

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>88</sup> The same cannot be said for the idealist for who the image itself is real in some neo-platonic way, or the empiricist who eliminates the aesthetic imagination since it can't be experienced by the senses, or the naïve realist who seeks reality "out there" as something to be seen. But images are essential for insights—if the images aren't there then insights are prevented from happening and the world-mediated-by-meaning is left unreal to the extent these distortions are embedded in the culture.

To the theorist, intent upon a problem, even the subconscious goes to work to yield at unexpected moments the suggestive images of clues and missing links, of patterns and perspectives, that evoke the desiderated insight and the delighted cry, 'Eureka!' In reflection, there arises a passionless calm. Memory ferrets out instances that would run counter to the prospective judgment. Imagination anticipates the shape of possibilities that would prove the judgment wrong. So deep is the penetration, so firm the dominance, so strange the transformation of sensitive spontaneity, that memories and anticipations rise above the threshold of consciousness only if they possess at least a plausible relevance to the decision to be made. For the stream of sensitive experience is a chameleon; and as its pattern can be biological or artistic, so too it can become the automatic instrument or, rather, the vitally adaptive collaborator of the spirit of inquiry.<sup>89</sup>

Living in the artistic or intellectual pattern of experience is somewhat unusual. Far more common to ordinary human living is the dramatic pattern of experience that has little to do with the biological, aesthetic or intellectual and lots to do with the underlying reasons, motives and purposes we assign to the task of getting things done. For human beings, it is not enough to do; there must be a reason that imports a deeper significance. Hence the ceremonies of baptism, confirmation, marriage and death in the Church: we are born, but baptism gives birth a new non-biological meaning; we belong to a Church but confirmation reaffirms before all that commitment as a communal responsibility; we form partnerships, but marriage gives this biological need a moral and religious dimension as an expression of God's love. So too with death.

The dramatic pattern of experience has to do with style expressed as we interact with others, the drama of roles and positions, of transformation and counter-positions. It is a communal process:

The characters in this drama of living are moulded by the drama itself. As other insights emerge and accumulate, so too do the insights that govern the imaginative projects of dramatic living. As other insights are corrected through the trial and error that give rise to further questions and yield still further complementary insights, so too does each individual discover and develop the possible roles he might play and, under the pressure of artistic and affective criterion, work out this own selection and adaptation. Out of the plasticity and exuberance of childhood through the discipline and the play of education there gradually is formed the character of the man. It is a process in which rational consciousness with its reflection and criticism, its deliberation and choice, exerts a decisive influence.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 186. This is not an easy world. "Even with talent, knowledge makes a slow, if not a bloody, entrance. To learn thoroughly is a vast undertaking that calls for relentless perseverance. To strike out on a new line and become more than a week-end celebrity calls for years in which one's living is more or less constantly absorbed in the effort to understand, in which one's understanding gradually works round and up a spiral of viewpoints with each complementing its predecessor and only the last embracing the whole field to be mastered." Ibid., 186.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 188.

The dramatic pattern of experience presents raw material for this drama, projecting courses of action, imaging different outcomes, trying alternative forms of influence or authority, learning roles through the common sense interactions with others, and visualizing other styles we might adopt

When it comes to the dramatic subject, there are a variety of biases that can arise. If there is no possibility of acting out a given role or position, then that role or position will not be brought into being. This means that people living in a closed society where many of their decisions are made by those in positions of power will not develop the roles, attitudes and attention to the transcendental injunctions that would emerge in more open societies.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, just as people can like light, there are those that like darkness; to the creative in society there corresponds the destructive; to those that seek insights into the fuller reality of being there are those who shun the tension of genuineness for the less demanding roles of party hack, officious bureaucrat or couch potato. Repression, inhibition and simple incompetence all result in unconscious aberrations of understanding and the creation of blind spots in a person's appreciative system.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> This "backwardness" is particularly obvious when it comes to dealing with members whose lives have been lived out in closed societies. The Middle East, where the only democratic country Israel is surrounded by dictatorships and countries run by strong-men, is a good case in point. The now formalized role of the "militant suicide bomber" first created by the Palestinians has backfired within Muslim communities to become a preferred method for exerting control and influencing the actions of other on the part of would-be power holders. That such a formal societal role should have emerged suggests a weakening of the Arab dramatic subject long denied opportunities to try other styles of living, of being, other than traditional Islam. Western liberal democracies have a better track-record for authentic character building since open societies allow for if not demand personal choice and the exercise of responsibility when it comes to the commonwealth. Current CC-PP games (Common Costs-Private Profits, *but don't tell anyone*) are—along with a breakdown in fiscal responsibility and the principle of subsidiarity in governmental affairs—reversing these historical cultural gains. The result is a further breakdown of meaning, as the prevalent world-mediated-by-meaning diverges from what would be ideally a solid and properly verified world-mediated-by-meaning. Control over meaning is necessary to make sure the collective wisdom does not go insane—or more precisely psychotic in the sense of being divorced from reality. The health of this collective world-mediated-by-meaning is one of the primary concerns of Professional Practitioners.

<sup>92</sup> Vickers uses the term "appreciative system" to refer to a common system of interpretation "as an ecological system, even though the laws which order and develop a population of ideas (conflicting, competing, and mutually supporting) in communicating minds are different from those which order and develop a population of monkeys in a rain forest or of insects under a paving stone." Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *Value Systems and Social Process* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1968), 12.

All of these factors involve insights into insights, and into oversights:

Insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.

Similarly, insight into oversight reveals the cumulative process of decline. For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The situation deteriorates to demand still further insights and, as they are blocked, policies become more unintelligent and action more inept. What is worse, the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified. So in every increasing measure intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living. Human activity settles down to a decadent routine, and initiative becomes the privilege of violence.<sup>93</sup>

Such is the price of losing control over meaning.

### Historical Consciousness

Being conscious of history is more than being aware of the way the passage of time changes the meaning of human events or even how the same expression can have a very different meaning in another context. It means to bring to consciousness one's understanding of what is going forward, knowing that one can never step outside as an external unbiased observer to "see" what is going forward. It is an awareness of being in history, being a part of history, making history, responding to history. Once again, it is the creative self in action, seeking insights that will add to the human good of order and avoiding oversights that lead to decline. It is being aware of progress, decline, recovery and redemption as these processes are expressed both in ourselves and in what is going on around us.

---

This shared symbolic system is itself one of the facts of life. To the visiting anthropologist it is as much a fact of the situation as climate or diet or endemic disease. It is, however, a fact of a different order and its difference lies in the process by which it is maintained and changed. This process is of critical importance . . . For it is essential to any society that its appreciative system shall change sufficiently to interpret a changing world, yet should remain sufficiently shared and sufficiently stable to mediate mutual understanding and common action and to make sense of personal experience. These demands manifestly conflict with each other increasingly as rates of change accelerate and contacts between disparate cultures multiply. This conflict seems to me to be the main characteristic of our time.

Ibid., 17. This is similar to Deutsch's more formal concept of "evolutionary epistemology". See David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality* (London, England: Penguin, 1997).

<sup>93</sup> *Insight*, xiv.

## *Myth and Magic*

Part of being conscious of history is being conscious of what is known and what remains to be known. It is to be conscious of finality, for finality in Lonergan's terms:

. . . is the dynamic aspect of the real. To affirm finality is to disagree with the Eleatic negation of change. It is to deny that this universe is inert, static, finished, complete. It is to affirm movement, fluidity, tension, approximateness, incompleteness. It is an affirmation that may turn out to have implications for the future, but affirmation that may turn out to have implications are a further question, for finality is an affirmation of fact and fact pertains not to the future but to the present and to the past. Finally, the fact in question cannot be denied outright, for our knowing is an event in the universe, and it is not inert, static, finished, complete; on the contrary, in so far as our experience is patterned intellectually, our knowing is in process; it consists in setting questions for intelligence, meeting them by insights, raising further question to elicit further insights, shifting to critical reflection and judgment only to shift back to further inquiry that will need the control of further critical reflection.<sup>94</sup>

Now to be aware of finality is to be aware that some things are known and some things are not. That which we know is part of explanatory theory, part of the realm of interiority, and part of common sense understanding. But common sense understanding does not know what it doesn't know, because common sense is not a coherent body of knowledge in the same way that empirical research results in formal theories on any given level of genus.<sup>95</sup> The realm of theory allows us to know how we know, but does not add materially to the task of understanding. Explanatory theory, both classical and statistical, do form well defined systems that includes not only what is know but also those questions to which we do not as yet have answers. Common sense intelligence, especially in the biological pattern of experience, needs to know what is going forward in order to orientate itself successfully within rapidly changing environments. Myth and magic come into play in that area of common sense intelligence that is concerned with questions that can be raised but for which no answers are yet known.

Mythic consciousness and the myths it generates are far more common then we might like to believe and the boundaries between the known and the to-be-known are subject to debate. Only a

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 446-47.

<sup>95</sup> Yet, common sense is very experimental. It deals with things as familiar, and to make things familiar is to ask questions, perform experiments and make judgments. Only the experiences are not guided by scientific theory but by asking others and trying things out ourselves. The result is a vast body of common sense knowledge that can never be grasped as a whole since it is all time-and-space-specific, embedded in the minds of intelligent people of common sense.

critical reflective consciousness can make the distinction between reality and myth and one has only to keep up on current affairs to appreciate the degree to which a critical reflective consciousness is lacking in contemporary society. But what does a mythic consciousness do?

Mythic consciousness experiences and imagines, understanding and judges, but it does not distinguish between these activities, and so it is incapable of guiding itself by the rule that the palpable act of rational assent is the necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge of reality. For it, the real is the object of a sufficiently integrated and a sufficiently intense flow of sensitive representations, feelings, words, and actions. Contrary judgments break the integration, but contrary judgments have a palpable ground only in the sphere of common, familiar, domesticated reality, in which trial and error exercise their pragmatic control. But contrary judgments have no palpable ground when unanalysed consciousness is orientated in the strange realm of the 'known unknown'. . . . As the uncritical scientist builds for himself a universe constituted by tiny, imaginable knobs or by a sponge-vortex aether, so the myth-maker builds himself a more vital and more impressive world. As for the uncritical scientist, so for the myth-makers, their respective worlds are 'real'.<sup>96</sup>

The opposite of mythic consciousness is the intellectually converted self-appropriated reflective consciousness operating at the cognitive level of judging. The opposite of myth is a metaphysics grounded in the cognitive operations of the human mind brought to awareness in the realm of interiority. It is the metaphysics of central and conjugate potentials, forms and acts operative within an explanatory worldview of emergent probability.

It is in this gap between anticipating something to be known and actually knowing it that the "speculative gnostic" and "practical magician" have a field day:

[Such people] anticipate scientific understanding of what things are and how results are to be produced. They anticipate the pure scientist's preoccupation with numbers and the applied scientist's preoccupation with tools. They are necessary factors in the dialectical development of human intelligence, for without their appearance and their eventual failure men would not learn the necessity of effective criteria for determining when adequate insight actually has occurred. But because their efforts are prior to the discovery of those criteria, because their pure desire to know is not contrasted with all their other desires, because names and heuristic anticipations can be mistaken for insights, because partial insights have the same generic character as full understanding, because the satisfaction of understanding can be mimicked by an air of profundity, a glow of self-importance, a power to command respectful attention, because the attainment of insights is a hidden event and its content a secret that does not admit communication, because other men worship understanding but are not secure enough in their own possession of it to challenge mistaken claims, the magician and then the gnostic have their day.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 538. It is against such mythic worlds generated by naïve realists, idealist or empiricists that control of meaning is so important. If such control is not maintained, human beings end up living in worlds-mediated-by-meaning disconnected from the 'real' world of verified forms. Under such conditions, decline is inevitable.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 542.

Because the human capacity for asking questions is virtually unlimited, the problem of mythic consciousness will always be with us. The problem of countering such forms of consciousness is a major part of Professional Practice, from Orientation to Diagnosis & Evaluation to estimating Scope and Constraints. It is a problem that involves intellectual conversion, for it is only through the self-appropriation of one's own rationality at the level of judging that the distinction between metaphysics and myths can be made. Lonergan once again elaborates on this theme.

Because myth has a permanent basis in the polymorphism of human consciousness, there is a permanent task of overcoming myth by metaphysics and it takes two forms. On the one hand, philosophic attempts to defend counter-positions cannot but regard the notion of being as the root of myth and the metaphysical analysis of being as an extension of scientific techniques into the domain of myth; for if the real is not being or if being is not the intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, then being is mythical, the possibility of metaphysics is precluded . . . On the other hand, outside the field of philosophy, there is the problem of human development that arises with each new generation. Because men do not develop intellectually or, if they do, because they become involved in counter-positions, they cannot be dealt with on the basis of intelligence and reason; but this makes it all the easier to deal with them on the sensitive level, to capture their imaginations, to whip up their emotions, to lead them to action. Power in its highest form is power over men, and the successful maker of myths has that power within his reach and grasp. But, clearly, if an adequate metaphysics can do something to overcome philosophic misinterpretations of the notion of myth, it needs to be extended into a philosophy of education and the education has to be made effective before there can be exorcized the risk of adventurers climbing to power through sagacious myth-making.<sup>98</sup>

Effective education (of the creative self) is thus another important component of Professional Practice.

### *Mystery*

Like mythic consciousness, mystery will also be with us; indeed, we are as human beings orientated to mystery. The reason for this is when human beings are caught up in the detached and disinterested desire to know they find that this desire to know has no limits. Yet we are creatures limited in both time and space. There will always be further questions, things that we don't know. The difference between myth/magic and mystery is that when it comes to mystery

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 543.



we can ask questions but can never have answers. One of the greatest mysteries is that of the Transcendent Being whose existence we can affirm but whose nature we can never know.

The same holds when non-differentiated common sense intelligence faces explanatory theories. Empirical hermeneutical structures relates things to each other, creating an often alien world to common sense understanding—from the paradox of quantum physics where an object can jump from one place to another without crossing the intervening space or of atom physics where apparently solid objects are nearly all space. Human beings can't live in such a world; we require a common sense world that relates things to us in familiar and comfortable ways. Even if we reached a state where all verifiable statements were made, this

. . . would not free man from the necessity of dynamic images that partly are symbols and partly are signs. This necessity neither supposes nor implies the commonly pejorative meaning of myth, for it remains despite complete and fully conscious rejection of counter-positions, of the attempt to confine explanation within a descriptive mould, of gnosticism and of magic. It is a necessity that has its ground in the very structure of man's being, in which intellectual activity is a higher integration of the sensitive flow and the sensitive flow is a higher integration of organic performance. To such images, then let us give the name of mysteries.<sup>99</sup>

Mysteries can unfold according to the development of human sensitivity and its integration into a higher viewpoint or the distortions of biased minds can transform these mysteries into myths.

### *Training the "Other Eye"*

Also crucial to this notion of Professional Practice is an understanding of fundamental institutional changes and the way they are going forward within one's own time-and-space-specific context. Since institutions are society's building blocks for the good of order, it is important to know how they come into being, are supported over changing conditions and usually at some point go into decline. The span of attention is not days, months, years or even decades—it is change measured in centuries and millennia, in the million year development of the human species. It is the broad context of all that we are and do.

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 547.

Bringing to consciousness, developing a sensitivity to, these institutional and historical processes going on around us and of which we are a part requires an imaginative and explanatory leap beyond our sense impressions and common sense understanding of what is happening. While it is important to read history, especially those works like Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* (1957), there are also such works as Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005) and *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1999), Jane Jacobs' *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), Barbara W. Tuchman's *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (1984), Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (2003), and Charles Mackay, LL.D., *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* (originally published 1841), J. Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man* (1973) or James Burke, *Connections* (1978).<sup>100</sup> Note that most of these have to do with the way institutions fail. This is very useful information, perhaps more so than knowing how institutions succeed, for failure lays bare underlying dynamics that otherwise may stay hidden when things are going well. It is only by understanding what can go wrong (a theory of errors) that preventive measure can be taken. Such is the importance of the Shoah.

And there are other tools. Doris Lessing has two training exercises that she uses to extend her understanding of what is going forward. The first of these is to imagine what the culture that will follow our own will be like, especially what that culture may think of our own times.

I spend a good deal of time wondering how we will seem to the people who come after us. This is not an idle interest, but a deliberate attempt to strengthen the power of that 'other eye,' which we can use to judge ourselves. Anyone who reads history at all knows that the passionate and powerful convictions of one century usually seem absurd, extraordinary, to the next. There is no epoch in history that seems to us as it must have to the people of lived through it. What we live through, in any age, is the effect on us of mass emotions and of social conditions from which it is almost impossible to detach ourselves. Often the mass emotions are those which seem the noblest, best and most beautiful. And yet, inside a year, five years, a decade, five decades, people will be asking, 'How could

---

<sup>100</sup> Toynbee, *A Study of History* (1957). Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999). Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2005). Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004). Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (New York, N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1984). Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (Canada: Anchor Canada, 2003). Charles Mackay, LL.D., *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* (New York, N.Y.: Harmony Books, 1980; originally published in 1841). J. Bronowski. *The Ascent of Man* (London: BBC, 1973). James Burke, *Connections* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978).

they have believed that” because events will have taken place that will have banished the said mass emotions to the dustbin of history.<sup>101</sup>

Exploring the parameters of the mass emotions characteristic of Thomas Müntzer’s time will be the subject of the next chapter. But in the meantime it is important to note Lessing’s own insight into how future generations will look back on our own insanities, for it directly concerns one of the primary objectives of Professional Practice: bringing what is known into the planning and decision-making processes.

I think when people look back at our time, they will be amazed at one thing more than any other. It is this—that we do know more about ourselves now than people did in the past. But that very little of it has been put into effect. There has been this great explosion of information about ourselves. The information is the result of mankind’s still infant ability to look at itself objectively. It concerns our behaviour patterns. The sciences in question are sometimes called the behavioural sciences and are about how we function in groups and as individuals, not about how we like to think we behave and function, which is often very flattering. But about how we can be observed to be behaving when observed as dispassionately as when we observe the behaviour of other species. These social or behavioural sciences are precisely the result of our capacity to be detached and unflattering about ourselves. There is this great mass of new information from universities, research institutions and from gifted amateurs, but our ways of governing ourselves haven’t changed.<sup>102</sup>

The second tool that Lessing talks about is the “What do you see?” game that trains a person to go beyond superficial appearances and into the implications of what they perceive.<sup>103</sup> This can

---

<sup>101</sup> Doris Lessing, *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*, Massey Lectures, 24<sup>th</sup> series (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 13.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>103</sup> Doris Lessing, *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* (New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins, 1999), 23-24.

At home there was a game that all the parents played with their children. It was called, What Did You See? Mara was about Dann’s age when she was first called into her father’s room one evening, where he sat in his big carved and coloured chair. He said to her, ‘And now we are going to play a game. What was the thing you liked best today?’

At first she chattered: “I played with my cousin . . . I was out with Shera in the garden . . . I made a stone house.’ And then he had said, ‘Tell me about the house.’ And she said, ‘I made a house of the stones that come from the river bed.’ And he said, ‘Now tell me about the stones.’ And she said, ‘They were mostly smooth stones, but some were sharp and had different shapes.’ ‘Tell me what the stones looked like, what colour they were, what did they feel like.’

And by the time the game ended she knew why some stones were smooth and some sharp and why they were different colours, some cracked, some so small they were almost sand. She knew how rivers rolled stones along and how some of them came from far away. She knew that the river had once been twice as wide as it was now. There seemed no end to what she knew, and yet her father had not told her much, but kept asking questions so she found the answers in herself. Like, ‘Why do you think some stones are smooth and round and some still sharp?’ And she thought and replied, ‘Some have been in the water a long time, rubbing against other stones, and some have only just been broken off bigger stones.’

This is pure Lonergan: starting with the question, formulating answers and then verifying these formulations—in this case by referring to memories.

start at a very superficial level. What do you see? I see a book. What is on the cover of this book? And so forth. As training continues, the questions go deeper. What do you see? I see a book. Who do you think made that book? An industrial society capable of printing large quantities of information for easy access by a number of people. What does this book tell you about this industrial society? That it must be at least in part democratic, otherwise such work would be suppressed in order to keep a minority in power. That the more people know the more they will want to know, and that knowing is unlimited. That the more people know the harder it is to manipulate and control them, especially if these books are of a critical nature. That there's a well developed good of order in the society that made this book, for the ink, pages, binding—not to mention the content—are only possible in a stable well functioning society that has enough float or leisure to produce such works and people who are not so desperate for survival that they have the time to read them. That this is a literate society.<sup>104</sup>

And so it goes. It is this deeper awareness of the significance of objects and events in the world around us that needs to be developed. That is why these two questions—"What will the culture coming after us think of us?" and "what do you see?"—are essential parts of my own pattern of experience.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter objectifies my initial horizon and intentions, sketching out my basic positions for a creative self operative in an open society, organizing social science knowledge for professional practice through the transdisciplinary work of Otto Friedman and the transcendental work of Bernard Lonergan. A few of the basic counter-positions—what and who I am against—are mentioned, e.g. the closed society, reliance upon traditional authority and power, and an

---

<sup>104</sup> Of course, these questions are derived from my own interests. A more artistic person might inquire into the color arrangements, type font, spacing on the page, the quality of the illustrations (if any) and the beauty of the bind. A literary person might go into the text to tease out the author's intentions. Whatever the pattern of experience, this is the game played out in Chapter Four—a game that reveals more about the horizon and intentions of the person asking questions than what can be known about Muntzer's own life.

uncritical “unconverted” and “unauthentic” approach to being. Covered were such subjects as OR/D&E/S&C, control over meaning and an historical consciousness. Together with the background material of Chapter One the grounds have been laid to consider those primary mass emotions, various controls over meaning, and changing institutional structures of Thomas Müntzer’s time and place, for without some understanding of his times it would be impossible to understand the significance of his own life.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that what follows in Chapters Three and Four is not a scholarly study of Müntzer but an initial foray into his life and times that exposes my own horizon and intentions. Encountering Müntzer is to face the affirmation of positions and counter-positions contrary to my own subjective stance.

## CHAPTER 3

### WHAT WAS GOING FORWARD

The first step in calling Müntzer into being is to call into being the times in which he lived, for to understand who he was and what he did involves understanding what was going forward during this period. Müntzer was an historical figure, a public figure, and as such he was perceived in terms of the major issues and trends of his time. His choice of whom and what to support and whom and what to oppose in effect sets the incarnate meaning of his life; whether he did so in a reasonable, responsible and loving manner indicates his general level authenticity.

To bring to life, to bring to existence, Müntzer's era one has to depend on those historians whose expertise in sifting through the records of the time—if done well—provides a more accurate understanding than what I am likely to achieve in this study. But there are at least two problems in relying on historians. The first is that historians write from the perspective of their own times and for that reason are engaged in setting out their own positions. The second is that they use generally agreed upon categories to “divide” history into recognizable segments, so for example there's a predetermination that Müntzer lived and worked first of all during the opening segments of the Reformation and secondly at a time in European history when there was a resurgence in learning, art, technology, exploration and all the other features during what we know as the Renaissance. While this makes it harder to enter into the common sense of his times, it does make it easier when comparing his with our own historical conditions inasmuch as long term developments are brought into existence that transcend what was understood by Müntzer's contemporaries.

The first step is to anticipate what there is to be known. Given that the primary purpose of this study is to objectivity my own subjectivity and enhance my own foundational stance, this means an understanding of early 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany both as it would have been framed by those living there and how it is framed now in light of subsequent developments—especially that

of Lonergan's Transcendental Method and Friedman's Transdisciplinary Framework. This upper blade of theory provides the heuristic structure for sifting out the important from the inconsequential, for what is important are such things as the orientation of those involved in public life, their diagnosis and evaluation of what was going forward, and scope and constraints that applied given their foundational stance. Such a case history would be a major work in itself, but all that is needed for this study are the key features that suggest the kinds of issues and concerns that preoccupied Müntzer.<sup>1</sup> Since the primary purpose of this study is my own foundational stance, the very selection of issues and concerns provides additional evidence to my own positions; what is important is that my own preoccupations do not predetermine the historical data. This does not seem likely, not only because I share the historical breakdown into the Reformation and the Renaissance but I have no preference as to how the data is to be interpreted.<sup>2</sup>

Given that Professional Practices stresses an understanding of what is or is not going forward at the institutional level, the primary object of consideration is the good of order both as an ideal type and as expressed in the institutions of the day.<sup>3</sup> This requires insights into the

---

<sup>1</sup> The concept of a "case history" is derived from the need of any trouble-shooter to know what has gone on before. The term itself is used in medical circles to describe the patient's medical history, a record of what has gone on before any current medical problem. The same holds true for Professional Practice, where it is necessary to sketch both the historical and geographical conditions of any socio-political problem situation as a precursor to working out an accurate and reliable diagnosis and evaluation of the root causes from the problem's symptoms. A preliminary set of what features to include and exclude is worked out over the next few pages. This set depends on the nature of the problems Professional Practitioners are likely to encounter.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, this is not true. The upper blade of theory affirms the reality of emergent probability as the only viable empirical worldview, counters naïve realism with an understanding of understanding as experiencing/understanding/judging, and highlights the importance of the subject as the major source of new developments. Since the assessment of various historians according to this upper blade is not possible—once again this would be a major work of its own—the strategy is to sort through their material to find those observations and insights that do apply, the assumption being that even if they may be mistaken from a theoretical perspective their writings still contain elements of truth.

<sup>3</sup> The good of order is the existing common sense arrangements that provide for understanding and predicting the behaviour of people in daily life so that individual needs are met and value losses avoided. Because the good of order resides in common sense intelligence and common sense intelligence does not go for comprehensive systems or have any way to know its own content, there is no way to actually determine existing rules and regulations that keep everything working. But there are images of society, of what it means to be human, of the past and the future, that together are expressed either in ideological or

conditions within which Müntzer positioned himself, especially his horizon, the primary objects or things that he might have been concerned with and his intentions when interacting with others. This work also draws upon contemporary historical insights, contributing to the contextual analysis required and grounded in professional practice.

Under these circumstances, a comprehensive analysis is impossible.<sup>4</sup> But what can be done is an initial survey that suggests productive courses to follow should a more detailed analysis be undertaken. Furthermore, there are key features that simply cannot be overlooked, things like the apocalyptic expectation that permeated a Europe devastated by the plague years, the subsequent century long economic depression, the presence of heretics on the Papal throne and the military pressure of Islamic forces poised to enter central Europe. Also, it was an intensely religious age dominated by the one surviving institution of the Western Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church, which stood in contrast to the good of a feudal order that rested on the great manor houses. In retrospect, we also know that this period saw the beginnings of an industrial transformation and the emergence of global commercial enterprises that lead to the first post-agricultural economy in Britain a mere few centuries later. It was also the beginning of the fragmentation of the Roman Church into the confessional system of Churches.

Four areas were selected for review:

1. The passionate and powerful convictions that ran in the air,
2. The dialectics of positions and counter-positions on the good of order in society,
3. The actually situation concerning the good of order as expressed in whatever fundamental institutional changes were going forward, and
4. The ways people of that time and place controlled meaning.

---

utopian thinking. These are the “images” of the good of order that provide direction and principles for self-regulation.

<sup>4</sup> This is impossible in any academic sense, but not impossible as a part of Professional Practice. In this discipline, what is important is arriving at a correct diagnosis and evaluation. The case history or personal profile provides important historical and geographical facts as well as data on the development of the time-and-space-specific situation under evaluation, but the actual confirmation of the diagnosis depends on those research projects deemed necessary to acquire more data on the symptoms and test hypothesis concerning their probable causes. This diagnosis and evaluation then becomes part of the case history for further problems.



Emerging out of the upper blade of theory, these four factors apply equally to Müntzer's time, his life and to understanding our current situation—and hence to the objectification and enhancement of my own foundational stance in Chapter Five. While there are other ways of framing socio-political conditions—the study of great figures in history, the retrospective sorting out of historical periods, a structural or systems analysis of society as a whole, the study of the common lives of people as they lived, the various specialities such as church history or legal development, or the conceptual tools of conflict analysis and real-world politick—each fails to take into account the creative selves seeking the greater good within their own time-and-space-specific situations. For every person shares in common passions, commits to one or another of the ideological and utopian ways of ordering society, participates in their own role in the good of order and is affected by any fundamental institutional changes that might be going on.

For the purposes of developing the creative self within Professional Practice, there are two broad lessons to be learned from the study of history. The first is to develop an historical consciousness that places immediate problems and difficulties within a broader historical context, allowing questions to be raised that otherwise might not be considered. For example, What *will* those that come after us think about what we are now doing? or In the long run, does this course of action promote progress or decline? The second reason to study history is to refine one's ability to analyze different socio-political circumstances for OR, D&E and S&C in our own time through gaining an experience and understanding of various transdisciplinary variables and their interrelationships in other times.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Otto Friedman developed a Transdisciplinary Framework for organizing socio-political knowledge for professional practice. This framework consists of a number of transdisciplinary variables and their relationships as operative in the social science paradigm of social or symbolic interaction that is used to understand what is going forward in any unique time-and-space-specific situation socio-political situation during times of fundamental institutional change. While the social sciences provide an understanding of the variables themselves, their use and interactions can only be understood within some historical situation. A fuller description of these variables is given in Appendix III: *A Transdisciplinary Framework for Professional Practice*.

There is another reason for studying history.

*Passionate and Powerful Convictions*

Anyone who reads history at all knows that the passionate and powerful convictions of one century usually seem absurd, extraordinary, to the next. There is no epoch in history that seems to us as it must have to the people who lived through it. What we live through, in any age, is the effect on us of mass emotions and of social conditions from which it is almost impossible to detach ourselves. Often the mass emotions are those which seem the noblest, best and most beautiful. And yet, inside a year, five years, a decade, five decades, people will be asking, ‘How *could* they have believed that?’ because events will have taken place that will have banished the said mass emotions to the dustbin of history.<sup>6</sup>

What strikes the modern mind, in reading the events of the Müntzer’s day, is the deep religious fever that permeated society. Müntzer himself was one such historical event, with his pastoral involvement with “the elect” and his work on a new liturgy to reflect a deep religious shift in society. Then, in a town with a similar name, a group of utopian Christians took control and established—at least for a time—a community in which everything was held in common.<sup>7</sup> For the next century, persecution, expulsion and outright warfare on the basis of religious discrimination seemed to be the order of the day. And yet, Europeans were rediscovering and making their own an intellectual heritage lost since the days of the Roman Empire: printing presses made thousands of books readily available, universities were established, and global exploration was well underway as great commercial empires were built.

---

The Master was a great supporter of historical research. His one complaint about history students, however, was that they generally posted over the most valuable lessons that history has to offer.

‘For instance?’ asked one student.

‘For instance, the sight of problems, once so vital, but now no more than cold abstractions in a book. The characters in history’s drama, once thought to be so mighty, but in reality mere puppets pulled by strings so obvious to us, so pathetically unsuspected by them!’

Anthony de Mello, *One Minute Nonsense* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1992), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Doris Lessing, *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside* (Massey Lectures, 24<sup>th</sup> series. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 13. Lessing’s italics.

<sup>7</sup> Williston Walker, Richard A. Norris, David W. Latz, and Robert T. Hariday, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 459. The town was Münster in Westphalia where radicals flocked in large numbers in the early 1530s, took over the city in 1534 to create a New Jerusalem. The bishop of Münster, with the aid of Catholic and Lutheran troops, retook the city by force a year and a half later.

As moderns, we can identify with the latter with the roots of our own civilization. But the former, medieval mentality?<sup>8</sup> It is hard for us to imagine that:

Religious beliefs were deeply woven into the fabric of early modern European culture from the princely courts to the village green. Ecclesiastical institutions supported social elites economically, justified their superiority, and defended the political culture they dominated.<sup>9</sup>

And this is the question to start with, “How *could* they have believed that?” How could they have believed that sectarian differences over a theological question—predestination for example—could lead people to kill each other in the most barbarian fashion? How could they have believed that their world was coming to an end when in retrospect we know that the intellectual and economic transformation of Europe was just starting? Why was it so important to “be saved”, to be part of the “elect”, to have true faith? Various possibilities are explored in this section, but there is no denying this passionate involvement with Christendom.

A second question is related to the first is, What did they presume? for in planning and policy-making, presumptions matter: presumptions not only figure in the definition of the situation but they help to establish people’s concerns, especially how these concerns evolve to shape aims and set concrete objectives. Furthermore, presumptions have an effect on options and people’s choices among them: some options are given extra weight while others are eliminated.

There seem to be two primary assumptions that went largely unquestioned. The first was that Christianity alone set the standards for moral and ethical behaviour. Secular society did not exist, at least in that form of a strict separation of Church and State that shapes our lives today, and ecclesial powers set the appreciative system for society as a whole. Problems developed when those responsible for this appreciative system failed to live up to their own belief, being as lax in their morals as everyone else.

---

<sup>8</sup> Entering into this highly religious environment where the primary concern was the saving of souls is really the foundational challenge Müntzer provides in this encounter, keeping in mind that since religious have been known to go bad discernment is necessary to distinguish between authentic and unauthentic Christianity as a religious tradition subject to its own biases, preunderstandings and prejudgment. The latter is also a modern Christian preoccupation, a problematique that from my perspective requires entry into the realm of interiority and into the adequacy of one’s own foundational stance.

<sup>9</sup> Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 7-8.

The second presumption, especially prevalent among reformers, was that:

They perceived ancient Christian writings and the primitive Church as an unchanging and divinely constructed whole. For the reformers, the medieval Church had deviated from its true original form, which they strove to realize once again. Even those Roman Catholics who defended the historical innovations of the medieval papacy did so with the assumption that these new traditions derived from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as part of a divine historical plan.<sup>10</sup>

It was only with the rise of an historical consciousness several centuries later that it was possible to conceive of an evolving Church that retains core doctrines amid the pluralistic reality of diverse cultural worlds mediated by meaning. Indeed, it seems evident that the Church is going through a second major historical transformation, namely de-institutionalization, that effectively reduces the church to merely one organization among many that could cease to exist without the body politic either caring or noticing.<sup>11</sup>

#### Reform was in the Air

Reform was the universal preoccupation of the age [of the Renaissance Popes], expressed in literature, sermons, pamphlets, songs and political assemblies. The cry of those in every age alienated by the worldly footing of the Church and a yearning for a purer worship of God, it had become widespread and general since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was the cry Saint Francis had heard in a vision in the church of San Damiano, 'My house is in ruins. Restore it!' It was dissatisfaction with materialism and unfit clergy, with pervasive corruption and money-grubbing at every level from the Papal Curia to the village parish—hence the cry for reform of 'head and members.' Dispensations were forged for sale, donations for crusade swallowed up by the Curia, indulgences peddled in common commerce so that the people, complained the Chancellor of Oxford in 1450, no longer cared what evils they did because they could buy remission of the penalty for sin for sixpence or win it 'as a stake in a game of tennis.'

Dissatisfaction was felt with absenteeism and plural holding of benefices, with the indifference of the hierarchy and its widening separation from the lower clergy, with the prelates' furred gowns and suites or retainers, with coarse and ignorant village priests, with clerical lives given to concubines and carousing, no different from the average man's. This was a source of deep resentment because in the common mind if not in doctrine priests were supposed to be holier as the appointed intermediaries between man and God. Where would man find forgiveness and salvation if these intermediaries failed in their office? People felt a sense of betrayal in the daily evidence of the gulf between what Christ's agents were supposed to be and what they had become. Basically, in the words of a sub-prior of Durham, people were 'starved for the word of God,' and could not obtain it from unworthy ministers of God the 'true faith and moral precepts in which the soul's salvation consists'.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Wallace, *The Long European Reformation* (2004), 8.

<sup>11</sup> The first major foundational shift being the institutionalization of the early church under the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine.

<sup>12</sup> Tuchman, *Folly* (1984), 54-55. "Stake in a game of tennis": G. G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1918), 204. "Starved for the word of God": G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England, 1350-1450* (Cambridge, 1926), 31-32.

There are several interesting points in this passage: the desire for the “true faith”; the psychic need for “forgiveness and salvation”; the long development of a need for reform that the individual egotism of the Popes and other recognized leaders plus the group bias had created through demeaning as insignificant the preoccupations of others; the blatant mismatch between what was professed and what was done; and the cheapening of everything sacred and holy that might give meaning and purpose to a person’s life at a time when life was cheap and for the most part impoverished.

It is interesting that questions of “true faith” still exist five centuries later and are as important as ever, at least to those involved with Christian affairs (such questions are no longer the preoccupation of Western society). So too the desire to return to the Churches’ foundations in scripture and to live a holy life based on discipleship—although both seem to be a response to rebuilding the Church in an age of declining membership than facing the issues of the day.<sup>13</sup>

But the medieval Church may not have been as corrupt as the reformers made it out to be.

One conclusion to be drawn from the accumulation of recent research on the Latin Church before the upheaval was that it was not as corrupt and ineffective as Protestants have tended to portray it, and that in generally satisfied the spiritual needs of late medieval people.

That recovered perspective only serves to emphasize the importance of the ideas the reformers put forward. They were not attacking a moribund Church that was an easy target, ripe for change; but despite this, their message could still seize the imaginations of enough people to overcome the power and success of the old church structures. Ideas mattered profoundly; they had an independent power

---

<sup>13</sup> This discrepancy between what church members should be doing and what they actually do is part of my own questioning. I have to ask myself, given the imminent threat of a Jihadist’s nuclear attack, the elimination of biodiversity, population pressures that strip land, the need to generate wealth, the continual tension between open and closed societies—what is being proposed? Not the exercise of intelligence but a return to intersubjectivity that constitutes a retreat from reality? It is only when one probes deeper into Christianity that it becomes possible to find meanings and values acceptable to educated sceptics who otherwise judge Christianity by its stance of Creationism or Intelligent Design—positions that are nonsense to scientifically literate people.

Cardinal Schönborn put it very well:

St. Thomas says that ‘one should not try to defend the Christian faith with arguments that are so patently opposed to reason that the faith is made to look ridiculous.’ It is simply nonsense to say that the world is only 6,000 years old. To try to prove this scientifically is what St. Thomas calls provoking the ‘*irrisio infidelium*,’ the scorn of the unbelievers. It is not right to use such false arguments and to expose the faith to the scorn of unbelievers.

“Cardinal Schönborn on God and Creation”, ZENIT (Vienna, Austria: Dec 19, 2005, Zevet.org). A provisional translation of a catechetical lecture given by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, archbishop of Vienna, in November, 2005.

of their own, and they could be corrosive and destructive. The most corrosive ideas of all were to be found in the Bible, an explosive, unpredictable force in every age. . . .

The power of ideas explains why the Reformation was such a continent-wide event: Using the common language of Latin, which all educated people spoke and wrote, religious revolutionaries could spread their message across smaller-scale culture and language barriers.<sup>14</sup>

The seeds of radical social change were already there, amplified by the new print medium that made the bible easily available to anyone who could afford the relatively minimal price. When combine with apocalyptic expectations, it was an explosive situation.

### Apocalyptic Expectations

As has been noted, the medieval and Reformation periods were profoundly religious. Theirs was a world-mediated-by-meaning centered around a Christian perspective, a deeply religious (and often superstitious) world where the Church mediated between man and God, and the rhythm of people's lives revolved around daily prayers, formal worship at Sunday services, and the yearly calendar of the Church—all closely tied to cycles of the birth and death embodied in an agricultural solar-based economy.

In such a world-mediated-by-meaning, events are often understood in terms of divine pleasure or displeasure (the scientific worldview had still to emerge and humanists were still part of the religious world—at least up to the Enlightenment). In dire times—recurring cycles of Plague, continual low level warfare, scandalous behaviour of religious authorities and the presence of Islamic forces at the very gates of Europe—the tendency was to think of all these as punishments from God for going against His word. When social and political orders were being cast aside, it was as if the Last Days—the days of judgment—were at hand.<sup>15</sup>

Above all, large numbers of Europeans were convinced in varying ways and with varying degrees of fervor that the momentous events through which they were living signified that the visible world

---

<sup>14</sup> MacCullock, *Reformation* (2003), xx-xxi.

<sup>15</sup> This is for me a serious misreading of God, one based on fear and trembling that belongs to the heavy hand of secular authorities than to a God who cares. Besides, generating fear and anxiety is a great way to control the behaviour of others: a citizenry caught up in apocalyptic expectations *needs* a mediator with God in ways that content and thriving people do not. This is not to say that praying on such feelings was a deliberate act, plan or policy; it was just that the two fitted together in a quite natural way—an emergent scheme of mutual reinforcement that once established could take on a life of its own.

was about to end. Is so, it was vitally important for the world's condition at its end to correspond as closely as possible to what God wanted. The perpetual threat from the Turks was proof enough, even before the Reformation (and some will have known that their Islamic enemies were also widely convinced that the world would end in the Hígra year of 1000, the equivalent of the Christian 1592). . . Without that pervasive expectation of an imminent, dramatic change, few might have listened to Luther's challenge to the Church. Without it, Savonarola could not have seized Florence, thousands would not have trekked to Münster to set up a new Jerusalem, Franciscans might not have toiled to convert the Indios in the Americas, Friedrich V might not have traveled to Prague, Transylvanian princes would not have found a sense of crusading mission, Oliver Cromwell might not have readmitted the Jews to England.

Without appreciating this background of thought, much of the Reformation will only be understood as a vandalistic, mean-minded, or money-grabbing assault on a settled round of devotion and a world of beauty and celebration.<sup>16</sup>

If civilization was about to end, how then to get back into God's graces and insure one's salvation? New ideas were in circulation; reform was in the air; and the Last Judgment was near at hand.<sup>17</sup>

There were real dangers. Beyond the institutional shifts, beyond the group bias of the Church that drove the need for reform, lies an image of the future that seems to have permeated society since the Black Plague, the rise of the Infidels in the east, and a general economic decline that lasted a hundred years. Müntzer's time was, according to the tacit understanding of the day, an apocalyptic age where the last days were immanent and redemption an urgent necessity. The Plague was especially important, for its periodic recurrence through Europe over three centuries could not be understood as we understand it today, as a disease propagated by fleas and rats, but only be understood in religious terms as divine retribution.

The European world didn't end in 1350, but it changed dramatically. Plague is a complex disease whose dissemination requires the presence of bacteria, fleas, and rodents. Endemic forms of plague exist in reservoirs among rodent populations throughout the world. Occasionally an epizootic disease among the rodents forces the plague-carrying fleas to find other hosts, including humans. Once plague has entered the human population, it spreads inexorably in great pandemics, series of cyclical epidemics covering vast areas, that can last several centuries. In Christendom the Black Death began

---

<sup>16</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation* (2003), 532-33.

<sup>17</sup> The apocalyptic tension in the "war" of good versus evil may well derive its emotional power from expectations of the Last Judgment (it certainly does from the human mind's inability to deal with death). This is one of the most threatening ideas we can have, namely that God of judgment whose hand can heal but can also met out punishment for our misdeeds. Yet there is an alternative position that transforms this into a final healing where one is restored to a right relationship with God. Whether one believes in it or not, "The Last Judgment might be called a process of right evaluation; it simply means that everyone will finally come to understand what is worthy and what is not." Foundation for Inner Peace, *A Course in Miracles*, combined volume, second edition (Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992), 34.

in the ports of southern Italy and spread like a slow but relentless brush fire across Europe. News of the calamity preceded the outbreak of the illness itself, and religious officials called for special services to ward off the catastrophe. Yet inevitably the disease came, for as the Florentine humanist Boccaccio noted, “all the wisdom and ingenuity of man were unavailing” to prevent it. The initial outbreak struck rich and poor, clergy and laity, townsfolk and peasants. The epidemic’s pathology left the survivors in shock yet relieved that God had relented in his punishment; but the disease, which was now endemic among the rat and flea populations in Europe, reappeared in the early 1360s. This second deadly assault of plague had a profound psychological and cultural impact whose effects were as devastating as the Black Death.<sup>18</sup>

Again,

The epidemic of 1347-50 was the greatest demographic catastrophe which Europe has suffered in its recorded history. Although statistical precision is impossible and records are sparse and inconsistent, the most plausible estimates suggest that a third of the population of Western Europe died. . . . The psychological shock is hard for modern minds to capture. In the graphic phrase of the poet Guillaume de Machaut, who lived through the epidemic, death ‘leapt from its cage’, attacking its victims suddenly, indiscriminately. Fatalism and despair took hold among populations confronted by the daily spectacle of blackened bodies tipped into vast open pits in improvised cemeteries a disaster which they did not understand and could neither avoid nor control. In the Low Countries, great processions of flagellant penitents began to appear in the streets of the main towns. Death, corruption, repentance, became increasingly insistent themes of an age of war in which life was cheap and brief.<sup>19</sup>

Although Müntzer was born over a hundred years later, when Europe was once again on the move after a hundred year economic depression, the effects of the Plague still lingered. Such deep collective traumas are passed down through generations, as for example the effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s and WWII a decade later are still with North Americans in a policy of arms development and full employment at any cost. At least we understand both the collapse of 1929 and the events that led up to the most logistically complex war ever fought. The real cause of the Black Death was never known until medical and public health practices had identified virus and their rat carriers as the prime vector of the disease a few centuries later. In a superstitious age where Christendom reigned supreme, it must have seemed a time when God’s wraith was laid upon the earth. The institution responsible for mediating between God and man—the Church of Rome—was itself in dire straights with the Great Schism. It is one thing to suffer a calamity and

---

<sup>18</sup> Wallace, *The Long European Reformation* (2004), 25-6. Quote from the introduction of *The Decameron*, quoted in Horrox, *The Black Death*, pp. 26-34, there at p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, volume I of *Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991), 7.



know why and quite another to suffer without being able to identify the cause or do anything to stave off further disasters.

What if?

The Pope became a heretic? Church councils strayed from true faith? Corruption set into Christendom? Such medieval question, part of the ongoing debate between papal and councillor authority within the Church, entered into the realm of practical common sense with a succession of several popes whose collective behaviour resembled secular Renaissance Princes rather than spiritual leaders.

The period through which the Church as an institution truly lost its authority and hence lost its control over meaning ran from 1471 to 1534, the reign of six Popes—not counting the short reigns of Pius III (Sept 22-Oct 18, 1503) and the Dutch foreign Hadrian VI (1522-23), whose attempts to reform were blocked by resentful Romans and resisted by a Curia resentful of his foreign status.<sup>20</sup> These six Popes—Sixtus IV (1471-84), Innocent VIII (1484-92), Alexander VI (1492-1503), Julius II (1503-13), Leo X (1513-21) and Clement VII (1523-34)—did not emerge full blown during the Renaissance but followed upon habits that had developed in the Papacy since the exile of the Papacy in Avignon a century and a half earlier. With this Great Schism in the Papacy, the hierarchical structure of the Church had a legitimacy problem—not to mention that with the Schism the Church became highly politicized. When this happened, the stage was set for a series of Popes that would reflect not the spiritual responsibilities of the Church but the temporal intrigues and power plays of the aristocracy. This was the height of folly, as Tuchman points out:

[These six popes] carried [these secular interests] to an excess of venality, amorality, avarice, and spectacularly calamitous power politics. Their governance dismayed the faithful, brought the Holy See into disrepute, left unanswered the cry for reform, ignored all protests, warnings and signs of rising revolt, and ended by breaking apart the unity of Christendom and losing half the papal constituency to the Protestant secession. Theirs was a folly of perversity, perhaps the most

---

<sup>20</sup> *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (HarperCollins), 1028-29.

consequential in Western history, if measured by its result in centuries of ensuing hostility and fratricidal war.<sup>21</sup>

Such conditions provided a rich soil for the emergence of such reformers as Luther and revolutionaries as Müntzer, and once they were on the scene offered resources for their continued existence. In the end, this succession of popes made a break-up inevitable; in the end, the reformers had no choice but to break away from the Church. But long before this happened, the faithful were caught in a paradoxical form of communication.

Paradoxical communication occurs when the non-verbal message contradicts the verbal message, a deadly form of interaction that can create all sorts of internal tensions. Such paradoxes abound in human relationships, from a mother whose voice proclaim love while rough hands convey hostility and anger, to an editor's comment to an aspiring author "you sure do write some good!", to a bully who says "This is not a threat, but . . ." <sup>22</sup> In this case, official pronouncements and Sunday sermons stated one thing while the behaviour of priests and ecclesial authority proclaimed another. What then was the real message? What then was to be believed? Out of this confusion, new messengers—new would-be power holders offering an alternative control over meaning—could rise to ease the tension.

And the discrepancy was obvious:

Under the heady humanism of the Renaissance, the popes, once the Holy See was definitively restored to Rome in the 1430s, adopted as their own the values and style of the piratical princes of the Italian city-states. Opulent, elegant, unprincipled and endlessly at odds with each other, the rulers of Italian life were, by reason of their disunity and limited territorial scope, no more than potentates of discord. In reproducing their avarice and luxury, the six popes did no better than their models and, because of their superior status, usually worse. Pursuing the spoils of office like hounds on a scent, each of the six, who included a Borgia and two Medicis, was obsessed by ambition to establish a family fortune that would outlive him. In this pursuit each in turn plunged into the temporal politics of the time, which meant into an incessantly shifting series of combinations, intrigues and manœuvres without permanent interest or guiding principle and regulated only by what appeared to be the balance of power at the moment. As the political balance was fragile and fluctuating, these arrangements were in a constant state of reversal and betrayal, allowing, indeed requiring, the exercise of deals, bribes and conspiracies as a substitute for thought or program.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (New York, N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1984), 52.

<sup>22</sup> See Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

<sup>23</sup> Tuchman, *Folly* (1984), 53.

What if the pope became a heretic? There were the councils of course, who also claimed final power over the Church, plus the voices of reformers and ultimately the consent of the people. But this was corruption at the very top, and corruption at the top has implications far beyond mere corruption:

Especially malignant is the issue of virtues and vices of senior politicians. No amount of anti-corruption laws and other anti-corruption instruments will achieve significant impact unless the virtues of senior politicians are improved. The damage caused by the vices of senior politicians goes far beyond that of 'corruption' as this term is usually understood, however harmful. It makes achievement of high-quality moral capacities to govern impossible, damages political cultures and has very negative impacts on all social values. Efforts to improve the ethics of lower-level governance elites are in vain unless the virtues of senior politicians are first improved.

To bring out the main problem, let me distinguish between 'surface corruption' and 'root corruption'. Surface corruption includes all the forms routinely discussed when the subject of corruption is taken up, which are serious enough. Root corruption is different—more insidious and deeper. It is the corruption of the body politic in the Greek sense of the term exemplified by the accusation, however unjust, against Socrates: 'to destroy utterly, spoil, harm, lead astray, corrupt, ruin, bribe or seduce'. It is grounded in the vices of senior politicians, whether character bound or brought about by environmental influences. To counteract such root corruption the virtues of senior politicians must become a main subject for evaluation, consideration and improvement.<sup>24</sup>

So it is that corruption at the very top of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe only reinforced apocalyptic expectations.

### Unexplained Socio/political Disruptions

The early emergence of a capitalist economy was not known as such during the early stages of a post-agricultural economy, but was seen as a disruption to traditional patterns of social ranking and medieval *ordo*—in the manorial system the loss of farmers and other agricultural

---

<sup>24</sup> Yehezkel Dror, *The Capacity to Govern* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 95. Although Dror writes of modern conditions, the same general principles apply to Müntzer's time. But the substantive virtues required for "future-building tasks" are formidable, worth mentioning not only because of the contrast they provide to the behaviour of these Renaissance Popes but because of their importance to the notion of Professional Practice.

In psychological terms, virtues such as fortitude, forbearance, persistence, seriousness, commitment, resoluteness, self-restraint, and toughness are needed to deal with difficulties and opportunities. For creating and analyzing policies, detachment, open-mindedness, creativity and a capacity for deep thinking are required. Crucially, the value judgements involved in critical choices, together with the need to advance *raison d'humanité*, require moral virtues. These include a strong sense of personal responsibility, an intense feeling of duty to humankind, compassion, a sense of obligation to the long term future, an ability to resist temptations and disruptive passions, and total dedication to the *res publica* even including a readiness to sacrifice oneself if necessary.

Ibid., 99.

workers and in the cities the breakdown of guild systems with their set practices. Now social norms could not be relied upon to provide guides to social and political interactions, for the shift to an industrial capitalist way of making a living brought with it an entirely different set of expectations and norms that were far more fluid than the relatively static social arrangements that emerged after the breakdown of the Western Roman Empire and the loss of the practical realities of a civil society.<sup>25</sup>

### A Heavy Hand

By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a good six or seven centuries after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, even the Black Death and the subsequent century of economic depression did not stop the slow concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a relatively small group of people whose initial wealth enabled them to include future plans while the poverty of those with little necessitated a discounting of the future. This relatively small and powerful “elite”, offset in

---

<sup>25</sup> This loss would have been a gradual. First, institutions faltered, with the loss of power and authority clearly evident with such events as the sacking of Rome. Then the intersubjective aspects of human living—family, kinship and clan—would assume more importance than adhering to civil laws that had lost their relevance. Then it would only take a generation or two for the common sense knowledge of what it meant to be a citizen with all the rights and duties pertaining to civil life would have so that even the memory of a civil society would have been lost. This is the same process that takes place today, when for example the experience of what it meant to live in a community where one’s door was never locked has disappeared from common memory. So too has the loss of what it meant to be part of a great extended family, now replaced in most people’s experience with the reality of a nuclear and now often one-parent families.

In itself, this process is neither good nor bad (much depends on the terminal values of the institutional structure). But it does mean that once such practical knowledge is lost, it is lost forever—unless conditions change. To some extent that is what happened in Europe: it was not that Europeans suddenly received their former glory from Islamic scholars but that conditions had changed that demanded the creation of a humanistic civil society organized around the emerging industrialist/capitalist ways of organizing economic life and those seeds were there for the gradual creation of a civil society quite different from the Greco/Roman model. Roman civil society, even with Greek elements of democracy, still operated within an agricultural solar-based economy that restricted the number of citizens, limited excess wealth to relatively small groups of people and still ended up under the rule of an emperor. It was only when the population started to grow to the point where family, kin and clan could no longer provide order that bureaucracies emerged under the rule of kings who were then subject to civil laws enacted to prevent pillage, protect property and enforce contracts that commercial enterprises demand by their very nature. Kings and princes always needed money to finance their households and wage war. To get it they turned to the great banking houses, who more often than not were left holding the bag. This shifted power to the bankers and other commercial enterprisers who eventually drew the line and insisted and were given legal protection of their personal property and wealth through the enforcement of commercial contracts.

part by a rising commercial and industrial interests concentrated in small semi-independent cities, naturally sought to protect their own interests, interests often justified by “keeping the order” although the multiplicity of fiefdoms and hereditary holdings that made keeping the peace a matter of low-grade warfare and military skirmishes. Tensions were particularly extreme in the area where Müntzer lived where unity was achieved only three centuries later under the threat of external force:

The American colonies were initially as jealous of their autonomy as the Cherokee chiefdoms, and their first attempt at amalgamation under the Articles of Confederation (1781) proved unworkable because it reserved too much autonomy to the ex-colonies. Only further threats, notably Shay’s Rebellion of 1786 and the unsolved burden of war debt, overcame the ex-colonies’ extreme reluctance to sacrifice autonomy and pushed them into adopting our [USA] current strong federal constitution in 1787. The 19<sup>th</sup> century unification of Germany’s jealous principalities proved equally difficult. Three early attempts (the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848, the restored German Confederation of 1850, and the North German Confederation of 1866) failed before the external threat of France’s declaration of war in 1870 finally led to the princelet’s surrendering much of their power to a central imperial German government in 1871.<sup>26</sup>

The egotism of the great princes combined with the Divine Right of kings—and the claim that the Pope had authority over all—certainly had its role in political and social life, often based on the intersubjectivity of kin and clan through arranged politically inspired marriages and a constant need for funds to live up to their station in life.<sup>27</sup>

The collective group bias of both bishops and princes sharing in Christendom yet protective and enhancing their own interests without regard to the well-being of others in the commonweal generated both apathy among the masses and rebelliousness on the part of those who championed the down-trodden in their cities, towns and country-sides. Luther was never a champion of the

---

<sup>26</sup> Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1999), 290. He goes on to point out that while China achieved political integration very early on, where relatively gentle terrain and two long east-west rivers facilitated the transfer of crops and technology, western Europe’s more rugged terrain and lack of unifying rivers “has resisted cultural and political unification to this day” (Diamond, 331).

<sup>27</sup> One wonders if the primary issue was over not over the right of feudal lords to “use” the general mass of people—the simple—for their own ends. Eric Fromm talks about a fundamental shift concerning the meaning of human beings when the first cities and organized water-based economies enabled sufficient excess capital to accumulate. With such increases, it became possible for newly emerging Priest/Kings to *use* people as tools for promoting their own wealth or the wealth of their friends and associates. “It was discovered that man could be used as an economic instrument, that he could be exploited, that he could be made a slave.” Eric Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 162.

simple in the way that Müntzer took up the cause of the poor. But in Müntzer's case, compassion became confused with a Theology of the Cross and the restoration of power in the rightful hands of the elect, i.e. those of true rather than counterfeit faith.

Discontent was wide-spread, part of a general atmosphere of reform that with an apocalyptic worldview periodically swept through the passions of people. In many ways there was a medieval undercurrent of injustice, resentment and pain—sometimes driven underground, sometimes erupting into storms of protest and armed uprisings. There were problems of over-population after the collapse of the Roman Empire sharply reduced economic life with the associated problems of dividing limited resources among too many people. But it wasn't until the Plague Years that the system came under increased pressure:

When plague struck in 1348, it reduced the human pressure on resources, but it also strained familial, social, economic, and political relations. Soon institutional structures, inheritance patterns, systems of trade, and even the lord's ability to control the peasantry, came under stress because, in Western Europe at least, feudal social foundations assumed a large population and limited resources. The initial redistribution of wealth profited peasants, whose rents for tenancies fell, and skilled artisans, whose wages rose, as the late fourteenth century formed something of a "golden age" for commoners with more disposable income, available land, and political leverage than their ancestors of descendants. The initial social and economic burden of depopulation fell on lay and ecclesiastical lords, who responded by freezing wages at pre-plague levels and preventing tenants from moving to estates with better lease rates for land, but these measures failed. As time passed, however, conditions for peasants began to deteriorate. Depopulation had altered traditional patterns of demand for market-oriented agriculture. Ironically, a series of good harvests in the last quarter of the fourteenth century triggered a prolonged slump in prices, which temporarily enriched the purchasing power of wage labourers but ruined those drawing income from farming. Peasants abandoned their fields and homes, while marginal soils reverted to pasture and woodland. In the German-speaking lands, perhaps a quarter of all villages ceased to exist. . . . Farming had grown unprofitable for many, and people quit to find better work.

The economic strains affected more than the poor alone. Ecclesiastical and lay landlords continued to feel the pinch as rent revenues from their tenancies shrivelled up, for the tenant farmers could not afford the old rates. . . . Some impecunious lords mortgaged their holdings and rights, handing them over to civic governments or wealthy individual townsmen. The ploughmen, who had formerly been the social and economic backbone of the peasantry, also fell into debt to urban moneylenders and Jews. Peasants continued to work small to medium-sized plots of land, but the towns assumed increasing control over rural production and peasant labour, which exacerbated town-country antagonisms. None the less, growing urban economic clout did not necessarily spell prosperity for all town dwellers. In many European cities, artisan's households lost their economic cushion and merged into the growing ranks of working poor, while wealthy guildsmen who had profited in the decades of crisis distanced themselves from their poorer neighbours and intermarried with older elite families. Civic governance became the prerogative of a small circle of oligarchs who saw themselves as rulers maintaining good order among their "subjects".<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Wallace, *The Long European Reformation* (2004), 28-29.

But those cities that had gained independence had two advantages that were to be lost in subsequent centuries: fiscal accountability and subsidiarity. The principle of fiscal accountability is that economic planning and policy-making work best when those providing the funds are in a position to take those who use these funds to account; when this principle is violated, a split takes place between rulers and ruled that allows those in power to use the wealth they have been given for their own purposes rather than for the commonwealth. Without proper controls, the temptation is impossible to resist. The principle of subsidiarity is that close political connections should exist between people in general and those who would rule them. Essentially another form of accountability, of responsibility, subsidiarity requires those who seek to rule take into account the interests of those who ultimately grant them this power. When this principle goes by the board, elites form that operate according to their own group bias without having to take into account the interests of any other group. When fiscal accountability and subsidiarity go by the board, people are *used*, plans and policies are increasingly distanced from reality, and decline ensues. While medieval princes and bishops could and did violate both, the city-states did not—with the result that they were in a position to move forward on a variety of fronts to increase their own wealth and well being. Venice was a good example of what could develop given independence from the powers that be and internal control over their own resources.

Then there were the obvious injustices due to a highly idiosyncratic system of laws and institutions:

Rigorous theological arguments, no matter how compelling, of themselves put no one to death. In order to pass from prescription to practice, the willingness to kill required determination, resources, and means. It was put into practice through formal institutions, by men observing established laws. Yet there was no direct link between laws and actual prosecution. Not only did early modern authorities vary in their individual conviction and temperament, but they also juggled diverse and frequently divergent priorities. Repression depended in part of states' judicial resources, rulers' own commitments, other political issues, military involvements, fiscal pressures, the perceived threat of heterodoxy, and the ever-present, overriding concern to maintain order. . . . Prosecution depended, too, on the sometimes strained cooperation between central and local authorities, the former craving greater control, the latter always keen to protect their privileges.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 90.

All this meant an ever-present tension, sometimes involving the use of military force, over who held the reigns of power, authority and influence. This made the struggle for power an essential feature of Müntzer's times, for anyone who did not have power, authority or influence was left to the vagrancies and whims of those who did. For those at the top, safety and security was achieved through political intrigue, aggressive behaviour, family alliances and gaining control over monetary sources of wealth. Those that did not achieve such positions could rely on guild and feudal traditions, at least up to a point; but in uncertain times, even these stabilising traditions were starting to crumble under an emerging capitalist system.

Still, it is hard to explain the vehemence, the outright hatred, many of the participants had for each other. The massacre of the Huguenots (1562-1563), only thirty two years after Müntzer's death, shows the depths of passion religious beliefs had reached:

The counterattacks that swept from power many of the temporary Protestant regimes in towns in 1562 to 1563 were followed by triumphant massacres of hundreds of Protestants. The massacres after the unsuccessful Huguenot attempt to seize Toulouse in May 1562 were notable for a feature that frequently recurred thereafter: many of those killed were drowned in the local river. Protestant corpses were in a similar manner deliberately humiliated, either by being flung into water or kicked into mud or sewage or obscenely mutilated with knives, often merely because they had been given a Protestant funeral.

All this seems to be an attempt to purify the community from the pollution caused by Protestantism. Protestants had tainted the sacredness of French society, and they deserved the most extreme exclusion from it. Protestant iconoclasm had a similar purifying purpose, to stop divine worship from being tainted by idols.<sup>30</sup>

Did they take their religion too seriously? Perhaps. There certainly were passionate and powerful convictions at play—made all the more intense by a feeling that God may have abandoned them, may be punishing them, in the Last Days of the fight between good and evil. Fear and uncertainty, combined with a lack of respect for the sanctity of individual human beings, a feeling that life was cheap, and never-ending power politics can play havoc with the good of order.

---

<sup>30</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2004), 299.



### *Existing Controls over Meaning*

Without control over meaning, a culture's world-mediated-by-meaning can easily drift into myth and magic—a social and political “psychotic” condition that blocks people from insights that explain the reality of the world. This separation between illusions based on naïve realism, idealist, etc. and a world-mediated-by-meaning grounded in the central and conjugate potency, form and act of a metaphysics and ethical foundational stance—metaphysics setting the upper blade for horizons and ethics the upper blade for intentions—gives rise to mental maps that have no or little relationship to the actual state of affairs. The question is, Who controls the making of these maps, these worlds mediated by meaning, that serve to regulate human affairs through society's institutions? This gives rise to a number of secondary questions. Is there a fight for control over meaning between those who have power and those who don't but want it? Do the mechanisms for exerting control over meaning—power, authority and influence for example—actually work? What kinds of biases affect experience, what is understood and what is judged to be real? And when it comes to intentions, who sets the priorities for what should be done?

As mentioned in the first chapter, the very polymorphism of human consciousness and the differentiation of mind into different realms of meaning implies that not only are there various ways of controlling meaning but it is only through the self-appropriation of one's own rationality that one enters the realm of interiority where the different methods appropriate to each are understood and related to each other. Common sense intelligence learns a culture's world-mediated-by-meaning through a process of trial and error, of trying and being corrected. There is no body of common sense knowledge like those in the scientific realm, where various explicit explanatory theories are generated and tested, but a set of generalizations that may or may not apply to the situation at hand. Common sense knowing is transmitted through countless interactions involving power, authority and influence. Complications arise in the socio/political dance of power, prestige and status as would-be power holders such as Thomas Müntzer come into conflict with the existing authorities.

A scientist's control over meaning is exercised through formal terminologies, rigorous testing methodologies and open discussion. But scientific methodology was just in its infancy around Müntzer's time: Copernicus refutes the geocentric view of the universe from 1530-43, Galileo was born in 1564 and did not run into the inquisition until the 1630s, and statistics as a discipline was not invented until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. As for the realm of interiority and differentiation of mind, these concepts were not formally developed until the work of Lonergan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is of course the realm of the mystics, where concepts lose meaning in the pure expression of religious love, as well as philosophical reflection on the human condition and the intelligibility of the universe and the theological speculations of academic scholars. By Müntzer's time, German mysticism had emerged and theological scholars such as Luther were having their say. But the dominate forms of control belonged to the realm of common sense.

Because interiority puts all into a common context, authenticity is a fundamental aspect of control, for the unauthentic violates the innate dynamism of the human spirit to follow the transcendental injunctions while those who do are far more likely to have correct insights into the data and into practical affairs, make sound judgments, and decide on appropriate plans and policies. So there is not only the question of how people in Müntzer's time sought to control meaning, there is also the question of their foundational discernment so necessary for determining which are positions and which counter-positions. The result is a mixture of the intelligible and the absurd, with the intelligible good of order established by the converted and the absurd by the unconverted—in Lonergan's sense of intellectual, moral and religious conversion as a fundamental change in who a person is. Thus the ultimate question for this section is the authenticity and/or unauthenticity of the world-mediated-by-meaning at that stage of historical development, that of early 16<sup>th</sup> century central Europe. While it is impossible to say for certain, there are indicators of the kinds of processes going on that make for the realization that one of the fundamental problems lay with the breakdown of such controls and the emergence of new forms.

## The Shift from Manuscript to Print Culture

With the emergence of the printing press—a rapid development that in a matter of forty years flooded Europe with cheap books, pamphlets and other reading matter—came two new challenges. How could scholars and other academics bring intelligibility to such a divergent and diverse mass of ideas and beliefs? And how could common sense intelligence be regulated given the rapid spread of so many ideas in the body politic? Commentaries and oral traditions that dominated the manuscript era were giving way to a need for taxonomies, for coherent philosophies, for indexes and table of contents. And with the flood of ideas, often new and practical insights into the possibilities of being human, traditional authorities became subject to human intelligence. Eventually it would take something similar to Lonergan's work into the realm of interiority to make sense of it all.

It is hard to believe how fast printing shops spread across Europe, starting from Gutenberg's invention of the first moveable-type press and the first dated example of the press in action: the Mainz Psalter, printed at the order of the Archbishop in 1457.<sup>31</sup> By 1471 there were printing shops in Seville, Rome, Subiaco, Foligno, Venice, Beromunster, Basel, Augsburg, Strasbourg, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Mainz, Eltville, Cologne and Paris. Ten years later, there were shops in Salamanca, Saragossa, Valencia, Tortosa, Lerida, Barcelona, Toulouse, Albi, Poitiers, Angers, Caen, Chablis, Lyons, Oxford, St. Albans, London, Westminster, Naples, Ascoli Piceno, Perugia, Iesi, Florence, Lucca, Bologna, Fivizzano, Ferrara, Nonantola, Parma, Reggio nell, Piacenza, Pavia, Milan, Como, Brescia, Toscolano, Torrebelvicino, Pojano, Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, Mondovi, Savigliano, Pinerolo, Cosenza, Messina, Turin, Trent, Vienne, Schussenreid, Memmingen, Ulm, Ulaudeuren, Reutlingen, Urach, Esslingen, Speyer, Würzburg, Marienthal, Erfurt, Prague, Breslau, Merseburg, Magdeburg, Oudenaarde, Brussels, Louvain, Alost, Hasselt,

---

<sup>31</sup> James Burke, *Connections* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 104.

Bruges, Sint-Maartensdijk, Delf, Uttecht, Gouda, Nijmegen, Deventer, Zwolle, Lübeck and Rostock. Ten years after that, twenty-seven more towns joined the list.<sup>32</sup>

Before the invention of moveable type, manuscripts had to be copied out by hand. This not only meant that at any one time there were only a small number of valued works in existence—sometimes the existence of a particular work depended on one scribe making a copy for himself—but copying by hand introduced numerous errors resulting in a variety of “unique” texts. The arrival of the printing press changed all that. Now instead of three or four manuscript copies there were hundreds if not thousands of identical texts scattered across Europe; if one was lost or damaged, it didn’t matter. At the same time, a higher order scheme emerged where a wide variety of experts and non-experts could evaluate a common text and feed their comments back for the printer or editor to make correction in the next edition. An entirely different means of controlling meaning sprang into being that brought all sorts of people and disciplines together in a common task.

In an attempt to explain ‘how it all came about,’ . . . new elements involving coordination and cooperation deserve not only more attention but also a more central place. When searching for the nurseries of a new philosophy, it seems unprofitable to linger too long in any one region, university, court, or town—or to focus too much attention on any one special skill or special scientific field. Certain universities, ateliers, or lay academies may be singled out for special contributions. But the chief new feature that needs further attention is the simultaneous tapping of many varied talents at the same time. As the chief sponsors of field trips, open letters, advertisements for instruments, and technical handbooks of all kinds, early printers ought to receive as much attention as is currently given to special occupational groups such as Paduan professors, Wittenberg botanists, or quattrocento artist-engineers. Publication programs launched from urban workshops in many regions made it possible to coordinate scattered efforts and to expand the scope of investigations until (like the *Grand Atlas* produced by the son of W. J. Blaeu) they became truly worldwide.<sup>33</sup>

No wonder there was a feeling of reform was in the air during the heady days when so much was available to the active reader. And there was more.

Previous relations between masters and disciples were altered. Students who took advantage of technical texts which served as silent instructors were less likely to defer to traditional authority and more receptive to innovating trends. Young minds provided with updated editions, especially of mathematical texts, began to surpass not only their own elders but the wisdom of ancients as well. Methods of measurement, records of observations, and all forms of data collection were affected by

---

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2005), 17-19.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 290-91.

printing. So too were the careers that could be pursued by teachers and preachers, physicians and surgeons, reckon masters and artist-engineers.<sup>34</sup>

There were changes not only in the way texts were produced, but in the way they were read.

Until well into the Middle Ages, writers assumed that their readers would hear rather than simply see the text, much as they themselves spoke their words out loud as they composed them. Since comparatively few people could read, public readings were common, and medieval texts repeatedly call upon the audience to 'lend ears' to a tale. It may be that an ancestral echo of those reading practices persists in some of our idioms, as when we say, 'I've heard from So-and-so' (meaning 'I've received a letter'), or 'So-and-so says' (meaning 'So-and-so wrote'), or 'This text doesn't sound right' (meaning 'It isn't well written').<sup>35</sup>

During the manuscript period, reading was for the most part a public event, a communal affair where diverse people could share in hearing the same message. But by Müntzer's time, a new kind of reader was no longer a rarity. Withdrawn, intent, tongue held still, deaf and blind to a passing world, the silent reader contemplated a world-mediated-by-meaning remote from his own. Reading was no longer an oral skill:

[Now] words no longer needed to occupy the time required to pronounce them. They could exist in interior space, rushing on or barely begun, fully deciphered or only half-said, while the reader's thoughts inspected them at leisure, drawing new notions from them, allowing comparisons from memory or from other books left open for simultaneous perusal. The reader had time to consider and reconsider the precious worlds whose sounds—he now knew—could echo just as well within as without. And the text itself, protected from outsiders by its covers, became the reader's own possession, the reader's intimate knowledge, whether in the busy scriptorium, the market-place or the home.<sup>36</sup>

It was the beginning of private study, and independent readers—as rulers soon found out—could be a threat.

Even though the Church instituted the death penalty for heresy as early as 382, the first case of burning a heretic at the stake did not occur until 1022, in Orléans. On that occasion the Church condemned a group of canons and lay nobles who, believing that true instruction could only come directly from the light of the Holy Spirit, rejected the Scriptures as 'the fabrications which men have written on the skins of animals.' Such independent readers were obviously dangerous.<sup>37</sup>

This profusion of books also supported synoptical reading. Now, the first thing about synoptical reading is that the reader's interests and concerns are the most important point, not the

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 293. This contributed to the rise of such people as Thomas Müntzer, who could strike out on their own without being tied to an intellectual "master" or authority. He had other role models to follow.

<sup>35</sup> Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*, vintage Canada edition (Printed and bound in the USA: Vintage Canada, 1996), 47.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 52. The quote is from Robert I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (London, 1975).

books; a comprehensive analytical reading of the text is secondary to the search for relevant passages. The second thing is that it is the synoptical reader establishes not only key words but they way they are to be used; the author's terminology is secondary to the readers. Thus, it is very important to clarify the questions, define issues and analyze the discussion. After the invention of moveable type printing presses, synoptical reading not only became a real possibility but tended to be the primary mode for anyone interested in the systematic study of a particular topic.<sup>38</sup>

### The Gradual Re-emergence of Civil Society

With the break-up of the Western Roman Empire went the loss of civil society, i.e. social norms and values orientated around common civic life—the rights and duties of a Roman citizen, for example—gave way to the intersubjectivity of family, clan and manor house, lord and king. What common meaning there was, amid the emergence of the Romance languages, lay with the one surviving institution—the Church—whose top-down institutional structure was patterned after that of the now vanished empire. However, such a structure was not free of the feudal life of the times; the reign of a series of worldly Popes from Sixtus IV (1471-84) to Clement VII (1523-34) attests to that.<sup>39</sup>

Müntzer's time spanned the late medieval to early Reformation period:

Late medieval states functioned through networks of aristocratic families bound together by personal ties rather than through institutional structures. Royal councils, central and regional law courts, and fiscal chambers provided the skeleton of a state, but the human muscle that moved it responded to other stimuli than modern bureaucrats. Politics entailed a welding of private interest onto

---

<sup>38</sup> See Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*, revised and updated (New York, N. Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1972). With the exception of Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method*, almost all of this study involved synoptical reading. The key lay in clarifying the questions, raising the appropriate issues and finding key passages that related to the specific subtopic at hand.

<sup>39</sup> See Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (New York, N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1984), 52-126. All six—Sixtus IV (1471-84, who plotted to murder the Medici brothers), Innocent VIII (1484-92, who hosted the Grand Turk, i.e. the Infidels), Alexander VI (1492-1503, noted for his depravity), Julius II (1503-13, more warrior than spiritual leader), Leo X (1513-21, whose worldly extravagance fuelled a humanist return to scripture), and Clement VII (1523-34, whose reign saw the sacking of Rome)—rose to the crown of folly. All were wilfully blind to the disaffection among those that they governed; all pursued policies that ran contrary to the self-interest of the church; and in the end they provoked the Protestant secession and the rise of the confessional churches, a schism from which the Church still hasn't recovered.

royal service. Officials treated their posts as personal property, allocated to them as members of a distinct and privileged class. They governed through a distribution of favours, both personal and official, and by calling in debts and obligations from clients. Devotion to a superior and generosity to subordinates were honourable and ethical traits. The members of this power elite envisioned themselves as the community of the realm, and they jealously defended the “public” interest, which meant their collective private rights. By the late fourteenth century nearly all leading ecclesiastical officials belonged to the ruling class by birth or ambition, and ties of blood, patronage, and class interest remained strong. Clerical education was a traditional pathway to governmental service, except in Italy where a new cohort of university-trained laymen, who modelled their political behaviour on ancient pagan statesmen such as Cicero, had emerged. Over time, lay officials would gradually replace churchmen in royal councils everywhere.<sup>40</sup>

Solar-based agricultural economies can exist under a single ruler whose subjects are tied to him through bonds of loyalty. As long as population sizes are relatively small and innovation rates quite low, family and clan allegiances can form the bases of an effective good of order. But population levels were on the rebound after the decimation of the Plague and technological innovations starting with the horse collar and leading on into the printing press, were already driving large global commercial enterprises that brought increased wealth to those Europeans who were able to tap into these new companies. Warfare had already moved out of the peasant call-up phase and the now standing armies had to be fed and paid—all of which required some form of taxation as well as a bureaucracy to manage the raising and distribution of funds on a day-to-day basis. Commercial enterprises require an ethics of honesty, rather than loyalty, so feudal lords found themselves tied to law courts and legal systems that placed constraints on what they could do.

There was also the memory of the Roman Empire, partially kept alive in the institution of Church but also in Greek and Roman writings now readily available, that was there not so much as to provide a guide but to show that large-scale civil societies were possible. This was particularly so with a rising educated class of workers:

As late medieval European society became more commercially integrated, and expanding governments required the recruitment of regiments of notaries and scribes, education became a vehicle for lay social mobility. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Church had monopolized schooling, but burgeoning civil society demanded non-clerical intellectual skills. First in Italy and later throughout Europe, a new form of elementary education centred on the study of the liberal arts, such

---

<sup>40</sup> Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 30-31.

as philology, rhetoric, and history, the *studia humanitatis*, offered learning laced with moral injunctions drawn from classical pagan authors but cloaked in Christian ethics. This educational programme created a new normative code of common values that seemed to the adherents to have been reborn from classical moral philosophy. Historians have long associated this Renaissance of classical learning with the Reformation.<sup>41</sup>

But a true civil society was not part of the thinking of the day. The brutal put-down of the Peasants' War on the part of the feudal rulers put an end to evangelical change from below; from now on reformers like Luther would work within the established structure. Furthermore, the period after Müntzer's execution for his involvement with the Peasants' War saw many forces at work:

The mix of the centripetal forces of Church-building and state-building with the centrifugal forces of regionalism and conflicting confessional identities stained the century after 1550 with religious bloodshed. Everywhere, the close association of faith and power raised the ante at each dramatic confrontation. Even in day-to-day affairs, officially sanctioned churches acted as the moral arm of the state through control of the pulpit, religious imagery, and the rote formulas of catechetical instruction. In fashioning men and women of conscience, ecclesiastical officials helped internalize the social discipline of modern citizens, but they also uncovered a complex and deeply embedded system of popular beliefs which stubbornly resisted "Christianization" along reformed guidelines. Everywhere authoritative force inevitable generated resolved opposition, stiffened by economic misery and social anger.<sup>42</sup>

The idea of a civil society was there and the various elements were starting to come together, but the reality was still a long way away.

### Authority, Power, Influence

For common sense intelligence, control over meaning can be exerted in one of three ways: direct power, use of authority and attempts to influence the minds of others. Each of these three ways of interacting to change the behaviour, attitude or values of others has its own language and its own style. The language of power is threats, bribes and extortion; the language of authority involves commands, orders or instructions; and influencing others is a matter of suggestions or advice.

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 118-19.



Each person brings to the table their own resources: institutional position, wealth, political power, specialized knowledge, unique talents, intellectual depths, rhetorical skills, etc. Then there are the social norms, institutional roles and value systems that structure such interactions by legitimizing some and declaring others beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout all of these modes, there is the concept of responsibility. Now language can be used to reveal, used to hide and used to coerce—and “responsibility” is one of the great ways of exerting control over others. It is worth while pursuing the matter, for questions of responsibility underlie many issues not only of Müntzer’s day but our own.

Percy W. Bridgman (1882-1961), Nobel Prize-winning physicist now remembered chiefly for the light that he threw on scientific methodology, once remarked that “conjuring up of ‘responsibility’ is often only a device of a lazy man to get someone else to do for him something of vital concern to him which he should be doing himself” Was he merely being cynical?

Hear this story told by Danilo Dolci, an engineer who abandoned his profession to study and try to help the desperately poor people of Sicily. He has recorded an account given by the father of five children. Both parents have tuberculosis and are in and out of the “san”—the sanatorium. The father speaks:

But it was no good; they told me the Council was short of money and couldn’t afford to pay for the board and keep of five kids.

“They’re too young to look after themselves,” I said. “They just can’t be left there like that.”

“Go apply to the Child Care Committee,” the official said to me. But I drew a blank there too.

“Do I have to kill somebody before I get any help?” I shouted at the director.

“If you ‘kill somebody,’ you’ll be sent to prison,” he said in a cold voice.

“All right,” I said, “I have to go back to the san, so there’s only one thing for me to do—bring the kids here and leave them.”

As soon as I left, the director, a shrewd-looking egg, went around where I lived and asked the neighbors about my case. One of them said how sorry she was for the children.

“I’ll make you responsible for them, Signora,” the director said.

“I’m only a poor woman—I’ll take them in and feed them, but I can’t do it without the maintenance money,” she said. Well, she did take them in, but a month went by and the maintenance money wasn’t sent to her, so she went to see the director.

“If you’d let me have the money—” she started to say, but he never let her get any further.

“Go away, Signora,” he said, “but remember, if any harm comes to those children, you’ll be to blame.”

Obviously, Bridgman was not cynical: he was merely a good observer who was not easily taken in by word magic. He recognized the coercive power of language. Once one is sensitized to the coercive power of the word “responsibility,” one finds countless instances of its being used as a weapon to control others—without bloodshed and often without the victim’s realizing that he is being controlled.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix II, *A Transdisciplinary Framework*, for details.

<sup>44</sup> Garrett Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 101-2. Author’s italics. P. W. Bridgman’s remark on responsibility is to be found in his *Reflections of a Physicist* (New York: Philosophical Library, 19750). The passage from Danilo Dolci is from pp. 95-96 of his *Report from Palermo* (New York: Orion Press, 1959).

Assigning responsibility can be done through exercising authority, power or influence. But is there a way of understanding the word that frees it from its coercive overtones? The answer is to distinguish between two different forms of responsibility: contrived and intrinsic.

*A decision is responsible when the man or group that makes it has to answer for it to those who are directly or indirectly affected by it.*

[Then] the decision-making and those who are affected by the decision are the same: me. I am *intrinsically responsible*. . . . Whippings, wages, and threats of death are contrivances whereby responsibility is imposed on a man who is not intrinsically responsible. We subject him to *contrived responsibility*.<sup>45</sup>

Issues of responsibility come to the fore when there are different appreciative systems and no way to properly control meaning other than to use force or the coercive power of language. This was the situation in Müntzer's time and to a great extent is the situation in our own, the difference being that now the possibility of exerting control over meaning now exists with the recognition that there are different realms of meaning (differentiation of mind) and an empirically grounded methodology for sorting reality from the imaginary (transcendental method)—plus the example of the empirical sciences specialized methodology to suggest that a method specific to the social sciences and theology is also possible. Without such a method to control meaning, human beings are thrust back on the naked exercise of power either through war or through the courts (or any other way that a society has of resolving conflicts). If these conflicts are not superficial but deeply embedded in contrary or conflicting horizons, then righteousness enters the picture and eventually—through the dynamics of human socio/political interactions—violence is used to make one's point without regard to costs.<sup>46</sup>

Control over meaning is also highly problematic in the face of three basic forms of bias: egotism, group interests and common sense expediency. Not only does control needed to

---

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 102-3. Hardin's Italics.

<sup>46</sup> People who *know* that they are right are people who refuse to allow any further questions to disturb their mind. This is what makes them so dangerous: there is no appeal to further data, alternative formulations or improved judgments. There is no appeal to God, for God has been made in their own image. They are in effect impervious to reality and their sin is not that of commission but of omission: what should have been done has not been done, and so the situation is impoverished and the good of order diminished.

differentiate between reality and fiction, but the social scene is made up of people operating at different levels of conversion, with different horizons and intentions that vary according to the questions that allow or disallow. As already mentioned, egotists restrict their question to matters affecting their own well-being, people fighting for the well-being of their own group restrict their interests only to that group, and common sense people carrying the work of the world are tempted to restrict their horizon only to what is easily achievable. The resulting social and political absurdities play havoc with the good of order in any society.

Add to this the unprecedented changes taking place in economic, political and cultural life of Müntzer's time, in what in retrospect came to be known as the Reformation and the Renaissance, and the need for ritual was more important than ever. Keeping roles and identities clear and distinct is not a matter of spiritual development but of participating in common ceremonies. As the church lost its ritualistic function, identities started to slip into each other, thus becoming powerful and dangerous. Müntzer himself was first of all an ordained priest, then reformer, then revolutionary and finally political activist—all within a matter of eight years. In him and others like him new rituals were being forged based not on doctrines or ritual, but on personal faith. But when this happened and the older rituals that supported the political and economic powers of the day were under threat, all sorts of passions were aroused—including a deep distrust of the self-serving attitudes of those in positions of power.

But there is more to authority, power and influence in the medieval age than this. Van Creveld, a contemporary authority on military history, notes that:

When we retreat from the early modern age into the Middle Ages the distinction between government, army, and people becomes more tenuous still. As the term 'feudal' implies, this was a period in which politics did not exist (the very concept had yet to be invented, and dates back only as far as the sixteenth century). So closely intertwined were a man's political power and his personal status that his ability to conclude alliances could well depend on the number of marriageable daughters he had sired. Politics were entangled with military, social, religious, and above everything else, legal considerations; feudalism before it was anything else comprised a network of mutual rights and obligations. The resulting witches'-brew was utterly different from the one we are familiar with today, so that to use the word politics probably does more harm than good. The medieval context hardly makes it possible to speak of governments, let alone of states. Both concepts did exist, but only

in embryonic form, as it were. Often their use carried nostalgic overtones, as if people were harking back to the days of the Roman Empire, from which government at any rate had been derived.<sup>47</sup>

Like an undifferentiated mind, everything was clumped together. And there were a multitude of players, of stakeholders:

For a thousand years after the fall of Rome armed conflict was waged by different kinds of social entities. Among them were barbarian tribes, the Church, feudal barons of every rank, free cities, even private individuals. Nor were the 'armies' of the period anything like those we know today; indeed, it is difficult to find a word that will do them justice. War was waged by shoals of retainers who donned military garb and followed their lord. The identity of those retainers who owned military service changed over time. When the foundations of the feudal system were being laid during the ninth century the *fyrð* or levy counted the entire free population, including even the lowliest villagers who responded to the call armed with whatever weapons they possessed. Later the situation changed. As free villagers were reduced to selfdom, there rose above them a class of people, known first as *bellatores* or *pugnatores* and later as knights, who made war their vocation and who fought on horseback. Thanks partly to their equipment, partly to their training, the military superiority of the knights over the popular levy was such that the latter languished and gradually disappeared.<sup>48</sup>

By Müntzer's time, this process was well advanced. In fact,

. . . people did not come into the equation at all; precisely because they were excluded from war, the great mass of serfs did not form part of society either. Low-born personnel who were not knights participated in war by attending their masters as baggage-carriers, servants, grooms, and the like. For them to take up arms was considered distinctly unsportsmanlike; usually when they did so they would be slaughtered, more in jest than in anger. The population at large entered war mainly in the role of victims. The simplest way to hurt an enemy while enriching oneself was to attack and despoil the serfs from who he derived his income. Conversely, so little did feudal war concern itself with the protection of the population at large that the garrisons of besieged castles often expelled noncombatants, regarding them as so many useless mouths. Hoping to apply psychological pressure, the besieging commander would then refuse to let them pass through his lines, with the result that the unfortunates ended up starving or freezing to death.<sup>49</sup>

What this meant for the "simple" of Müntzer's day was simple enough.

Judging by literary sources such as the fourteenth-century *Piers Plowman*, members of the lower classes seem to have looked at war as the product of baronial vice and greed. Far from being a deliberate instrument in the king's hands, it was akin to a plague inflicted on the people by wanton noblemen. Always in theory, and often in practice as well, they did this without the king's knowledge or else against his will.<sup>50</sup>

Because power lay in the hands of individuals, appeals or requests were the primary way of settling matters or getting something done. If one did not have power, it was important to find a protective and supportive patron; if one did, then it was important to have retainers and all the

---

<sup>47</sup> Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: FreePress, 1991), 52.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 54.

retinue of court to display and exercise one's power. No doubt a Mafia god-father would have felt quite at home.

### Excommunication

While war was the tool of last resort for the nobility, the ecclesial tool of last resort was excommunication—or turning a heretic over to the secular arm.<sup>51</sup> In many cases, even the threat of being excommunicated was enough to silence dissent. And although the church was forbidden to use force, they could authorize turning over a reluctant person to the secular authorities for questioning (torture) and if necessary execution. Before Müntzer's time, the Fourth Lateran Council's (1215) call for aid from the secular authorities to eradicate heresy was well established in the institution of the Inquisition.<sup>52</sup> But the problem with any such tool is that if it fails, the authority behind it starts to look weak and inept—and for the medieval and early Renaissance Church, any claim less than total authority challenged the entire framework of society. For controlling meaning is to control the legitimacy of those exercising power or authority.

Excommunication excludes a Catholic from participating in the life of the Church.

Excommunication does not expel a person from the Church, but it does distance one from the Christian community. Excommunication is considered a very serious penalty in canon law, one used for very serious canonical offences. These offences are of such a nature that they must be strongly repudiated by the Christian community. Because of their seriousness, an unrepentant perpetrator is to be, to a certain degree, repudiated by the Christian community and disbarred from full communion therein. Of itself excommunication says nothing concerning the moral standing of a given person before God; rather, it addresses the person's relationship with the Christian community.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> "Of the last resort" is misleading. War was a way to win resources, make a place in the world, and show one's courage and stamina as a man. It was a way of gaining favour at court and the rewards favour could grant. And there are always those who enjoy war for its own sake, for it draws upon skills and talents not usually required in civilian life. Yet much could be lost in war, which made diplomacy and recourse to courts a less risky form of exercising power, authority and influence.

<sup>52</sup> Richard P. McBrien, General Editor, *The Harpercollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, first edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 668-69.

The record of imprisonment, torture, and execution connected with the Inquisition has been a blot on the history of the Church. . . . Despite attempts by some historians to put the phenomenon into larger historical perspective, the popular picture of the Inquisition as despotic, narrow, and cruel has persisted in the popular imagination to the extent that the very word 'inquisitorial' has an ominous ring to it (Ibid., 668).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 500. Entry on excommunication.

Such power could easily be abused, as it was during the time from roughly 1470 to 1530 when a succession of Popes were more Renaissance princes than spiritual leaders. Yet power it was. After all, the Church itself was a major employer with its own sources of wealth often granted as beneficiaries by rich patrons desiring to do well; excommunication was not financially rewarding.

### Piety

The dominant style of piety in the fifteenth century, which helped the laity to [use their imagination privately within the framework of controlled prayer], was an intense, introspective and creatively imaginative mode of reaching out to God known as the modern devotion (*Devotio Moderna*). The great characteristic of the *Devotio* was that, as with the activity of pilgrimage, laity as well as clergy, women as well as men, could aspire to the heights and depths of experience within in. . . Its promise was that laity could aspire to the high personal standards that had previously been thought more easily attainable by the clergy—a program of practical action and organization of one’s thoughts and life that was summed up in the title of Kempis’s famous devotional treatise *The Imitation of Christ*. That might sound a daunting agenda, but all sorts of expressions of pious activism might contribute to this earnest quest to come closer to Christ: It was not a faith just for the clever or the articulate.<sup>54</sup>

Thomas à Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*, first published anonymously in 1472 and reprinted many times since, has been said to be the second most read piece of Christian literature next to the Bible. Written during a time when many clerics had become more bureaucrats than priests and university intellectuals were pursuing their own specialized interests, this work expresses the *Devotio Moderna* not as a treatise or guidebook, but a series of personal meditations that brings Christ into the reality of one’s life. Written by a novice master, it was designed to change one’s life—and at a time when the last days were thought to be at hand, changing one’s life was necessary for salvation. But what were these changes? The opening chapter is worth quoting in full, for it gives expression to many of the fundamental ideas that occupied the souls of many devote people around Müntzer.

---

<sup>54</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation* (2003), 22-23. According to the HarperCollins *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, “Their spirituality was Christocentric, with an emphasis on Scripture, meditation, and a strong, nonmystical interior life” (McBrien, 1995, 414).

“Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness,” says the Lord. These are Christ’s own words by which He exhorts us to imitate His life and His ways, if we truly desire to be enlightened and free of all blindness of heart. Let it then be our main concern to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.

2. Christ’s teaching surpasses that of all the saints, and whoever has His spirit will find in His teaching *hidden manna*. But it happens that many are little affected, even after a frequent hearing of His Gospel. This is because they *do not have the spirit of Christ*. If you want to understand Christ’s world and relish them fully, you must strive to conform your entire life to His.

3. What good does it do you to be able to give a learned discourse on the Trinity, while you are without humility and, this, are displeasing to the Trinity? Esoteric words neither make us holy nor righteous; only a virtuous life makes us beloved of God. I would rather experience repentance in my soul than know how to define it.

If you know the entire Bible inside out and all the maxims of the philosophers, what good would it do you if you were, at the same time, without God’s love and grace? *Vanity of vanities! All is vanity*, except our loving God and *serving only Him*. This is the highest wisdom: to despise the world and seek the kingdom of heaven.

4. It is vanity to seek riches that are sure to perish and to put your hope in them.

It is vanity to pursue honors and to set yourself up on a pedestal.

It is vanity to *follow the desires of the flesh* and to crave the things which will eventually bring you heavy punishment.

It is vanity to wish for a long life and to care little about leading a good life.

It is vanity to give thought only to this present life and not to think of the one that is to come.

It is vanity to love what is transitory and not to hasten to where everlasting joy abides.

5. Keep this proverb often in mind: *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*. Therefore, withdraw your heart from the love of things visible and turn yourself to thing invisible. Those who yield to their sensual nature dishonour their conscience and forfeit God’s grace.<sup>55</sup>

This is a world-mediated-by-meaning grounded in reflection on one’s own life experiences within the context of Christ’s life—not revealed through scripture or through the intellect, but through a personal piety that sought to free itself from the disturbances of an unsettled mind and an unsettled age through modeling one’s own life upon that of Christ. Such modeling was not imposed by an outside power; control was not exercised through ecclesiastical authority. Spiritual direction based on the gospels that led to a change in one’s lifestyle was the key.

Another important work were two texts written after the Council of Constance (1414-1417) collectively known as the *Ars moriendi*, or the “art of dying.”

Extensively disseminated, they are extant in more than three hundred manuscripts, were printed at least seventy times between 1470 and 1500, and survive in greater numbers than any other fifteenth-century xylographic book. The *Ars* was widely adapted and expanded: single-sheet broadsides of the dying man tempted by five demons and consoled by five angels, for example, were popular in late-fifteenth century German-speaking lands.

The *Ars moriendi* depicted the hour of death as a singularly dangerous ordeal. The devil would try his utmost to drag the dying Christian down to damnation. . . . The five temptations were falling into

---

<sup>55</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated by Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J., revised edition (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1998), 3-4. Italics in the text.

error or heresy against faith, despairing of hope in God, becoming impatient with affliction, being spiritually complacent out of pride, and growing preoccupied with worldly things, including one's family. One's precarious final hours were pitched between God and the devil on the edge of eternity. Failure to navigate temptation could mean the shipwreck of the soul, a sinking to the hideous, congested floor of a Hieronymus Bosch hellscape.<sup>56</sup>

No wonder people took their religion and their faith seriously.

But there was also a problem, a split in worlds between this form of piety popular for the laity and the scholastic concerns of theologians.

Hindsight allows us to see that scholastic debate on the conceptual level had simply bankrupted itself. It had notably revealed its sterility in at least three major ways. Corporately, the scholastics had proved themselves incapable of constructing a philosophy which could underpin Christian belief. They were, for instance, unable to reconcile the need for knowledge based on sense perception with the immortality of the soul. Nor could they reconcile the freedom of the will with the role of rational considerations in any human act, like the act of choice or the act of faith, which was both cognitive and volitive. Thirdly, they were powerless to reconcile God's justice with his creation of souls from who he was by the same act also withholding the divine grace which would alone enable them to escape perpetual agony, the torture of hell preached to them as physically unbearable and infinite because unending. All three of these dilemmas were to be bypassed without flouting orthodoxy or incurring serious condemnation by the major non-scholastic thinkers of the second half of the fifteenth century, inspired south of the Alps chiefly by the popularized Plotinian neoplatonism of Marsilio Ficino, and in the north by the selective distillation of moral norms from the gospels promoted by the *devotion moderna*.<sup>57</sup>

Such failures left a gap in the intellectual and spiritual life of people, one that the apocalyptic tensions of the time only exacerbated.<sup>58</sup> For medieval life was not a life of religious interiority, but a life constructed around rituals: court rituals, church rituals, guild and town rituals, clan and family rituals. Rituals that displayed power, rituals that brought families together in marriage, rituals relating to the great dramas of human existence: birth, death, coming of age, membership, excommunication, etc. Rituals that brought people together in common life, something quite

---

<sup>56</sup> Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 52, 53.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Intellectual Genesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>58</sup> Was the successes of such reformers as Luther, Zwingli or Calvin—and even Müntzer—due to this split between the spiritual needs of Europeans and the issues and terminologies of theological discussion? Certainly Müntzer's faith through suffering echoed *The Imitation of Christ*, although he went beyond imitation to direct inspiration. His many biblical references cover both the New and Old Testament writings (imagery rather than theological discussion was Müntzer's forte) and he relied on the direct work of the Spirit to provide the foundation of faith, not scripture nor Church doctrine. But this question lies outside the scope of this study, for this study involves not history but my own foundational stance and this chapter the initial and possibly fundamental features of Müntzer's time necessary to ground the incarnate meaning of Müntzer's life—the subject of the next chapter.



different from the kinds of interior spiritual development and personal rather than collective responsibility that more often than not tore societies apart.

### *Dominant Concepts of the Good of Order*

Social conditions have a lot to do with what people consider the proper good of order, what the good of order actually is, and the mismatch between the two. This section deals with the development of and tensions within emerging concepts of order in society, with special attention to the problems of regulating behaviour through the setting and propagation of norms for social interaction. Historically, the dialectical contradiction has always been between open and closed societies, i.e. between societies where individuals are more or less free to regulate their own behaviour and those where standards are set from above and enforced through controlling as many of the reigns of power as possible.

But what is the “good of order”?

In primitive society it is possible to identify the good simply with the object of desire; but in civil community there has to be acknowledged a further component, which we propose to name the good of order. It consists in an intelligible pattern of relationships that condition the fulfilment of each man's desires by his contributions to the fulfilment of the desires of others and, similarly, protect each from the object of his fears in the measure he contributes to warding off the objects feared by others. The good of order is not some entity dwelling apart from human actions and attainments. Nor is it any unrealized ideal that ought to be but is not. But though it is not abstract but concrete, not ideal but real, still it cannot be identified either with desires or with their objects or with their satisfactions. For these are palpable and particular, but the good of order is intelligible and all embracing. A single order ramifies through the whole community to constitute the link between conditioning actions and conditioned results and to close the circuit of inter-locked schemes of recurrence. Again, economic breakdown and political decay are not the absence of this or that object of desire or the presence of this or that object of fear; they are the breakdown and decay of the good of order, the failure of schemes of recurrence to function. Man's practical intelligence devises arrangements for human living; and in the same measure that such arrangements are understood and accepted, there necessarily results the intelligible pattern of relationships that we have named the good of order.<sup>59</sup>

People of Müntzer's time and place lamented the loss of order in society. Such complaints were not based on the careful analytical approach typical of our own era but on a tendency to generalize coloured by highly emotional responses grounded in Christian life. When emotions hold sway over people's minds, there is a tendency to portray everything in black-and-white, all-

---

<sup>59</sup> *Insight*, 213-14.

or-nothing, terms. Furthermore, individual events became the spring-board for vast generalizations, where bad situations and actions became worldwide catastrophes and proof of the innate evilness of humankind. All this can be seen in the following typical passage from Müntzer's *Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel* written in 1524 while at Allstedt:

In view of the wretched, ruinous condition of the poor Christian Church it should be realised that no advice or help can be given until we have industrious, unflagging servants of God who are ready, day in, day out, to promote the knowledge of the Biblical books through singing, reading, and preaching. This will mean, however, that either the heads of our delicate priests get used to taking some hard knocks, or else they will have to abandon their trade. What alternative is there, while ravaging wolves are so grievously devastating the Christian people, like God's vineyard described in Isaiah 5, Psalm 79? St Paul, after all, teaches us to school ourselves in songs of divine praise, Ephesians 5. For our situation today is the same as that of the good prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the others, when the whole congregation of God's elect had become completely caught up in idolatrous ways. As a result, not even God could help them, but had to let them be captured and transported and tormented under the heathen until they learned to recognize his holy name again, as Isaiah 29, Jeremiah 15, Ezekiel 36 and Psalm 88 testify. Nonetheless, in our own time and that of our fathers, our poor Christian people has shown even greater obstinacy while going to incredible lengths to claim the divine name for itself, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3. The devil, of course, and his servants love to deck themselves out like this, 2 Cor. 1, and do it so alluringly that the true friends of God are seduced, and—despite the most determined efforts—are almost incapable of seeing their mistake, as Mt. 24 points out so clearly. The cause of all this is the counterfeit sanctity and the hypocritical absolution of the godless enemies of God, who say that the Christian Church cannot err, although—if error is to be avoided—she should be being built up continually by the word of God and kept free from error. She should also admit the sin which keeps her in ignorance, Lev. 4, Hosea 4, Malachi 2, Isaiah 1.<sup>60</sup>

The “devil” and the devil’s “servants”, the “godless enemies of God”, all busy “seducing” the “true friends of God”—all these highly religious and polarized terms and phrases are a far cry from the explanatory theories and their supporting data of the social and behavioural scientists (social scientists do not speak of good or evil, other than as descriptive terms applied by other cultures). They also fall outside our cultural norms for a proper sermon. Fichtenau describes the medieval period, not so different from conditions at the beginning of the sixteenth century:

Reflections on natural phenomena were often stamped by horror at the evil in the world. Thus the desire for order had a higher priority than in a “rational” period. There is an emotional component of the quest for order, especially in an age when the Antichrist and the Last Judgment seem to be at hand. Longing for the divinely ordered state may lead to attempts to restore it by violent means, and doing justice can degenerate to cruel retaliation. Rational considerations may give way to aggression and assault in the political arena as well. On the other hand, we can understand how deep the joy must have been for disturbed souls in finding a sphere in which all was ‘in order’ . . . The overemphasis on ritual had a sense. The principle of order in feudalism may have been more attractive than is suggested by the generally negative image of ‘feudal anarchy.’ Where no royal authority ruled, many

---

<sup>60</sup> *Collected Works*, 230.

a layman found firm ground in feudalism and, hence reassurance from the fear of being crushed by the wheel of fortune.<sup>61</sup>

The medieval church, with its emphasis on daily devotions, weekly services and the regular cycles of the church year, provided this sense of ritualistic order at a time when civil law and the courts enforcing it did not in any practical sense exist for the common people. Disputes were settled by recognized authorities—a city council, local prince or king and their deputies—rather than independent law courts; order was provided by the secular arm of kings and princes, legitimized by church authority.

And there were conflicting norms that resulted in all sorts of conflicts and disputes.

Church law was a primary factor in the attainment of order, or should have been. We have heard several times of the chasm between canonical prohibitions and reality. These gaps were lamented by many authors, who did not ask what had caused them. They extended from power politics and family interests to the averting of material crisis, from the games of the ‘rich’ to the ‘poor’ in clerical garb. They existed for the archbishop, who simultaneously held four bishoprics against canonical prohibitions, and priests or deacons of Catalonia, who were moneylenders. Did they do this out of greed, or did they lack other income for their daily support? Moreover, canonical prohibitions were not at all unified, so that the genuine could not easily be distinguished from the false. Ecclesiastics may have noticed, as Abbo of Fleury expressed it, that ‘what is prescribed by one ecclesiastical synod is proscribed by another.’<sup>62</sup>

This was a clear case of human intersubjectivity triumphing over any rational and intelligible standards or code of law for human behaviour and the good of order, for common sense action based on family ties and clan affiliations set poor standards for the whole of society. But then, society wasn’t whole at that period of European history, but consisted of a number of loosely organized fiefdoms—some small, others quite large—that were ruled under the authority of one person. Although such supra-organizations as the Holy Roman Empire or the Roman Catholic Church did exist, those that ran these organizations exercised what power and authority they had among this diverse collection of “states.”<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, translated by Patrick J. Geary (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 387.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 387-88. No source given for quote from Abbo of Fleury.

<sup>63</sup> In the small area of central Europe known as Thuringia, that area now called central Germany where Müntzer lived out his life, there were the following jurisdictions: the Archbishopric of Mainz, the Archbishopric of Magdeburg, the Principality of Anhalt, the Electorate of Saxony, the Duchy of Saxony, the Imperial Free Cities, the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the Bishopric of Halberstadt, the County of

## Church as Mediator

The medieval worldview was deeply Christian.

Christians viewed external and internal conflicts, the destinies of peoples and the contradictory impulses of the inner man, as the battle between good and evil or, in theological terms, as the will of God, which also allows evil. Neither the grace and goodness of God nor the wickedness of the devil stood in the foreground of reflection in the tenth century. The major focus was on order, in which God and his human image could be seen. Was this emphasis on order the continuation of the classical idea of the macrocosm and the microcosm of the soul? Only incidentally. It was, rather, a parallel to those rigorous principles in which many early civilizations found support and security.

Order and disorder were important themes for men and for society. They were established along general lines by religion, as were good and evil, but in their details they were open to more individual interpretation. Good was often, in the thought of historiographers, what corresponded to their hopes or to the position of their party. Whatever disturbed the peace, such as reform of the clerical way of life, was not good. Order meant preserving of the old, or condemning it in the struggle for something new that was conceived of as a return to the original norm. Disorder and confusion were created by political opponents and their partner, the devil. The war or feud of one's own party was a battle for what was true and pleasing to God.

On one thing all agreed: order had to reign, and a fixed law had to govern mankind.<sup>64</sup>

The good of order in medieval and early Renaissance society was based on the concept of the Church as mediator between man and God. When this was challenged by the early reformers, the very foundation of the social order came under scrutiny. And when such challenges could not be contained by traditional authority, power or influence all sorts of positions emerged created by various power-seekers. Since challenging the authority of the Church as mediator also challenged the divine right of kings to rule and princes to their privileges as guardians of the faith, the very possibility that ecclesial authorities did not have this power to control meaning aroused a lot of passionate feelings.<sup>65</sup>

---

Stolberg-Wernigerode and the Lordship of Blankenburg-Regenstein. Tom Scott, *Thomas Müntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 20.

<sup>64</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, translated by Patrick J. Geary (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 381-82. Interestingly enough, Müntzer read heavily of early church history in order to restore the original purity of the Church in evil times. See Eric W. Gritsch, *Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 16.

<sup>65</sup> Müntzer's own position was quite clear. The liturgy he developed while at Allstedt:

... involved a quite startling break with traditional concepts of worship. The role of the priest ... is transformed. Although still very much the leader in worship, in teaching, and in spiritual direction he is no longer the mediator. He is defined by his functions, as the diligent pastor, steward, interpreter, watchman, there not to exploit his people materially or to claim any privileged access to God, by 'some private mumbo-jumbo', but to share with all the elect what he, himself, has learnt from Scripture and from his own experience of the spirit of Christ. He will be zealous, devoted to his flock, and fearless, paying 'no heed to the raging of the tyrants', prophet as well as priest.

In the resulting debates over meaning,

... we see a fascinating mixture of scholarly arguments and popular hunger for the certainty of salvation. Sometimes the sophisticated language of the university set the pace; at other times scholars were put under pressure by non-professional Christians, who simply wanted to express their longing for divine grace and their desperate search for God's love through the Mass, the Cross, the Mother nursing her son at her breast or passionately weeping over his crucified corpse.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, there were two languages in use: the language of the scholar and theologian associated with the universities, and the common piety of those seeking God's love in what can only be described as an intersubjective, sensate and highly emotional mode of religious understanding.

The source of grace was another fundamental question:

Just as Erasmus refused to use the word 'heretic' of Luther, whose doctrine was by now [circa 1525] in obvious conflict with the notion of a hierarchical church entrusted with the bestowal of grace through a sacramental system, so he carefully distinguished his position from that of Pelagius, which Erasmus described as requiring no further grace, 'once grace had liberated and healed free will'. The notion of a redeemed nature which could aspire to grace and merit it by virtue not of its own powers but of those bestowed on it by the redemption was still closed to him, because it would have meant allowing the possibility of salvation generally outside the church. Erasmus saw, but could not solve the irresolvable problem. He genuinely did not believe that human beings could *ex puris naturalibus*, be the use of their own free will unmodified by any effect of the redemption, merit supernatural reward. He rejects the view that free will can itself achieve justification, straining in *Hyperaspistes II* for an acceptable form of merit at least *de congruo*,<sup>67</sup> that is 'appropriately', short of establishing the right to merit *de condigno*, as of right. He was, of course, not 'semi-Pelagian', either. The term had not yet been invented, and Erasmus did not in any case hold the doctrines condemned by the synod of Orange in 529 which it was to be invented to cover. In addition, the condemnations of Orange had never formally been accepted as binding.

Luther, on the other hand, could never find any source apart from the religious experience of his followers for the authority to distinguish authentic from non-authentic interpretations of scripture, although he hoped that a valid interpretation might be achieved by a system of cross-references establishing a consensus of meaning. Already while Luther was at the Wartburg, Karlstadt, virtually in charge at Wittenberg, moved further towards simple prophetic illuminism than Luther himself was able to tolerate. Karlstadt's theology was motivated primarily by his desire to remove from the theology at Wittenburg God's arbitrary predestination and reprobation, but it heralded forms of religion even less constrained by anything beyond the personal experience of the individual. Often associated with him are figures like Thomas Müntzer, a radical visionary whose preaching may well have compromised Luther's reform. He thought the Peasants' Revolt was the beginning of Christ's second coming and was tortured and killed after being taken at Frankenhausen in May 1525, when the uprising collapsed.<sup>67</sup>

Theological convolutions aside, the primary struggle was not a struggle for truth but a struggle for power between the church authorities and a rising as yet unformed group of would-be

---

Matheson's introduction to Müntzer's liturgy, *Collected Works*, 164-65. Quotes from Müntzer's introduction to the *German Evangelical Mass*, *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>66</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation* (2003), 21-22.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Intellectual Genesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 302.

power holders. The area for their battles lay not within church walls but in popular appeals to the public—a practice started in 989 C.E., when a council was called at the monastery of Charroux, a council that was the first of many in a movement to curtail the flagrant abuse of the nobles, a movement called the “Peace of God.” Four centuries later, the same methods were still being used; Müntzer’s own actions reflect the same appeal to the public in bringing about institutional change.

What is interesting is the apparent reversal in power.

The tactics which Gregory VII and his associates used both in their deliberate and organized encouragement of the Patarene movement in Lombardy and Tuscany and in attacks on the old ecclesiastical order elsewhere were revolutionary in the classical sense that they called upon underlings, clerical and lay, to sit in judgement on their superiors, and to withdraw obedience if they found them wanting. Such judgements were generally arrived at not through formal legal process, but by traditional tests of popular reputation and standing in the community.<sup>68</sup>

The process became highly political. The concentration of power and wealth in a relatively small group of aristocrats was associated with a collective group bias that justified a cycle of injustice and oppression moderated only by the possibility of a public outcry and the “ordering” efforts of the church. But by Müntzer’s time, the church had run into credibility problems, sparked by the Great Schism, that diminished their own standing. Besides, even in the “peace” movement, injustices often had to do with the seizure of church property by ambitious nobles. The church leaders could use public outrage against the aristocrats to aid them in their own conflicts against the nobles.

By Müntzer’s time, the critical evaluation of one’s superiors had become a social tradition that served to animate the lower classes. The close feudal caste system in which each person had

---

<sup>68</sup> R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215*, The Making of Europe, series editor Jacques Le Goff (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 15. The Patarenes were a:

... radical Church reform movement originating in Milan in the 1050s seeking to end clerical marriage and simony (buying and selling of Church offices and spiritual goods) and hostile to lay involvement in the Church. Though supportive of papal reforms, they were criticized by Pope Alexander II for their violence and extremism. ‘Patarene’ eventually became a general label for heretics.

Richard P. McBrien, general editor, *The HarperCollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, first edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 965.

their place—their socially determined rights, duties and responsibilities—was incompatible with an strong top-down hierarchy well established in a church that in turn legitimized the right of secular rulers to rule through the divine right of kings. The continual jockeying for power among the nobles also served to disrupt feudal order, especially when the different parties could be played off against each other. Religion became politicized, which accounts in part for the passions and vehemence behind so much of the religious wars.

But the church also had an ideological problem: the message of Scripture was a message of liberation and freedom, of rebirth and reincarnation, of personal commitment as a disciple of Christ and of the escape from bondage; the message from the Papacy was a message of the church mediating between man and God, of ecclesiastical authority held by divine right. The situation was ripe for conflict and for change, but these changes were going to exceed anyone's expectations:

In general, each period [of history] may be said to possess its own favourite instruments for looking at, and making sense of, the external world. To employ a simple analogy, so long as God was believed to rule mankind directly, insanity had to be regarded as his special handiwork and was accordingly treated by means of prayer and exorcism. Once the seventeenth-century scientific revolution had dethroned God in favour of the Newtonian clockwork universe, mechanical causes such as a blow on the head too His place as an explanation for lunacy, the cure being sought, appropriately enough, in other mechanical devices, such as cold baths or centrifuges for whirling the patients about. Freud's employment of dreams, hypnosis, and free association as lenses through which to investigate mental phenomena led directly to his discovery of the unconscious as the root of madness and to attempts to manipulate it. In turn, the invention of unprecedented sensitive measuring instruments made possible the present-day preoccupation with the body's biochemistry and electronics, causing the unconscious to be put on the back burner; instead, the very same phenomena—depression, for example, or schizophrenia—are now treated with electric shocks and drugs.<sup>69</sup>

All these changes were to come, changes that could not be anticipated at the time because of the prevailing way of making sense of the world. In a world-mediated-by-meaning dominated by a Christian ideology, alternative viewpoints often had within them the temptation of the devil. As for us, it is hard to set these later developments aside and re-enter the common sense reality of Müntzer's time.

---

<sup>69</sup> Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 251-52.

## Fiat or Law?

To understand Müntzer's time is to understand yet another fundamental issue that had to do with two opposing positions concerning power and what it means to be human: creatures determining meaning through fiat, and persons subject to laws. The same applied to God. On one hand, He could exercise power however He wanted; on the other, God was subject to the same rules that He created. The former position:

... was certainly consistent with the transcendent but arbitrary God of Ockham's theology, known as 'nominalist' on account of its epistemology, which founded what is called the *via moderna* in theology to distinguish it from the earlier tradition of Aquinas and Scotus, principal representatives of the *via antiqua*. It entailed a moral order that was the arbitrary enactment of the divine will, unconstrained by any inherent rationality, and therefore discoverable only by revelation. On the one hand, acts were good or bad not in themselves, but because God had ordained or forbidden them. On the other, salvation and reprobation, awarded at the instant of death, were fore-ordained according, it seemed, to divine caprice, within God's single act by which human souls were both created and predestined.<sup>70</sup>

The difference is not an insignificant one; these two positions concerning God and man are diametrically opposite to each other. It has to do with the connection between knowing and deciding, between the demands of reason and the exercise of will.<sup>71</sup>

According to theological *voluntarism*, God's will is absolute and subject to no limitations. This view was maintained by William of Ockham in opposition to Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas held that God's will is limited by His own nature; therefore, God can will neither a contradiction nor any evil. In such a view (which is in the spirit of Plato and Aristotle), God forbids murder because murder is wrong; it is not made wrong simply because God forbids it. Ockham took the other view, holding that God's will is unlimited in any respect and is itself the ultimate basis of right and wrong. The difference may seem subtle and technical, but in fact it is momentous, especially when transferred to the human level. All so-called natural-law theories proceed on the assumption that certain acts or dispositions of character are inherently right and others inherently wrong, and that man, by using his reason or his conscience, can learn what these are. Voluntarism denies this, asserting in effect that right and wrong are established only by the command or decree of some authority—God, a human monarch, a legislature, etc. In this view it makes no sense to ask whether God's will is righteous, because by definition whatever God wills is right. Similarly, on a secular level, the king can do no wrong because the king's degree is the basis of right. The result of such a view is that there is no right or wrong except by *fiat*. This is the position taken in modern days by legal positivism, which holds

---

<sup>70</sup> Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation* (2002), 9. Lonergan's position favours the latter and considers Ockham's stance a counter-position that doesn't take into account the unrestricted desire to know and the heuristic structures that guide such knowing. An arbitrary God could not provide intelligibility to the universe, or rather would provide intelligibility—but only up to a point. In effect, this defines a limit to the questions that can be asked that cuts off any further questioning into divine motivations and/or purposes: we do what we do because God revealed certain things to us, not because there's an inherent meaning in the laws of the Hebrew Bible or the injunctions that sublated these laws in the New Testament.

<sup>71</sup> It is a question of the moral capacity to follow the good. As St Paul wrote, "I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (NIV, *Romans*, 7:18-19).



that the positive law of any society, if duly enacted by the appropriate authority, is for that society the measure of right and wrong.<sup>72</sup>

### Central Purpose of Society

Jane Jacobs identifies the key to revealing the central purpose of any society.

How does a culture reveal its concept of the purpose of life? A cultural purpose enables perpetrators and witnesses to regard horrific deeds as righteous. Republican Rome's defeat of Carthage and its people—Virgil's cant notwithstanding—was as gruesome a murder scene of helpless and innocent people as has been recorded; it was deemed glorious by Romans because they construed it as a righteous act of pre-emptive protection for the state. Looting and massacres by sixteen-century Spanish conquistadores in South and Central America were justified by the same cultural drives for salvation of souls that justified the labours, sacrifices, and risks of Spanish missionaries. The aggressions of crusading soldiers and kings against Muslim 'infidels' in the Middle East and Christian heretics in France; the tortures and executions in Europe by Catholic inquisitors and Protestant witch-hunters; the persecutions and forced conversions of Jews; the oppressions by Puritans in Britain and New England—these and other deeds that created hell on earth were all righteously justified as defeats of the devil and salvation of souls.<sup>73</sup>

One key to understanding Müntzer's world is to realize he was engaged in this common cultural drive of saving souls for God. But what was the proper way to fulfill this divinely appointed task? There were a number of possible answers, of which Müntzer's approach was one. But all emerged from a growing tension:

What chiefly determined the intellectual aspects of the cultural upheaval in the west which reached its apex around 1500 appears to have been the explosive force of a tension which had been growing for a century and a half. The theology of Aquinas had made it possible to regard even grace-aided, and therefore supernatural, religious human perfection as something intrinsic to the moral fulfilment to which sane, adult human beings aspired by virtue of their (redeemed) natures. The reaction, primarily of Scotus, to this 'naturalism' in Aquinas's own thirteenth century began to insist on divine transcendence from God's own creation to a point where human moral needs were no longer necessarily correlative to the revealed divine law, interpreted and administered by the church.

At the heart of the renaissance was the process by which western Europe gradually came to accept that human perfection, including the religious perfection which was grace-aided and necessarily rewarded by eternal salvation, had to be intrinsic to the fulfilment of the highest human moral aspirations inscribed on rational human nature itself, and not something different from or additional to human moral achievement, as measured by rational norms. It began to be felt that no tolerable, divinely promulgated religion could exist in which divine reward, instead of following moral achievement, was ultimately independent of it, and therefore arbitrarily bestowed. Aquinas had

---

<sup>72</sup> Philip H. Rhinelander, *Is Man Incomprehensible to Man?* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1974), 55-56. Rhinelander's italics. Lonergan comes down on the side of Aquinas. To take Ockham's position is to ultimately deny intelligibility to the universe and hence to deny any reality to the dynamic movement of the human spirit and the unrestricted desire to know.

<sup>73</sup> Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004), 58. Our own atrocities—species extinctions, land degradations, inadvertent man-made climatic change, extensive mercury and other forms of lethal pollution, nuclear proliferation—can all be traced to the Common Costs—Private Profits, *but don't tell anyone* game. This suggests our central cultural purpose is the creation of private wealth measured in lines of credit extended by the major players, the great international banking institutions.

approached this position in all but his earliest works, but such a view was incompatible with the theology developed by Scotus and, particularly, Ockham and the religious attitudes with which it was consistent, and it was also held to be incompatible with the theological legacy of Augustine.

What prevented the essential renaissance shift in cultural values from gaining earlier acceptance and drove the religious tensions to breaking point was largely the close and closely defended link which had grown up between the credal belief essential for membership of the church and the spiritual need of human nature. It was not in doubt that unbelievers, 'pagans', shared with Christians the same rational human nature, and therefore the same aspirations to moral fulfilment. They could attain, and indeed in antiquity were known to have achieved, heights of moral virtue unsurpassed by Christians. But because by definition they were unbelievers, they could not belong to the church, be justified, or, any more than unbaptized babies, be rewarded with eternal salvation. Salvation, which consisted in the beatifying vision of God and participation in uncreated grace, that is in the nature of God himself, could be neither an exigence inscribed on human nature, which would have ruined the gratuity of grace with what the Sixteenth century would consider implicit Pelagianism, nor the reward for a moral grandeur achievable by non-believers.<sup>74</sup>

If Max Weber is to be believed, this shift set into place the psychological conditions that drove the development of a post-agricultural capitalist civilization.<sup>75</sup>

#### Open and Closed Societies

At one point in *How Real is Real: Confusion, Disinformation, Communication*, Paul Watzlawick writes about Semantic Punctuation as a source of confusion and conflict. This phenomenon is well known in legal circles, where different punctuations of the same event lead witnesses to quite different and often contradictory stories or accounts of what "really" took place. Under extreme circumstance, it may be impossible to sort of the truth.

One example Watzlawick gives is the story of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is a truly terrible story, leaving the reader on one side or the other. It is a story that highlights the tensions of Müntzer's time, for there are two forms of social and political order—open or closed—well contrasted in this dialogue between Jesus and his inquisitor.

The story is laid in sixteenth-century Seville, at the height of the Inquisition. On the day following a magnificent *auto-da-fé*, in which nearly one hundred heretics were burned alive, *ad maiorem gloriam Dei*, Jesus descends once more and is immediately recognized and worshiped by his tortured, suffering people. But the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, has Him arrested and thrown into prison. Night falls; the door of the dungeon opens and in comes the old, ascetic cardinal, alone. For a few

---

<sup>74</sup> Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Intellectual Genesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 10-11.

<sup>75</sup> See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (New York, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

minutes there is silence; then the Grand inquisitor delivers the most profound and terrible attack against Christianity that has even been conceived:

Jesus has betrayed mankind, for He deliberately rejected the only way in which men might have been made happy. This unique, irretrievable moment occurred when “the wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence,” tempted Him in the wilderness by asking Him three questions, expressing “in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of the world and of humanity—dost thou believe,” the Grand Inquisitor asks, “that all the wisdom of the earth united could have invented anything in depth and force equal to the three questions that were actually put to Thee . . . ?” First, the spirit tempted Jesus by asking Him to turn stones into bread. But He refused because He wanted mankind free, and what would obedience be worth if it were bought with bread? In doing this, He deprived man of his deepest craving—to find someone all of mankind can worship together, who will take away the awesome burden of freedom. When Jesus refused the second temptation—to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, “for it is written: the angels shall hold Him up lest He fall”—He rejected miracles. But man cannot bear to be without miracles; if he is deprived of them, he immediately creates new ones. Jesus craved faith freely given, not based on miracles. But is man capable of that? Man is weaker and baser by nature than Jesus thought. “By showing him so much respect, thou didst . . . cease to feel for him . . .”

And then the Grand Inquisitor comes to the last temptation, the third gift that He rejected: to rule the world, to unite all mankind “in one unanimous and harmonious ant-heap, for the craving for universal unity is the third and last anguish of men. . . . We are not working with Thee but with *him*. . . . We have taken the sword of Caesar and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed *him*. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. . . . [But] we have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon *miracle*, *mystery* and *authority*. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering, was, at last, lifted from their hearts. . . . And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. . . . Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name, and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death.” In concluding his terrible accusation, the Grand Inquisitor tells Jesus that He will not be allowed to bring unhappiness to mankind a second time—tomorrow He Himself will burn at the stake!

To all of this Jesus has listened in silence. Now He suddenly approaches the old man and softly kisses him on his thin, bloodless lips. The cardinal shudders, goes to the door and opens it: “Go, and come no more . . . come not at all, never, never!” And the prisoner goes out into the night.<sup>76</sup>

Watzlawick goes on to note that:

The story is fictional, but its implications are very real. Christ and the Grand Inquisitor have both devoted their lives to the alleviation of suffering, and yet they are poles apart. Between them the paradox of help and of the power inevitably associated with help arises in all its stark contradiction. . . . Jesus, the Grand Inquisitor charges, wants spontaneous compliance and thereby creates a paradox that is beyond human power to resolve. How can the weak be free? For the cardinal, the only solution is to rid man of the terrible burden of freedom, to make him unfree but happy. For Jesus, man’s goal is not happiness but freedom. [The] poem means something totally different if we accept only Christ’s or only the Grand Inquisitor’s world-view. Those who grasp both views are left hanging in a universe where everything is true, and so is its contrary.<sup>77</sup>

One doubts that Müntzer would side with the inquisitor’s world-view, yet there is this disturbing difference between helping others in a free and open society and helping others in a top-down, controlled and closed society designed to prevent people from having to think for

---

<sup>76</sup> Paul Watzlawick, *How Real is Real: Confusion, Disinformation, Communication* (New York: Random House, 1976), 68-70.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

themselves. The two forms of order are diametrically opposite to each other, mutually incompatible—unless of course one is incapable of choosing one or the other. In part, the key dialectic for Müntzer’s time—as for our own—may rest on whether Christ’s or the Inquisitor’s perspective predominates. If the former, than law prevails; if the latter, than fiat.<sup>78</sup>

There is a further dimension to this dialectic. As human beings, we like to know. In fact, it is this detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know that is the immanent source of transcendence in human beings:

It is the origin of all his questions, it is the origin of the radical, further questions that take him beyond the defined limits of particular issues. Nor is it solely the operator of his cognitional development. For its detachment and disinterestedness set it in opposition to his attached and interested sensitivity and intersubjectivity; and the knowledge it fields demands of his will the endeavour to develop in willingness and so make his doing consistent with his knowing.<sup>79</sup>

But although our desire to know may be unrestricted, our achievement is not. We have a limited capacity to attain knowledge and our questions often exceed our ability to find answers. Then there are the paradoxes and dilemmas of human living, from the fact no one can exert control over everyone else (there are always more than one actor in the social and political scene, and they don’t necessarily have to agree although they do interact as stakeholders), to the positions and counter-positions of dialectics, to misunderstandings and deliberate misleading statements where language is used to conceal rather than reveal, and we are creatures limited in both time and space. While we may desire to be all-knowing the reality is that we are not; we always operate within levels of uncertainty and risk in whatever it is we do. It is this haze of “living in the midst of noise, turbulence and uncertainty” of Chapter One that is one of the characteristics of open societies. As Watzlawick puts it:

---

<sup>78</sup> This may reflect a fundamental dialectic within Christianity itself, the difference between the organization’s ideology and the message given in sacred scripture. As an organization, the church requires an ideology to keep its members together; any ideology based on the exercise of personal freedom is counter-productive—at least in the organizational sense—for any organization committed to the personal freedom of its members finds it hard to maintain sufficient central unity for action; yet the message of scripture is that of freedom to chose the good, to follow the Divine Mystery. It is a tension that generates great creativity and innovation, as the Reformation demonstrates and our own time attests.

<sup>79</sup> *Insight*, 636-37.

Perhaps the most murderous element in human history is the delusion of a 'real' reality, with all the consequences that logically follow from it. On the other hand, it requires a very high degree of maturity and tolerance for others to live with relative truth, with questions for which there are no answers, with the knowledge that one knows nothing and with the uncertainties produced by paradox. Yet if we cannot develop this ability, we will, without knowing it relegate ourselves to the Grand inquisitor's world, in which we will live the lives of sheep, occasionally troubled by the acrid smoke rising from some auto-da-dé or the chimneys of crematoria.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, it is worth pointing out that our choice of society depends in part of our concept of what it means to be human:

That there is at least a general correlation between our assumptions about the nature of man and our ethical and political outlook can be shown by a few examples. If, for example, we believe that all men are by nature egotistical and aggressively self-seeking, we may then conclude that men can be ruled only by force, and that an authoritarian state is necessary to provide any semblance of peace and security. Such was (in substance) the position of the eminent seventeenth-century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes. If, on the contrary, we believe that men are naturally peaceable and benevolent, and that aggressive, competitive egotism is the product of artificial restraints imposed by society, we may readily conclude that social and legal restraints on individual conduct are counterproductive and should be removed or at least minimized. Several versions of this view are held today.<sup>81</sup>

Thus we are back at the problem of valuation, of the emergence of a suitable common appreciative system sufficient to regulate human behaviour under changing circumstances.

### Rule of Law

The collapse of the Western Roman Empire saw a resurgence of family and clan, feudal dynasties and nations, as intersubjective communities replaced societies based on common law. This breakdown of civil law brought those living in Europe closer to the origins of human communities, as family and tribal affiliations played a stronger role than any legal system. But this reduction to a more primitive form of social and political living meant increased demands for the exercise of authority and power to solve disputes and establish priorities. But eventually population growth and resurgence technological growth dramatically expands the number of interactions to the point where tribal customs and communal rituals are no longer capable of handling the complexities involved in social and political life.

---

<sup>80</sup> Watzlawick, *How Real is Real* (1976), 221-22. The delusion of a 'real' reality lies behind the assumption that knowing is looking. It is this epistemological assumption based on our sensate origins both as a species and as individual human beings that gives rise to many of the dysfunctions and confrontations reveal in the study of history.

<sup>81</sup> Philip H. Rhinelander, *Is Man Incomprehensible to Man?* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1974), 2.

The break-up of the Western Roman Empire was not only a loss of civic culture:

A Dark Age is not merely a collection of subtractions. It is not a blank; much is added to fill the vacuum. But the additions break from the past and themselves reinforce a loss of the past. In Europe, languages that derived from formerly widely understood Latin diverged and became mutually incomprehensible. Everyday customs, rituals, and decorations diverged as old ones were lost; ethnic awareness came to the fore, often antagonistically; the embryos of nation-states were forming.

Citizenship gave way to serfdom; old Roman cities and towns were largely deserted and their underpopulated remnants sank into poverty and squalor; their former amenities, such as public baths and theatrical performances, became not even a memory. Gladiatorial battles and hungry wild animals unleashed upon prisoners were forgotten, too, but here and there, in backwaters, the memory of combat between a man on foot and a bull was retained because it was practiced. Diets changed, with gruel displacing bread, and salt fish and wild fowl almost displacing domesticated meat. Rules of inheritance and property holding changed. The composition of households changed drastically with conversion of Rome's traditional family-sized farms to feudal estates. Methods of warfare and ostensible reasons for warfare changed as the state and its laws gave way to exactions and oppressions by warlords.

Writers disappeared, along with readers and literacy, as schooling became rare. Religion changed as Christianity, formerly an obscure cult among hundreds of obscure cults, won enough adherents to become dominant and to be accepted as the state religion by Constantine, emperor of the still intact Eastern Roman Empire, and then, also as the state religion, in territorial remnants of the vanished Western Empire. The very definitions of virtue and the meaning of life changed. In Western Christendom, sexuality became highly suspect.

In sum, during the time of mass amnesia, not only was most classical culture forgotten, and what remained coarsened; but also, Western Europe underwent the most radical and thoroughgoing revolution in its recorded history—a political, economic, social, and ideological revolution that was unexamined and even largely unnoticed, as such, while it was under way. In the last desperate years before Western Rome's collapse, local governments had been expunged by imperial decree and were replaced by a centralized military despotism, not a workable organ for governmental judgments and reflections.<sup>82</sup>

The feudal system that emerged after the fall of the Western Roman Empire was itself showing signs of strain by Müntzer's time. Recurring schemes based on human intersubjectivity were breaking down. Practical common sense intelligence now faced new sets of problems that stemmed from technological innovations and capital formation that exceeded the regulatory capacity of manorial estates and the system of allegiances to local lords and distant kings. What was needed was a rule of law set down in an institutional structure that provided new ways of sharing power—for the shift from real estate to a cash economy redefined the nature of wealth. Prior concepts of "fair price" of a shoe, horse collar or carriage produced under the guild system ran into new economic realities that allowed the price of commodities to float according to supply and demand of the market place. Charging interest on loans ran contrary to feudal beliefs, for

---

<sup>82</sup> Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004), 8-9.

usury would played havoc with levels of communal intersubjectivity so necessary for the regulation of feudal economic life. Ultimately, the divine right of kings to extort and expropriate as they wished would be countered by the creation of an institutional structure now separate from the church and based on the rule of law of a commercial civilization rather than the loyalty-based ethics of nation-states.

### *Fundamental Institutional Changes of Müntzer's Time*

#### Architectural Clues

Similar to Jane Jacobs' observation that understanding the purpose of a culture is to find out what horrendous acts are considered reasonable and righteous, there is the key to understanding what the fundamental institutions of any society: great buildings, monuments to the exercise of power that convey a sense of authority and exert influence over people's lives.

There were three major forms of architectural projects in the medieval age: Castles and Keeps, defensive city walls and ramparts, and great churches and cathedrals. Displays of power included: Caernarvon Castle (Wales, 1285-1322); Keep (Tower of London, late 11<sup>th</sup> c.); Carcassonne (Walled town of Aude, 13<sup>th</sup> c.); Ávila (walled town in Spain, 14<sup>th</sup> c.); Grand Place belfry and town hall (Bruges, 14<sup>th</sup> c.); Abbey church, Cluny (1088-1118); Albi Cathedral (France, 1282-1390); Notre-Dame (Paris, started 1163); and St Peter's (Rome, 1506-1626).

By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, wealth and power was starting to be displayed in Palaces, Châteaux, civic halls and libraries. These included the Laurential Library (Florence, 1524); Palazzo del Tè (Mantua, 1526-1531; Villa Farnese at Caprarola (1547-59); Villa capra (near Vicenza, Begun, 1567); Antwerp town hall (1561-65); Hatfield House (Hertfordshire, 1607-11); Burghley House (Northamptonshire, 1585); and the Château of Maisons (Begun, 1642). A few centuries later, the great architectural achievements were the Crystal Palace (London, 1850-51) and the Eiffel Tower

(Paris, 1889). Today, city skylines are dominated by great glass towers with Bank logos, or commercial centers such as the ill-fated Twin Towers of New York.<sup>83</sup>

Taken together, there seems to be a long-term trend from Ecclesial edifices and the palaces of kings, to emerging civic buildings and houses built on private wealth, to industrial monuments and commercial enterprises. Certainly for Müntzer's time the focus was on religious institutions such as monasteries, abbeys and cathedrals, defensive structures such as city ramparts and castles, and the grand homes of kings and princes. Such is the way power-holders made their presence felt; such were the people would-be power seekers like Müntzer would have to face.

The anticlerical atmosphere of Müntzer's time certainly shaped his thinking, but his actions played out in a public sphere where authority of all kinds was under suspicion, where traditions were being challenged:

It was not only the prestige of the Pope, but also the authority of the Emperor, that other pillar of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which was under assault. The reforming Imperial Diets, which were convened in the second half of the fifteenth century to avert the decline of the Empire, really benefited not the Crown but the territorial rulers, who were attempting to extend their dominions organisationally, judicially and economically. The princes became the powers in the Empire. The territorial expansion was at the expense of the Emperor's power, but it also put pressure on the lesser powers: the regional nobility, the knights and the lords of the manor. Tensions in the ruling elite grew stronger and were often only held in check by laborious negotiations in imperial and provincial diets.

The relations between territorial rulers and the Emperor on the one hand and the Imperial cities on the other were also fraught with tensions. With their policy of guarding, securing or defending their freedom, the Imperial cities had to take care to retain the Emperor's protection, and therefore could not afford to engage in any anti-imperial politicking. This was the only way in which the Imperial cities could maintain themselves *vis-à-vis* the provincial lords, in whose territories they constituted a foreign body. This political quandary often put the towns in a ticklish position.<sup>84</sup>

With multiple authorities engaged in maintaining a delicate balance of power among a wide and diverse number of stakeholders it is no wonder that Müntzer's growing evangelical and revolutionary influence provoked the reactions it did—this all the more so because Müntzer clearly sided with the interests of the common people. But these interests were also changing.

[Such political changes] were not without an effect on the common people, the broad social stratum in town and country which hitherto had had no part in government. Chiefly, it impinged ever more upon the consciousness of the common people that they, too, could accomplish something in

---

<sup>83</sup> See Trewin Copplestone, general editor, *World Architecture* (New York, N.Y.: Hamlyn, 1963).

<sup>84</sup> Goertz, Hans-Jürgen. *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 26-27.



this world. 'Perhaps it should be that the lowly will be lifted up and the powerful will be brought low, just as Christ says in the Gospel,' runs the *Reformatio Sigismundi*, a successful reform pamphlet which was published in 1476: 'the uneducated folk will rise up and go to heaven and the scholars and the priests will go to hell.' The adoption of this biblical prophecy went hand-in-hand with the laicisation of church life already observed in the anti-clerical struggle, strengthening this tendency and driving it to a revolutionary conclusion. Müntzer, too, applied a similar prophecy to his times and extended it beyond the religious sphere and into the temporal realm. Likewise the popular slogan from the English Peasants' Revolt of 1383 had found its way to Germany, fomenting rebellion and protest among the peasantry:

'When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who then was the gentleman?'

In their economic and political beleaguerment the lords of the manor had felt compelled to pass on the pressure to their underlings, and so severely aggravated the political, judicial and economic situation of the peasantry that the *Bundschuh* (Laced Boot) and *Arme Konrad* (Poor Conrad) movements sprang up in the Upper Rhine and in Württemberg respectively, and brought unrest into the villages and countryside.<sup>85</sup>

Real changes were also taking place behind the scenes, in what we would call the development of a capitalist post-agricultural economy:

Behind these rumblings in the countryside lay covert changes in the total economic picture. Increasingly, trading capital was displacing ground-rents; that is, the 'big money' was no longer to be dug from the ground or produced off the land, but was to come from investment in trade and industry. The self-sustaining process of money circulation and of the credit system began to operate on a larger scale, and the complaints about speculative buying, usury and interest rates grew in volume. Through the establishment of larger trading companies, of manufacturing and publishing, and the drift of craft production into the countryside, the craft guilds in the towns were put under pressure. Monopoly concerns were established with ruinous effects on the smaller merchants and artisans. Mines were dug; and new settlements arose on their outskirts. The 'riches of the mountains' brought with them many social ills, when little was done to ensure adequate provisions for the population or when the pits and tunnels were closed down again, literally putting people out on the streets overnight. The silver mines in the Erzgebirge, and especially the copper mines in the Mansfeld area, played an important rôle in Müntzer's activities. Miners took his part and supported his plans.<sup>86</sup>

Before moving on to the last significant type of institutional change going on in Müntzer's corner of the world, it is important to keep in mind a few of the significant events of his era. Political history included Charles V being elected Holy Roman Emperor (1519), Cortés winning the Aztec empire in Mexico for Spain (1519), Suleiman the Magnificent ascending the Turkish throne (1520) and threatening Vienna (1525), Francis I of France defeated by Charles V at Pavia (1525) and the founding of the Mogul dynasty in India (1527). On the religious and literary front, Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Praise of Folly* was published (1511), Thomas More's *Utopia* (1526),

---

<sup>85</sup> Goertz, Hans-Jürgen. *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 28. Reference to the *Reformatio* is in *Reformation Kaiser Sigismund*, ed. Heinrich Koller, Stuttgart 1964, 59.

<sup>86</sup> Hans-Jürgen, *Thomas Müntzer* (1993), 28-29.

Martin Luther posts theses (1517) and is excommunicated and outlawed (1521), the first printed edition of Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) and Ignatius of Loyola founds the Jesuit Order (1534). Science and technology included such feats as Balboa sighting the Pacific Ocean (1513), Portuguese reaching China (1516) where they held a trade monopoly in the Far East until 1602, the first circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan and crew (1520-22), and Copernicus refutes the geocentric view of the universe (1530-43).<sup>87</sup>

Clearly, European culture was on the move.

### Civil Society

In the section on dominant concepts of the good of order, attention was drawn to a number of basic positions and counter-positions concerning the best way to order or regulate social and political affairs that had emerged from having to cope with the break-up of the Western Roman Empire, the shift to the manorial system in the Medieval Ages and the later emergence of civil society. These ideas operated in what can only be called an evolutionary epistemology, where those committed to various positions and counter-positions competed for the resources of various supporters. The net result of power plays, attempts to exert authority and influence each other were institutions that embodied these positions and counter-positions. It is these fundamental institutional shifts, understood both genetically and dialectically, that are the focus of this section.

It is rare that people going through fundamental changes are fully aware of what is going on. It was only in retrospect, centuries later, that historians identified and gave a name to a number of significant events: e.g., the Reformation (at least from Church history, the Renaissance from a secular viewpoint). Like any such label, the boundaries are somewhat flexible and the key trends—identified through subsequent developments and insights into what was going forward—are not so clear-cut as to be beyond question. The whole idea of the Dark Ages is now recognized

---

<sup>87</sup> Synoptic Tables, taken from H. W. Janson, and Dora Jane Janson, *History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day*, revised and enlarged (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 582.

as a period of remarkable innovations that included among other things the energy magnifying invention of the horse collar.<sup>88</sup>

The fundamental institutional changes of Müntzer's time involved a conflict between two types of organizational principles: the intersubjectivity of the feudal system that emerged after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, and a new civil society based on commerce and open trade. Each rested on its own moral code. The dominant value and moral imperative for those who organize and manage territories is loyalty; for those who engage in trading and producing, it is honesty. Feudal lords relied on loyalty to hold their realms together and, for the well-being of the group, lying and cheating, stealing and finagling were *de rigour*—as long as was directed against the other side (deceit, torture and coercion are perfectly moral as long as it is done in defence of one's institutions to which allegiance is given and support received). But loyalty is of little value for those engaged in production and commerce, where deception only leads to a loss of efficiency and a breakdown in commercial enterprises. Industrial and commercial "empires" require among other things laws supporting private ownership, the sanctity of contracts, due process for legal institutions, a stable currency, banks and insurance companies where "honesty is the best policy." To expect honesty from governments is as much a "no-brainer" as expecting loyalty from limited corporations, yet both guardian and commercial modes of survival are needed. In fact it is when one form of institution tries to take on the practices of the other that things fall apart.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> See James Burke, *Connections* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978) for a description of the Medieval Industrial Revolution between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries.

<sup>89</sup> See Jane Jacobs, *Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics* (New York: Random House, 1992). She argues that there are two distinct and contradictory ethical systems that govern much of our behaviour: a guardian ethic that stems from the need to forage and protect territory (for example, armed forces, police, government ministries, bureaucracies, legislatures, courts and organized religions), and a commercial ethic arising from trade and the production of goods (limited corporations, banks, manufacturing organizations, agriculture, shipping lines, trade routes, retail outlets and city markets). It is interesting to note that art flourishes under guardian institutions, for example Japanese feudal sensitivities or the great art of the Renaissance, while science only emerges as part of an open commercial world-mediated-by-meaning.

The rise of political power on the part of the clergy was another factor. De Tocqueville gives an excellent description of one of the surprising results of such changing fortunes:

Let us recollect the situation of France seven hundred years ago, when the territory was divided amongst a small number of families, who were the owners of the soil and the rulers of the inhabitants; the right of governing descended with the family inheritance from generation to generation; force was the only means by which man could act on man, and landed property was the sole source of power. Soon, however, the political power of the clergy was founded, and began to exert itself. The clergy opened its ranks to all classes, to the poor and the rich, the villain and the lord; equality penetrated into the Government through the Church, and the being who as a serf must have vegetated in perpetual bandage took his place as a priest in the midst of nobles, and not unfrequently above the heads of kings.<sup>90</sup>

By Müntzer's time, the vast majority of the ecclesial elite were from the entitled class. But opportunities were still open to the ambitious. Müntzer was part of a long trend toward equality, toward democracy and an open form of society. Not born into an aristocratic family, he still achieved considerable influence—although not power—to intervene in the affairs of men. As a clergyman, and even as a reformer, he represented the individual man, self-made in a religious organization (the Reform movement) that was open to all. Liberty! To be free to worship before God according to one's beliefs! To stand up to the powers of the day by adhering to a higher power than kings, queens and princes—and ultimately the popes. And there were other paths to equality than the church:

The different relations of men became more complicated and more numerous as society gradually became more stable and civilized. Thence the want of civil laws was felt; and the order of legal functionaries soon rose from the obscurity of the tribunals and their dusty chambers, to appear at the court of the monarch, by the side of the feudal barons in their ermine and their mail. Whilst the kings were ruining themselves by their great enterprises, and the nobles exhausted their resources by private wars, the lower orders were enriching themselves by commerce. The influence of money began to be perceptible in state affairs. The transactions of business opened a new road to power, and the financier rose to a station of political influence in which he was at once flattered and despised. Gradually the spread of mental acquirements, and the increasing taste for literature and art, opened chances of success to talent; science became a means of government, intelligence led to social power, and the man of letters took a part in the affairs of the state. The value attached to the privileges of birth decreased to the exact proportion in which new paths were struck out to advancement. In the eleventh century nobility was beyond all price; in the thirteenth it might be purchased; it was conferred for the first time in 1270; and equality was thus introduced into the government by the aristocracy itself.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated with preface and introductory notice by Henry Reeve, C.B., edited by Bruce Frohnen (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2002), 3. Originally published London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1889.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Müntzer's life spanned the first quarter of 16<sup>th</sup> century central Europe, when these processes were well advanced. His life overlapped the initial years of Luther's career as a reformer, a period that precedes the establishment of the confessional system of churches by several decades. By his time Gutenberg had invented the movable type printing press (1446-50), Christopher Columbus had discovered the New World (1492), Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* was published (1494), Charles VIII of France had invaded Italy (1494-99), Vasco da Gama had reached India and returned to Lisbon (1497-99), Martin Luther posted his theses (1517) only to be excommunicated and outlawed in 1521, Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor (1519 ) and the Peasants' Revolt in Germany (1524-25)—an uprising that cost Müntzer his life. Twelve years after his death, the first printed edition of Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) was published, after which Henry VIII founds the Anglican Church (1534), and Ignatius of Loyola establishes the Jesuit Order (1534). It was only years later that the Council of Trent undertook both moral reform and doctrinal clarification—at least in Catholic circles—and laid out the Catholic position against Protestantism (1545-63), that the Edict of Nantes established religious toleration (1598), and that the King James Bible was printed (1611).<sup>92</sup>

In itself, Europe was a patch-quilt of small and large powers held together by a:

... vast European-wide trade union that was the clergy: a trade union large enough to include something like a tenth of the entire population in some of the cities of the late medieval Holy Roman Empire. Alongside this authority of the Church was a kaleidoscopic hierarchy of secular jurisdictions varying in size and scope, from the vast territories and assorted jurisdictional rights of the Holy Roman emperor to a tiny but effectively independent territory belonging to a free city or a count or a knight. Europe was not then made up of nation-states . . . I doubt whether one can use the word 'nationalism' to any great purpose in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. . . . Nationalism is a phenomenon of the world after the 1789 French Revolution; it implies a common consciousness created within a consolidated territory, usually involving a single language and shared culture, producing a public rhetoric of a single national will, and with the agenda of creating or reinforcing a unitary state.

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe did indeed recognize regions and jurisdictions where people were conscious of a common heritage, usually because they nursed a long-standing hatred against some nearby region. The kingdom of England was perhaps the most exceptionally developed example: It was much older, more united and self-conscious than most European secular jurisdictions. This in turn gave the very diverse Gaelic and English-speaking peoples in the neighboring northern

---

<sup>92</sup> W. H. Janson and Dora Jane Janson, "Synoptic Tables", *History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962; revised and enlarged 1969), 587-89.

kingdom of Scotland a vigorous common consciousness of not being English, particularly because of past inept English interference, and one might mistake that attitude for Scottish nationalism. Yet even in the realm of England, five different living languages were spoken in the fifteenth century (English, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, and French).<sup>93</sup>

Notwithstanding MacCulloch's comments, nations were starting to emerge—or at least a proto-nationalism that brought with it the beginnings of civil law and the bureaucracies associated with the exercise and enforcement of such laws. Tax collecting, the keeping of economic records, and the maintenance of full-time professional armies meant that the tools and methods appropriate for running a manorial or feudal system; family ties, kinship and clan affiliations were not sufficient to regulate those roles essential for running a civil society.<sup>94</sup>

Politically, it was only towards the end of the fifteenth century that large new territorial units were emerging to consolidate a politically fragmented feudal Europe. By 1500 France under Louis XI had absorbed the former possessions of the duc d'Anjou, Maine, Anjou, and Provence, as well as those of Roussillon, Artois, the vast estates of the remaining great feudal landowners, and of the duchy of Burgundy. These annexations had been followed by that of Brittany into France on the marriage of Charles VIII to Anne de Bretagne in 1491, creating the huge nation-state of France. Spain was unified on the merging of Castile and Aragon following the marriage of Isabella in 1469 to Ferdinand of Aragon, on her succession to the throne of Castile in 1474. The establishment of Tudor hegemony in England after the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 had created a third massive new power block in western Europe. In 1475 Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, had annexed Lorraine to unite his northern territories, the Low Countries (roughly today's Holland and Belgium), with his southern dominions, including today's Alsace, Burgundy, and Franche-Comté. Had his kingdom not disintegrated after his death defending Lorraine in 1477, Burgundy, while unlikely to have been stable, might have constituted a fourth huge western European nation.

Such changes had their impact on Church policy and practice:

These and other political developments . . . were to influence not only the policies of the papacy but also the promulgation of doctrinal and legal decisions and condemnations. The popes were often prepared to use spiritual penalties, and occasionally such rewards as red hats, to achieve temporal advantage for the church or political power for themselves. An awareness of the politics of the papacy is therefore integral to an understanding of the exercise of the magisterium, as in Rome's failure to condemn Luther for heresy, or in the rulings of the Roman courts, such as the refusal to grant Henry VIII the declaration of the nullity of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Political considerations played a determining role in both decisions.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation* (2003), 41-42.

<sup>94</sup> “. . . the three cardinal virtues of medieval nobility [were] ancestry, royal favour, and money. The greatest of these was money.” Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, volume I of *Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991). He goes on to note that kings did not hoard land in the way the Church did, by retained large estates in the form of monasteries, church properties, and a variety of real estate gifts on the part of the faithful. Kings often gave away whole regions to their brothers and sons.

<sup>95</sup> Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation* (2002), 4.

Another characteristic of this period, vitally important when it comes to understanding Müntzer's rather confrontational approach to ministry, was a tendency to take others to court, the court of law.

The middle ages were litigious. Their institutions were rent by competition for jurisdiction pursued with a passion which is apt to seem pointless and absurd. But contemporaries did not see it like that. The administration of justice was not only an important source of revenue; it was the highest attribute of sovereignty.<sup>96</sup>

Rights and privileges in feudal Europe were matters of tradition, convention and special dispensations or privileges. Towns would be given their own charters that would make them independent; sons would be given large estates along with the authority to run them as they saw fit; the lack of a market system for setting rates and so forth meant that changes to meet the economic shifts of the day had to be laboriously negotiated. In a crude sense, feudal society was one big extended family, where getting things done often meant knowledge of who to approach and who would hinder or block one's plans. Currying favour with the powerful—finding a patron in other words—was a necessary part of social, political and economic life. And as Sumption notes this practice had its own impact of human relationships:

In place of the strictly feudal relationship between a great lord and his tenants (a system never perfectly in force and long sense obsolete [1330s]) there had grown up a network of more personal bonds based on contract and mutual self-interest, pervading the fabric of provincial life. A nobleman's contract retinue was not only, or even mainly, a private army corps, the means by which he satisfied his military obligations to the King. It was first and foremost an instrument of local government and, occasionally, of the pervasion of local government for powerful private interests.<sup>97</sup>

Whatever safety and security that could be procured lay in becoming a "big fish", i.e., to become a powerful patron upon whom others had rely. Patronage was the game, governed by guardian ethics but always susceptible to corruption as the powerful preyed upon the weak. It was not a society conducive to "peace, order and good government."

---

<sup>96</sup> Sumption, *The Hundred Years War* (1991), 22. An excellent example of this has come down to us in Steven Ozment, *The Bürgermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996). Anna Sporland, born Anna Büschler (1496/98-1552), had spent fully half her life battling her father, siblings and city hall in a notorious case of parental brutality and denial of family inheritance. The case only ended with her death.

<sup>97</sup> Sumption, *The Hundred Years War* (1991), 51-52.

## The Church

By Müntzer's time, the Church was deeply involved in financial affairs. Not only did the great cathedrals express the commitment of the people to Christian life, but they also expressed the power and authority—and financial weight—of the institution of Church.

Part of this wealth derived from their direct involvement with a variety of financial enterprises. The exploitation of the alum deposits in Italy is a good case in point:

The discovery of rich deposits of fine alum at Tolfa in the Papal States in 1462 brought the papal treasury an annual income of 100,000 ducats in royalties, and added to the fortunes of the Medici and other financiers who held shares in the *Societas Aluminum*, the company organized to handle production and sale. Alum was an indispensable ingredient in the dyeing of cloth, being used to set the colors, and as the only other large source of supply was in Turkish territory in Asia Minor, whence it could be imported only at excessive cost, the *Societas Aluminum* was obviously on to a good thing, especially as the pope felt justified in pronouncing ecclesiastical censures on anyone using the infidel alum instead of his own more sanctified product. The alum works at Tolfa soon became one of the largest mining operations in Europe, employing more than 8,000 workers.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to such in-house operations, Monasteries and Churches through out Europe had over the centuries acquired extensive holdings and a considerable degree of real wealth (as defined at the time: land and the serfs that worked it). As various kings and princes gradually unified large areas of Europe into pro-nations and needed funds to support full-time armies, to maintain a nascent bureaucracy and to provide rewards for loyal supporters, the wealth of the churches proved an irresistible temptation. The balance of power shifted away from religious authorities. Even though both were part of Christendom and both shared a single good of order that legitimized church practices and secular authority, the wealth held in monastic orders or ecclesiastical cathedrals was a tempting target. And there were various ways of going after the churches' wealth:

The foundation at Ingolstadt in 1472 of what has now become the University of Munich provides a paradigm of the way in which entailed ecclesiastical funds could legitimately be transferred for secular purposes. The Ingolstadt foundation was authorized by a bull of Pius II dated 7 April 1459 and a charter from its founder, Ludwig der Reiche, duke of Upper and Lower Bavaria, and count palatine of the Rhine. The method of financing originally proposed involved the erection of the Ingolstadt church of St Mary's into a collegiate institution. On the same pattern as that adopted in Vienna, the holders of chairs would have been the canons, salaried from their ecclesiastical benefices. An

---

<sup>98</sup> Wallace K. Ferguson, *Europe in Transition: 1300 – 1520* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 427-28.



ecclesiastical endowment would in effect have been diverted for secular educational purposes, but by a lengthy process requiring recourse to princely, Episcopal, and papal jurisdictions.

The endowment was presumably inadequate, and the financing had finally to be achieved by simple expropriation, but that required cumbersome, and no doubt expensive, recourse to Rome. On 4 January 1454 the bishop of Eichstatt, and on 26 June 1465 Paul II, duly annexed part of a pious bequest which provided its beneficiaries with a stipend on the condition that they heard mass daily and said a stipulated number of Paters and Aves for the souls of the dukes, leaving apparently intact that part of the bequest which also provided for an organist and eight psalm-singers to sing over the ducal grave.<sup>99</sup>

How wealth was spent provides an interesting insight into the times. Supplying “an organist and eight psalm-singers to sing over the ducal grave” reinforces the idea that for the medieval mind religion was not so much a set of beliefs as a set of rituals. And such rituals were important. O’Toole, writing on Shakespeare’s times, captures the intensity of the need to confront the uncertainties of a similarly troubled period of history:

The church was important . . . not because of its formalised code of belief but because its rites were an essential accompaniment to the important events in . . . life—birth, marriage, death. . . . Religion was a ritual method of living, not a set of dogmas. With the changeover to Protestantism, the religious rituals were abandoned or reduced, but the anxieties which created the need for them had not disappeared. The fluxuations of nature, the hazards of fire, the threat of plague and disease, the fear of evil spirits, and all the uncertainties of daily life. And indeed to all of these uncertainties was added the uncertainty of unprecedented economic, political and cultural change. There were needs and no rituals to fill them. The theatre, and in particular Shakespeare, was one way of providing for that need.<sup>100</sup>

But in the end, the truly revolutionary changes were not institutional or spiritual. As van Dülmen maintains:

The Reformation was far from being a phenomenon concerned only with the subjective faith and piety of individuals, or one that was merely a matter of ecclesiastical and secular public institutions. Without effecting any profoundly revolutionary changes in human conduct and community life, the Reformation did in the long term exert considerable influence on everyday structures of thought and conduct. Above all, by encouraging ‘rational’ communication in public life, the moral awareness of responsibility, a plain and practical piety and ‘civilized’ everyday behaviour, it favoured the development of modern forms of behaviour and structures of communication. The Reformation differs from the open culture of the Enlightenment . . . in being of a uniformly religious character.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation* (2002), 13.

<sup>100</sup> Fintan O’Toole, *Shakespeare is Hard, but so is Life: A Radical Guide to Shakespearian Tragedy*, revised edition (London: Granta, 2002), 30-31.

<sup>101</sup> Richard van Dülmen, “The Reformation and the Modern Age”, in *The German Reformation*, edited by C. Scott Dixon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 212. Originally appeared as Richard van Dülmen, “Reformation und Neuzeit. Ein Versuch”. *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 14 (1987), 1-25.

## Co-Ops

Another significant institutional change going on during this period was a grass-roots drive toward founding local co-operatives.

Not only was there unrest in the countryside, there was also unrest in the towns. Countless guild members banded together and took to the streets, gathering in front of the town halls and roundly threatening councillors and mayors. The artisans wanted to take part in the government of the towns, and in most towns achieved their aim. And so the communalism which had been gradually and hesitantly germinating since the fourteenth century grew stronger in the countryside and in the towns: the co-operatively organized communities, a type of self-government, sprang up and turned into a way of life which came increasingly into conflict with the hierarchically structured government of the first and second estates. Not the lord but the brother was political model for the common people. The anti-clerical atmosphere combined with the communal ethos . . .<sup>102</sup>

An extreme example of this was the 1534 taking over of the town of Münster, a revolt instigated by radical apocalyptic Anabaptists' preachers such as Jan Mathys who as the self-proclaimed prophet Enoch proposed to inaugurate the new age through force:

Popular democratic discontent gave him his opportunity.

Nowhere was this new teaching [of Mathys] more influential than in Munster in Westphalia, Where Bernt Rothmann, the Lutheran preacher, had adopted Anabaptist views in January 1534. Mathys arrived soon after, and so did a tailor of Leyden, Jan (John) Bockelson. It was now assumed that God had rejected Strassburg by reason of its unbelief and had chosen Münster as the new Jerusalem in its stead. Radicals flocked there in large numbers. In February 1534, they gained mastery of the city and drove out those who would not accept the new order. The bishop of Münster laid siege to the city. Mathys was killed in a sortie in April. John of Leyden was proclaimed king. Polygamy was established, community of goods was enforced, opponents were slaughtered. The struggle, though heroically maintained, was hopeless. The bishop, aided by Catholic and Lutheran troops, captured the city on June 25, 1535, and the surviving leaders were put to death by extreme torture.<sup>103</sup>

The important point is that there was an already existing social/political option for reformers of all stripes: to build a power-base among the common people with the idea of creating a league or communal organization that would embody the reformer's ideals, an option many were forced into by the reticence of both estates to engage in the reforms many thought necessary to restore peace, to restore the good of order and provide for their own spiritual well-being. But as events at Münster and later with the Peasants' Revolution demonstrated, there were severe risks in facing off with feudal authorities equipped to handle such uprisings. That people persisted in taking such risks suggests deep serious flaws in the good of order.

---

<sup>102</sup> Hans-Jürgen. *Thomas Müntzer* (1993), 29-30.

<sup>103</sup> Williston Walker, Richard A. Norris, David W. Latz, and Robert T. Hariday, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 459.

## Long Periods of Change

There is considerable diversity of time-and-space-specific unique institutional forms such as those mentioned above that refer specifically to early 16<sup>th</sup> century European history. Yet, if one takes into account the entire range of known human history, there seems to be two fundamental forms of institutional change: tribal to civil, and hunting to agricultural to industrial—or the development of open societies with post-agricultural economies, for such economies only seem to work within a commercial rather than guardian ethical system and scientific development only seems to emerge within open societies that more often than not have a commercial base.

The long term development of our species suggests three distinct stages, each with its own institutional structures, each involving the way human beings manage their economic life, and each connected in some way with population growth. The first is a long period of hunting-gathering by small tribal groups often organized around a nomadic life-style dependent on local supplies of food including that provided by migrant animals. Communities were rather small, adapted to local resources and the need to remain mobile, and gradually radiated out over the earth from an originating point somewhere in Africa.

At some point about ten thousand years ago a new form of economic life emerged that revolved around settled communities engaged in agricultural and animal husbandry. The area between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers known as the Fertile Crescent saw the development of the first water-based societies engaged in large-scale irrigation that now required a central coordinating authority. A new institutional structure emerged from the intersubjective tribal customs of what were in effect large extended families, now organized around a Priest/King and divided into castes or social roles that were required by the far larger population sizes. Such periods saw the development of the first bureaucracies and the beginnings of civil law in the Divine kingship of the Pharaoh, for example the legal codes of Hammurabi. Such societies had solar-based economies, with relatively limited surplus wealth taken over by powerful central figures and their supporters.

Then around Müntzer's time, a third institutional structure began to emerge around the development of technology, the advance of scientific thinking, and what can only be called a post-agricultural economy that generated far more wealth than any solar based one. This was the start of large scale commercial "empires" that cared little for acquiring and managing territory but relied on industrial development, cheap fossil fuel energy, unrestricted commercial trade and an educated well-trained workforce to generate wealth. With this excess wealth it became possible for the emergence of open civil societies based on equality, honesty and tolerance.

The idea of open societies whose members shared in the common development of all started with Greek democracies—and with the Israelites. From a magic driven tribal and collectivist society largely based on human subjectivity where little creative individuality was allowed and innovation discouraged, societies developed that confronted their citizens with the need to make their own decisions based on their own understanding and according to their own conscience. Already by Müntzer's time, equality under God was well established—at least in the Sacred Scripture of Western culture. The emergence of co-ops was part of this fundamental institutional change, as were the subsequent French and American Revolutions as well as the creation of British liberal democracy. So too was the development of a trained literate work-force, which could then exert their own power and influence over civil affairs, as well as emerging commercial, scientific and technological recurring schemes necessary to create the foundations of the first true post-agricultural economy established centuries later by the Victorians.

This institutional shift toward a post-agricultural economy had started by the time Müntzer emerged as an historical figure, although those living at the time would never have been in the position to recognize the long-term implications of what was going forward. We are still engaged in this centuries-long transition and our success in making this shift is far from being assured. Thus to understand Müntzer's time is to understand the foundations of our own—and the direction we seem to be moving as a species in the process of emerging into a higher perspective of what it means to be human.

### *Conclusions*

For the purpose of this study, having used the upper blade of theory to direct attention and keeping as close as possible to data, a conditioned affirmation is made that Müntzer's time was a time of:

- A solar-based agricultural economy with relatively little excess wealth leaving at least 90% of the people impoverished and living in rural settings.
- Apocalyptic expectations amid an atmosphere of reform.
- A common cultural purpose: to save souls for God at any cost.
- An unresolved tension between creedal beliefs essential for membership in the church versus the spiritual needs of human nature.
- A world-mediated-by-meaning dominated by a church that was losing its moral authority through a preoccupation with wealth, status and political power.
- The fragmentation of the medieval feudal *ordo* as the foundation of a future secular, civil, and commercial post-agricultural civilization was being laid.
- Emergence of new roles that enabled people to gain freedom from the stringent confines of a feudal economy.

## CHAPTER 4

### THOMAS MÜNTZER (1489?-1525)

#### *Introduction*

#### A Brief Biography

Not all that much is known about Thomas Müntzer childhood or even his early years. That he was born around 1489 is a guess based on a prebend granted to him by St. Michael's Church in Braunschweig in 1514. If he was ordained shortly before this prebend and if he was the minimum age of twenty-five at the time of his ordination, then he could have been born around 1489. Nothing else is known until his name crops up at the University of Frankfurt an *der Oder* in 1512, where he was inscribed as "Thomas Muntzer Stolbergensis." At various times he acquired, or claimed to have acquired, the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Bachelor of Theology, but there are no surviving records of such degrees ever having been granted. From 1519 to 1520 he was confessor to a house of Cistercian nuns at Beuditz, a post that allowed him ample time to read and reflect. But it wasn't until he took up a temporary preachership in Zwickau, a south Saxon industrial centre, that he enters history.

The next five years were busy ones. While at Zwickau he made a name for himself as a radical preacher, engaged in a verbal duel with Egranus (the other preacher in town) to the point he was let go by the town council in 1521 and had to flee the city. It was during this time that he developed his mystical-spiritual roots that were to ground his later theology. Then, after an uncertain period of migrant preaching that included a stay in Prague, he was given a position in the market town of Allstedt. This short period from April 1523 to August 1524, the longest sojourn in his storm-tossed life, was an incredibly fruitful time. It was here, with the financial support of town to meet printing costs, that he wrote his two main devotional works—the *German Church Service* and his *German Evangelical Mass*—plus an apologia, the *Order and Explanation of the German Church Service*, that together made up the first full evangelical liturgy in the German vernacular.

Müntzer was an instant success:

Within weeks of his arrival [at Allstedt, he succeeded] in attracting large crowds to his services in St John's. A later report that on Sundays up to two thousand people flocked to his sermons from the surrounding countryside is by no means improbable, given that in both its churches Allstedt offered the only evangelical worship for miles around. But the sudden attraction of Allstedt clearly derived above all from Müntzer's personal impact. In his sermons Müntzer may have expounded his unique vision of faith, but it was chiefly through his recasting of the traditional form of church service that he was able to win the hearts and minds of his swelling congregation. Müntzer's liturgical reforms, which are central to any understanding of his spiritual and pastoral concerns, are by any standards an extraordinary achievement, yet they have been strangely overlooked by generations of historians. The sounding brass of confessional polemics has deafened scholars to the originality and warmth of Müntzer's evangelical services, as he sought to lead his flock by prayer, hymn and sacrament gently but steadfastly to the true experience of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

But before long pressure grew to restrain Müntzer's ministry and rather than submit to being muzzled he fled towards the imperial city of Mühlhausen in a state of mental and emotional turmoil. By this time, he had already begun to focus on the lives of the common people rather than on the Christian obligations of princes:

. . . from the casting down of the mighty to the exaltation of the lowly. No longer did he pose as a new Daniel, the interpreter of the dreams of kings, but as a new John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness to God's chosen people Israel.<sup>2</sup>

As a fugitive defender of the poor against the powers of the rich and mighty, and by this time lambasting Luther as a temporizing hypocrite perverting the meaning of scripture, he concludes that:

The law is not merely corrective, it is also directive: God's will *shall* be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is the duty of the princes to execute God's will in the community by wielding the sword of justice. To ensure that the princes remain servants, not masters, of the sword, however, the community must control the sword.<sup>3</sup>

Such a position, combined with the power of his word-magic (rhetoric) mixed with a liking for controversy and public position, was bound to lead him into the civil strife building in Mühlhausen between the council and the guild craftsmen. By this time, Müntzer had cut all ties with the official Reformation in Saxony and now was caught up in the orbit of another reformist preacher and public agitator, Heinrich Schwertfeger (known as Pfeiffer). It wasn't very long

---

<sup>1</sup> Tom Scott, *Thomas Müntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

before things got out of control and the uprising known as the Peasants' War began. For Müntzer's involvement, whether exaggerated by his enemies or not, he was executed along with Pfeiffer on May 27, 1525.

Yet the 'legend' of Thomas Müntzer, which was intended to defame him, continued to exercise a powerful fascination not only upon his contemporaries but also in the generations to come. His name became the totem of struggles for emancipation from the age of the Enlightenment onwards. Yet the further removed those who invoked his name were from the religious turmoil of the sixteenth century, the more Müntzer's transcendent theological vision was pushed into the background. At first he was portrayed as the champion of personal freedom and dignity, then as the hero of the common people, and latterly as the pioneer of a communist society. In all these cases those who used his name could do so with impunity, secure in the knowledge that their mentor could not gainsay them from the grave.<sup>4</sup>

### Intentionality Analysis

Any encounter with the incarnate values of another human being is a highly personal thing. And although what follows may seem excessively formal, which it is because of the upper blade of metaphysics and ethics that guides the encounter, it is not a theoretical understanding of Müntzer that is sought but those challenges that emerge from having to call Müntzer into existence as a "real" person. To understand my own subjectivity is to heighten my awareness of how I come to understanding the meaning of his life, deepening any appreciation of Müntzer by putting myself in his shoes and wondering what choices and decisions I would have made in his shoes. To do so, in the end, is to encounter the incarnate meaning of his life.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>5</sup> This is the big difference between historical and foundational studies: the former seeks a proper interpretation of the data of another time and place to determine historical facts; the latter seeks an understanding of the processes of developing and selecting one's own position on the issues of the day as a means of enhancing one's "inner eye" of discernment. The latter depends upon the former, but is not constrained by understanding what went forward; what might have gone forward is often just as important.

This is the flaw with much of the human sciences as currently practiced. Limited in the end to descriptive determinations of fact and not considering other ways human communities could have developed, scientists cannot understand the phenomena of sin as an absence of something that should have been but wasn't. When egotism, group bias or common sense bias restricts questions to immediate interests, what might have been achieved if people had achieved that state of authenticity and willingness necessary for cosmopolis to spring into being will never be known by "objective" scientists.

This is not to discount their dispassionate and disinterested desire to know what people actually do as opposed to how we like to think we are. There is much to be learned about our failures—and our successes—in living in the tension of genuineness of a transcending self dominated by an unrestricted desire to know that through successive questions and a series of higher viewpoints eventually leads to God.



There are many ways to come to understand the data on Thomas M ntzer, starting with classifying the material that has come down to us, interpreting each of the documents he has left, or understanding the dynamic story of his life as history. Since the work in this study belongs to the functional speciality of Foundations, and Foundations operates at the fourth level of consciousness, the way M ntzer is to be understood is through an analysis of what can worked out about his horizon and intentions.

Intentionality analysis concentrates on the way people give meaning and purpose to their lives. Grounded in conversion, in authenticity, in seeking to enhance the light and diminish darkness in all that one does, it is an analysis that takes place at the level of conscience and as such involves not only coming to know that is part of the first three levels of consciousness but any discrepancy between what one knows and what one does in light of that knowing. What one knows is a function of one's horizon—the boundaries of one's life between the close and familiar, the distant and uncertain, and those questions that are never allowed to enter the light of day. What one decides is given expression in one's intentions, of the stance or position that one takes in light of the existing good of order and world-mediated-by-meaning, of the decisions one takes as to whom or what one is for and whom or what one is against.

Such an analysis goes forward on two fronts. The first of these, genetic method, considers the development of a person's conscience at the fourth level. One the whole, this is tracing the pattern of religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion in a person life in light of the kinds of biases and distortions that block the human drive to know the real and do the right given their formal meanings in a metaphysics and an ethics. The second, the method of dialectics, considers the tensions, contraries, contradictions, areas of agreement, etc. with respect to the positions and counter-positions to which a person is exposed and needs to respond. This depends on an understanding of the general state of the good or order and the organizing principles embedded in the prevailing world-mediated-by-meaning that existed at that time and place. In this

case, the analysis deals with Müntzer's own response to these conditions, his own choice of whom to support and whom to oppose, of what to do and what not to do.

This is to operative at the level of morality, and there are a number of ways to escape its challenges:

The first and most common escape [from moral living] is to avoid self-consciousness. The precept of the sage was 'Know thyself'. But the precept at least was needed. How finely tempered must one's sincerity be, if one is to know oneself as one is, to know not a character-sketch that explains one in terms of ancestry and environment, but a moral analysis of one's deeds, one's words, one's mixed motives. How much simpler to pour oneself out in 'worth while' external activity and, if praise and blame must be administered, then administer them not to oneself but to others. The second escape is rationalization. Inconsistency between knowing and doing can be removed by revising one's knowing into harmony with one's doing. Such a revision is, of course, a bold step. Not a little ingenuity is needed to transpose inconsistency between knowing and doing into inconsistency within knowing itself. The average mind can invent lies about matters of fact; it can trump up excuses; it can allege extenuating circumstances that mingle fact with fiction. But hypocrisy is no more than the tribute paid by vice to virtue. It falls far short of the genuine rationalization that argues vice to be virtue, that meets the charge of inconsistency not by denying the minor premise of fact but by denying the major premise of principle. But the revision of major premises is a tricky business; it is playing fast and loose with the pure desire to know in its immediate domain of cognitional activity; and so the majority of men, instead of attempting rationalization themselves, are content to create an effective demand, a welcoming market, for more or less consistently developed counter-positions presented in myths and in philosophies. The third escape is moral renunciation. . . . It is without the illusion generated by fleeing self-consciousness. It is without the deceit generated by rationalization. But it is content with a speculative acknowledgement of the aspiration to make one's own living intelligent and reasonable. It is ready to confirm its wrong doing, but it has given up any hope of amending its ways. If you please, it is very human; yet it also is incompletely human, for the demand for consistency between knowing and doing is dynamic; it asks to be operative; it seeks to extend detachment and disinterestedness into living, and it is not satisfied with a merely speculative acknowledgement of its existence.<sup>6</sup>

External activities, rationalization and moral renunciation all have their role to play in bringing to mind Müntzer—perhaps external activities most of all, for Müntzer was an intense active man. Moral renunciation was not part of who he was, as he put himself on the line more than once, and rationalization to bring harmony between what he did or did not do and his beliefs does not fit a person seeking truth.

#### *A Mind Shaped by another Age*

One of the hardest things to do is come to understand a mind shaped by another age. And as the last chapter demonstrated, Müntzer's mind was shaped not by our secular post-agricultural

---

<sup>6</sup> *Insight*, 599–600.

civilisation but by a deeply religious solar-based feudal medieval culture in the process of transformation. It was a Christian age, where the dominate ideology required all forms of reform to be expressed in religious terms, especially as a fight between the forces of good and evil. Membership in the church required not a deeply spiritual life, but adherence to a credo and to a set of rituals that expressed the life of the church. Müntzer's mind was shaped not only by the tensions between leading a spiritual life and entering a ritualistic "unionized" church, but by the existential crises engendered by popes that were no longer spiritual leaders. On top of it all, centuries of feudal domination concentrated power in the hands of a small group while reducing all others to little more than serfdom. In a fragmented society filled with competing authorities each seeking jurisdiction, since administering justice was a lucrative business, extortion and oppression were common injustices. For many people life was not only short but brutish.

While the previous chapter established at least conditionally the basis of a contextual understanding of Müntzer's life, this chapter is an inquiry into his moral living that was certainly conditioned by his environment but only to the point that it set the grounds for working through his own psychic, intellectual, moral and religious conversions. In understanding the tensions and dialectics of his own situation, it is possible to work out at least a reasonable idea of his orientation, his evaluative and diagnostic positions, and the scope and constraints that he had to work within, given the time-and-space-specific conditions of a time very dissimilar to our own.

Müntzer has been described as a preacher and teacher, spiritual director and counsellor, liturgist and biblical exegete, but these are specific aspects of whom he was. In a more general sense, there are three features of his life worth pointing out:

1. He was an integral part of a social network, an "extended family" that constituted his immediate working environment.
2. He was an extremely driven and motivated man, who if anything defined himself in terms of his achievements and his work.
3. This work—his "mission"—involved an intense relationship with the Divine Mystery experienced within a Christian milieu and defined in terms of a profound spiritual transformation.

### Müntzer's "Extended Family"

If one had to select one predominate feature of Müntzer's life on which to build, then it would have to be that he lived his life as part of an extensive social network—a network that in effect consisted of his dialogue partners in the issues of the day. Not for him the ivory tower of formal academic discourse or the life of a monastic. If anything, he is a partisan, sensitive to the needs of others, ever fighting for those he cares for and seeks to tend.

Müntzer's social life represents a time quite different from the social networking, self-selecting communities of like-interested people, and non-confrontational patterns of our own age. G. K. Chesterton captures a bit of what it must have been like during the time of St. Aquinas, a period separated by two centuries from Müntzer's own time (Aquinas died 1274; Müntzer was born 1489) yet still similar in its feudalistic mores:

There is a queer quality in [Aquinas'] time; which, while it was international was also internal and intimate. War, in the wide modern sense, is possible, not because more men disagree, but because more men agree. Under the peculiarly modern coercions . . . there are such very large *peaceful* areas, that they can all agree upon War. In that age men disagreed even about war; and peace might break out anywhere. Peace was interrupted by feuds and feuds by pardons. Individuality wound in and out of a maze; spiritual extremes were walled up with one another in one little walled town; and we see the great soul of Dante divided, a cloven flame; loving and hating his own city. This individual complexity is intensely vivid . . .<sup>7</sup>

Chesterton goes on to illustrate such complexities in the life of Aquinas, but the similarities with Müntzer's time may help in understanding the passions and intense diatribes that at least in part characterized Müntzer's life.

The first principle of interpretation we may deduce from this network of contacts is Müntzer is always talking and writing to a specific person or group, always engaged in "conversation" with others. Even his *Protestation or Propositions*, which reads like a theological treatise in point form, was written as part of a suggestion for an impartial hearing in the face of a growing conflict with Count Ernest von Mansfeld, whom had forbidden his Catholic subjects to attend Müntzer's services:

---

<sup>7</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox"* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956; first published by Sheed & Ward, 1933), 56.

Müntzer's critique of Biblicism and of the universities, and his implicit rejection of the Christendom concept only accentuate this dramatic crisis of authority [between Müntzer and Count Ernest]. Apolitical, then, as this writing may at first appear, it is directed against arbitrary secular intervention by Count Ernest and should be read in conjunction with his blunt warning to the Saxon Elector that the sword has to be taken from the tyrant and given to the elect.<sup>8</sup>

This means that the social science paradigm of social interaction is the primary interpretative tool for understanding Müntzer's use of rhetoric, persuasion, nuanced presentations, outright condemnation, cajoling, pleading, and all the other forms of social interaction known to anyone who has been part of a large extended family.<sup>9</sup>

The second point is that Müntzer's pronouncements or positions are not set within some abstract realm of thought, as for example Luther's condemnations, but in his own personal response and deciding upon a position within the social affairs of his "extended family." His own horizon emerges from the dialectics of this social and political network, defined in its terms, and worked out (as authentic) in recognition of the unauthenticness of others, that is, his recognition of the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility on the part of his own encounter partners.

And this is another consequence of his extensive social life: it is based not on dialogue as such but on the notion of encounter. Engaged in setting his own foundations out of the dialectics of the situation, Müntzer both responds to the authenticity in others and seeks to stand as an exemplary person to others. His life then can be understood as a quest for the incarnate meaning of his own existence within his own social context. The evidence of this is to be found in his

---

<sup>8</sup> *Collected Works*, 183. Matheson's introduction to Müntzer's *Protestation or Proposition*, a document originally published December 1523 that Matheson maintains was "both an apologia for a persecuted minority and a conscious exposition of the Christian faith" *Collected Works*, 184.

<sup>9</sup> Such as: who to go to for advice (in an extended family, one soon learns to separate the well-intentioned, the unintelligence, the flighty, the reliable, and the responsible from each other); who will provide support (and who not to go to, because the response to a call for help would only be an outright refusal if not blocking); and how to operate within the complex social and political dynamics where everyone involved plays one or more roles, defines status and ranking in relation to each other, and goes about taking care of business. This is in sharp contrast to the dynamics of a nuclear family of two parents and two-to-three children, where authority is fixed in only one or two persons, it is only possible to play each off the other and the rich diversity of a multi-generational extended family is missing.

decision to model his life after one of the prophets—the ultimate expression of a truly authentic individual in tune with the Divine Mystery. This was *his* role, a commonly understood one that emerged after his ordination as he engaged with others on the issues of the day.

### A Highly Motivated Man

Müntzer was executed in his late 30 s, long before reaching the age when soul work leading to integrity, resiliency, and compassion would take over from the mid-adult tasks of imposing oneself upon the world. Yet he did have a deep-felt belief that he expressed a true faith, that he was one of the elect of God. This belief seems less a matter of theological insight or social class and more a change in his affective orientation to self and world. There's a sense of assurance that permeates his writings that may be due to rhetoric necessities when it comes to mobilizing others, but most likely derives from a faith well-seasoned through suffering. William James notes such states of assurance in *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

The characteristics of the affective experience which, to avoid ambiguity, should . . . be called the state of assurance rather than the faith state, can be easily enumerated, though it is probably difficult to realize their intensity, unless one has been through the experience one's self.

The central one is the loss of all worry, the sense that all is ultimately well with one, the peace, the harmony, the *willingness to be*, even though the outer conditions should remain the same. The certainty of God's 'grace,' of 'justification,' 'salvation,' is an objective belief that usually accompanies the change in Christians; but this may be entirely lacking and yet the affective peace remains the same . . . A passion of willingness, of acquiescence, of admiration, is the glowing centre of this state of mind.

The second feature is the sense of perceiving truths not known before. The mysteries of life become lucid . . . and often, nay usually, the solution is more or less unutterable in words . . .

A third peculiarity of the assurance state is the objective change which the world often appears to undergo . . . [A] sense of clean and beautiful newness within and without is one of the commonest entries in conversion records.<sup>10</sup>

A "sense of clean and beautiful newness" does not spring out of Müntzer's writings, but it might be possible to infer such a state from his response to those around him. Take the following scathing passage in a 9 July 1525 letter Luther concerning a "false" Christian reformer that Luther had recommended to Müntzer:

---

<sup>10</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: New American Library, 1958), 198-99.

What really shocked me, however, was that your letters commended to me that most pestilential fellow, Egranus, because with every passing day I realized more clearly what the crow was up to, and that he would soon be casting off the feathers he had stolen and gorge himself on his stinking carcasses completely turning his back on the ark of righteousness. In short, he emerged in his true colors . . .<sup>11</sup>

The problem in being drawn closer to God is that one notices the flaws, the imperfections, the lack of response to the transcendent in oneself more than ever before, and out of this self knowledge come an awareness of the same blindness and wilfulness in others. But it is impossible to tell one way or another. But he certainly does seem to meet the first two, especially the *willingness to be* in the face of continued adversity—although his claim to wisdom through the direct inspiration of the Spirit is also realized in his integrated understanding and continual reference to both the Old and New Testaments.

#### Müntzer's Mission

Müntzer's life can be broken down into four stages: his early years, the quest for true faith, liturgical reform and active revolt.

Of his early years, virtually nothing is known. It is likely that he was born around 1489 in the small town of Stolberg on the western fringes of Saxony. Nothing else is known until 1512, when he went to study at the university in Frankfurt. By 1514 he was an ordained priest holding his first appointment in Brunswick and he was a master of arts by the summer of 1515 something that presumes a bachelor's degree although there are no surviving records granted such degrees. According to own testimony, he had wanted to be a priest from his earliest years—an early interest in mediating between God and man?

In 1519, Müntzer accepted the position of father confessor at the Cistercian nunnery at Beuditz, southwest of Leipzig. The duties were light. In his letter to his friend Franz Günther dated 1 January 1520, he wrote:

---

<sup>11</sup> *Collected Works*, 56.

I must needs be content with a shortened rein [i.e., his environment is not stimulating] but take comfort from the fact that I am not impeded by the nuisance of the Jewish chants and observances, and rejoice that ample time remains for my studies. I read again the first six books of Doctor Augustine, and have gone through other volumes of histories; it has been a bitter cross to me in my Lord Jesus that so far I have been unable to procure many of the authors I need so badly.<sup>12</sup>

Why the extensive reading? The problem was that so many of the things that seemed so secure to the medieval mind were now under question:

Luther and humanists such as Erasmus of Rotterdam had begun an investigation, based on critical editions of the sources, of the origins of the Christian church. The Leipzig debate had focused on the question of ecclesiastical authority: Did papal authority exist from the very beginning of Christianity? Could pope and councils err? Müntzer felt himself to be a part of this quest for historical truth, and so became a bookworm in a nunnery.<sup>13</sup>

This period of study soon drew to an end, when he accepted a position as substitute priest for the vacationing John Egranus, pastor at St. Mary's in Zwickau. His first sermon took place in mid-May, 1521, and with that he entered into what was to be the first of many conflicts. When Egranus returned, Müntzer was posted as pastor of St. Catherine's, where he and Egranus soon ran into serious differences of opinion. In April 1521, Müntzer was asked by the city council to leave the city, which he did—fleeing under the cover of darkness. Now, as itinerant preacher, he wrote the *Prague Manifesto*, a minor work that in 1523 was followed by a cluster of writings—the two most important being *Protestation or Proposition* (December 1523) and *On Counterfeit Faith* (also in December 1523). With these he is well on the way to developing his own theological answers to the questions of the day.

---

<sup>12</sup> *Collected Works*, 14. The list is rather impressive:

“Two days later [3 January 1520], Müntzer wrote to Achatius Glor, Lotter's employee in Leipsiz, listing books he had received and books he still needed. Among them were the church history by Eusebius of Caesarea, which depicted the rise of Christianity from its beginning to its acceptance under Constantine the Great in 324 C.E.; Flavius Josephus's history of the Jewish war against the Romans ending with the fall of Massada in 73 C.E.; Jerome Emser's polemical treatise against Luther, entitled *Assertion of the Leipzig Goat Against Luther's Hunt*, 1519; a concordance of Canon Law; the newly edited (1518) continuation of Eusebius's church history by Jerome; the complete works of Jerome (345-420), edited in nine volumes by Erasmus in 1516-18; the 1516-17 Paris editions of the letters and sermons of Augustine (354-430); the acts of the general councils of Constance (1414-18) and Basel (1421-49). By the end of 1520, Müntzer had made a list of seventy-four book titles, seemingly intending either to buy them or to pay for them. These titles mainly represent works published in 1519 and 1520, and included writings by Luther, Carlstadt, and several humanists.” (Gritsch, *Müntzer* (1989), 14-15. The list is taken from *Thomas Müntzer. Schriften und Briefe*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte. Vol. 33. Ed. Günther Franz. Gütersloh, W. Ger.: Gerd Mohn, 1968, 556-60.)

<sup>13</sup> Gritsch, *Müntzer* (1989), 15-16.



Then, by Easter of 1523, he was made probationary pastor at St. John's in Allstedt and with this started a year and a half revision of the liturgy that lead to the first evangelical service in German. The three works—*German Church Service Book*, *Order and Explanation of the German Church Service* and *German Evangelical Mass*—presented a complete set of sung services for the Church year based not on priest as mediator between man and God but as minister serving his flock as spiritual councillor, motivator and example setter. These works were the mirror image of his exhortations to the authorities to reform, given expression in one of the most remarkable sermons of the Reformation, Müntzer's *Sermon to the Princes* (Allstedt, 13 July 1524).

This sermon is titled, *Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel*, an interesting play on words for in the second chapter Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. When Daniel narrates this dream without being told the nature of the dream, he is promoted—something one suspects Müntzer was hoping for in his crusade against a “corrupt” church.

For our situation today is the same as that of the good prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the others, when the whole congregation of God's elect had become completely caught up in idolatrous ways. As a result, not even God could help them, but had to let them be captured and transported and tormented under the heathen until they learned to recognize his holy name again, as Isaiah 29, Jeremiah 15, Ezekiel 36 and Psalm 88 testify. Nonetheless, in our own time and that of our fathers, our poor Christian people has shown even greater obstinacy while going to incredible lengths to claim the divine name for itself, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3. The devil, of course, and his servants, love to deck themselves out like this, 2 Cor. 1, and do it so alluringly that the true friends of God are seduced, and—despite the most determined efforts—are almost incapable of seeing their mistake, as Mt. 24 points out so clearly. The cause of all this is the counterfeit sanctity and the hypocritical absolution of the godless enemies of God, who say that the Christian Church cannot err, although—if error is to be avoided—she should be being built up continually by the word of God and kept free from error. She should also admit the sin which keeps her in ignorance, Lev. 4, Hosea 4, Malachi 2, Isaiah 1. There can, however, be no doubt that Christ, the son of God, and his apostles and his holy prophets before him, founded a pure and true Christianity, and cast the pure wheat into the field, that is, planted the precious word of God in the hearts of the elect, as we read in Mt. 12, Mark 4, Luke 8 and Ezek. 36. But the lazy, negligent servants of these churches were not willing to perfect and protect this work by watching over it zealously. They pursued their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ, Philip 2.<sup>14</sup>

Interpreting the dreams of princes before the princes have articulated that dream is a risky business, especially for such a black-and-white argumentative person as Müntzer with the nerve to instruct rulers in proper Christian behaviour. (But it is a task appropriate to a prophet.) And not only princes come under his eagle eye.

---

<sup>14</sup> *Collected Works*, 230-31.

Now comes the text: 'King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but it eluded him etc.'

What should we say about this? Talking about men's dreams is no easy matter; it is not something we are used to, and is invidious, because from the very beginning up to now the whole world has been led astray by the interpreters of dreams, as is written in Deuteronomy 13, Ecclesiasticus 34. That is why this chapter states that the king was unwilling to believe the clever soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. For he said: 'First tell me what my dream was, and then give me the interpretation. Otherwise all I will get from you is deception and lies.' What was the result? They could not even begin to recount the dream and said: 'Dear king, no man on the face of the earth can tell you what the dream is; only the gods can, and they have no communion with men on earth.' To their mind they really talked sense, but they had no faith in God, for they were godless flatterers and hypocrites who said what their masters wanted to hear, as is the case today with the biblical scholars who like the choicest morsels at court. But it is against them that the words of Jeremiah 5 and 8 are directed. And so much more! The text says that one would need men who had communion with heaven. Now! What a bitter pill that is for such smart alects, although St Paul stressed the same point to the Philippians in chapter 3. Despite this such scholars still arrogate to themselves the interpretation of the mysteries of God.<sup>15</sup>

And the faithful will be tested.

Nebuchadnezzar heard the divine wisdom through Daniel. He fell down before him, after being overwhelmed by the power of the truth, but he was like a reed moved by the wind, as the third chapter shows. One sees much the same today: countless numbers of people embrace the gospel with great rejoicing, because everything is going smoothly for them, Luke 8. But when God wants to put such people in the crucible or the refining fire, 1 Peter 1 then, O dear! they take offence at the least little word, as Christ prophesied in Mark 4.<sup>16</sup>

Then, at the end, he places an injunction upon the princes.

In order, then, that the truth may really begin to dawn you rulers must (God willing—whether you do it gladly or not) be guided by the conclusion of this chapter, where Nebuchadnezzar installed the holy Daniel in office to judge fairly and well, as the holy spirit says, Psalm 57. For the godless have no right to live, unless by the sufferance of the elect, as is written in the book of Exodus, chapter 23. Rejoice, you true friends of God, that the hearts of the enemies of the cross have fallen into their boots, for they have no choice but to do right, though they never dreamt of doing so. If we fear God, why should we be alarmed by rootless, feckless men, Numbers 14, Joshua 11? So be bold! He to who all power is given in heaven and on earth is taking the government into his own hands, Mt. 28. May he preserve you, my most beloved, for ever.

Amen.<sup>17</sup>

The next and last phase of Müntzer's mission takes place after the Saxon princes tried to muzzle him. Rather than submit, he fled Allstedt on the night of August 7, 1524 and made for the imperial—and therefore independent of the Saxon lords—city of Mühlhausen. The princes had replied; having burned so many bridges, there was little left but to uphold the poor against the might of the rich and powerful—a mission that caught him up in the Peasants' War of 1524-25.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 236-7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 250-51.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 251-52.

Now he became the voice of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness, announcing the coming of the Lord through the sword against corrupt princes.

But the Peasants' Revolution did not last for long. The end came on 27 May 1525, where, executed along with his fellow preacher Pfeiffer, he was so "broken in mind and body he could barely stammer the creed."<sup>18</sup> Then he passed into history, a history that:

. . . remembered only the violent Müntzer, wielding the sword and heaping salvos of abuse upon his enemies. It has forgotten the more gentle Müntzer, the theologian steeped in mystical resignation, the pastor ministering to his flock, the first liturgist of Protestantism.<sup>19</sup>

The violent crushing of the revolution was in effect the end of any further radical evangelical movement in Germany. From this point forward, any changes were going to be made within the feudal structure of conflicting authorities and multiple jurisdictions. But it is interesting to note that:

[T]here is a succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means. Waking replaces dreaming. Intelligent inquiry emerges in waking to compound intelligent with empirical consciousness. Critical reflection follows understanding and formulation to add rational consciousness to intelligent and empirical consciousness. But the final enlargement and transformation of consciousness consists in the empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious subject

- (1) demanding conformity of his doing to his knowing, and
- (2) acceding to that demand by deciding reasonably.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of his life, Müntzer had entered into the realm of self as rational self-consciousness and even if in our terms he seems most unreasonably in his own unruly and conflict-ridden times it made him a player.

### Müntzer's Use of Images and Symbols

Three domains, that of the nature and nomination of God, that of higher mathematics and that of music (how are these interrelated?) set the boundary conditions of language. They delimit the outermost reaches and constraints of lexical-grammatical discourse. But these boundaries are, as it were, active. There are vital truths and illuminations in their demonstration of the inaccessible. They instruct us, as do the seeming paradoxes of relativity theory, that language is, within itself, infinite, that it is incommensurable in its potential, but not unbounded. . . . Yet at the very same time, the walls which all discourse runs up against, theological-metaphysical, mathematical and musical, enforce on

---

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 169.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>20</sup> *Insight*, 613.

us undeniable intimations of the transcendent, of the unsayable presence, of the ‘other’ across the border. Trapped within its measureless limitations, inside the fruitful immensity of its final failures—‘Word, word that I lack,’ cries out Schoenberg’s Moses in the face of the unspeakable—language posits negatively but overpoweringly the pressure, the ‘thereness’ of what lies beyond it. As mystics insist, as daily experience so often confirms, the falling short of language makes absence substantive. What carries a more vehement weight and feel of actual being than the capacity of syntax to attest that ‘there is a there there’?<sup>21</sup>

God refuses to be confined by words, and when one reads Müntzer, the flow of images and biblical references that pile each upon the other gives the impression that words cannot contain all he wants to say. The language of scholars, precise and calculated, cannot bear the passion and urgency of his thought. The measured tone of a biblical commentator fails to hold the spiritual messages that he seeks to convey, or even convey his eloquence, charm and originality.

[Müntzer] writes with great economy of words, but with an extraordinary profusion of images, positive and negative, which integrate argument and experience in a fascinating, if sometimes misleading manner: the ‘key of knowledge’, the fish rising to the surface from the murky depths, the ‘black crow’, the ‘sack of gunpowder’. He relates contemporary event to Biblical saga, sets eschatological perspectives to contemporary events, even sees himself in mythical terms: as God’s trumpeter or watchman, as a protective bastion or wall, as the courier of God, as Jehu, Gideon, David, John the Baptist. The present becomes a recapitulation of the Biblical past, discipleship a *conformitas* with its sufferings, a concelebration of its triumphs.

Yet when all this has been said we have still barely begun. Müntzer’s correspondence certainly throws vivid light on the ‘grass-roots’ realities of the early Reformation, or, to use his own metaphor, on its less ‘ornamental’ aspects. Yet it progressively bursts these categories. We note the perplexity of Müntzer and his friends as the alienation from the Wittenbergers gathers pace (Nr. 30, 48), as the latter’s theological leadership and then their social and political stances are challenged. The very term ‘Christian’ comes to acquire a dubious connotation, as Christians have become Turks (Nr. 55) and so-called Christian rulers persecute the faithful (Nr. 57). Christendom is revealed as both sly and foolish (Nr. 67); to obtain justice one has to appeal to the elect beyond the corrupt Christian fold (Nrs. 52, 64).<sup>22</sup>

It is as if his creative insights have produced new meanings that common sense usage cannot convey, so old words are given new meanings through the use of images and biblical references.

This was the same problem faced by early Christians:

[Jesus] told them this parable: ‘No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.’<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Steiner, *Errata* (1997), 63–4.

<sup>22</sup> *Collected Works*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 5:36–38 NIV.

Müntzer's *Protestation or Proposition* offers excellent examples of his style. First published December 1523 in the hope that he could defend his position before an independent tribunal of the elect, Müntzer laid out his:

. . . critique of Biblicism and of the universities, and his implicit rejection of the Christendom concept only accentuate this dramatic crisis of authority. Apolitical, then, as this writing may at first sight appear, it is directed against arbitrary secular intervention by Count Ernest and should be read in conjunction with his blunt warning to the Saxon Elector that the sword has to be taken from the tyrant and given to the elect.<sup>24</sup>

As for the work itself,

It is a carefully organized piece of writing. With brevity, liveliness and homely imagery it engages the reader from the start, luring the 'brethren', the 'elect friends of God', to who it is primarily addressed into ever deeper waters. It is poetry masquerading as prose. Pole-vaulting over Christian conventions and territories it uses the new medium of the printing press as an eschatological tool to summon a court of the elect from all nations and tribes. Before this bar, and none other, Müntzer is willing to appear. In fact, throughout this book that is what he is already doing: presenting his case to the elect, documenting it so abundantly from Scripture that both margins of the page are frequently needed, appealing beyond Rome and Wittenberg to the higher court of what we would, today, call world opinion. Müntzer remains humanist enough for the myth of beginnings to compel him. Truth lies in the beginning of things: for the Church in its apostolic purity, for the individual in his or her initiation into faith. This cannot possibly be infant (or rather 'infantile') baptism. As long as this, with its ludicrous accessories, is maintained there can be no growth in faith.

In one sense—the cultic sense—Müntzer is not particularly concerned about baptism, as his contemporaneous liturgies illustrate. It is, however, absolutely crucial for him to demonstrate that it is only by way of despair, madness, error, crime, sin, unbelief—all adult prerogatives—that true initiation into faith can take place, as fear of the Lord becomes sudden and desperate reality.<sup>25</sup>

What follows is Müntzer's opening paragraph and first of twenty-two propositions. The text, as translated by Matheson, is in the left hand column and Müntzer's biblical references plus Matheson's comments in the right hand column. All quotes are from the NIV.

<i>Protestation or Proposition</i>	<i>Protestation oder empietung</i> ; Stayer: 'Protestation or Demonstration'; Elliger, p. 395 n. 137 translates <i>empietung</i> as 'explanatory proof'; cf. p. 208/16; the term 'Protestation', perhaps most famously used in the submission of the Lutheran Estates of the Diet of Speyers in 1529, should not be understood in the modern sense of 'protest'; it implies both a testimony, and an assertion of one's rights by submitting a declaration; Müntzer uses <i>protestatio</i> elsewhere in the sense of testimony, not least in the title to the Prague Manifest, cf. p. 363; cf. also p. 69/1f. and p. 68/21; on <i>empietung</i> cf. p. 202/8, 209/2, and especially Letters 52 82/21 and 64 111/32; 'proposition' or 'proposal' appear to be the best rendering.
A protestation or proposition by Thomas Müntzer from Stolberg in	<i>Seine lere betreffende und zim anfang von dem rechten christenglawben und der tawffe</i> ; Stayer: 'on the beginning of a genuine Christian faith'; cf. the beginning of section 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Collected Works*, 183.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

the Harz mountains, now pastor of Allstedt, about his teachings, beginning with true Christian faith and baptism. 1524. Are you listening, world? I preach to you—as the new year begins—Jesus Christ, he who was crucified, and you and me with him. If it appeals to you accept it, if not, cast it aside.

1524.

First

I, Thomas Müntzer, from Stolberg in the Harz, a servant<sup>1</sup> of the living God, by the unchanging will and unwavering mercy of God the father, do commend to you all, elect friends<sup>2</sup> of God, the pure and upright fear of the lord. This I do in the holy spirit, wishing you also the peace against which the world has set its face. After the head of the household,<sup>3</sup> all-wise and watchful, destined you to be pure wheat and placed you in fruitful and profitable soil,<sup>4</sup> your development has been such that (one could weep to God in vexation) it is hard to see any great difference between you and the tares.<sup>5</sup> For you are hopelessly outshone by the godless sons of wickedness,<sup>6</sup> with their skulking, underhand ways; they tower so high above you, to the front and to the rear, that your piteous and wretched groaning<sup>7</sup> at the lofty pretensions of the cornflowers and the red blooming roses and the prickly thistles<sup>8</sup> has been totally blotted out, surrendered to scorn and derision,<sup>9</sup> an ugly sight indeed. Yet no one can doubt that this heart-felt groaning and yearning to

<sup>1</sup> Romans 1<sup>1</sup> [Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God]; Malachi 3<sup>1</sup> [‘See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, who you desire, will come,’ says the LORD Almighty.]; Psalm 19<sup>1ff.</sup> [By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.]

<sup>2</sup> John 14 esp. ns. 23, 27 [Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. . . . Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.’]

<sup>3</sup> *haussvatter* [‘house father’, in modern German].

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 13<sup>1ff.</sup>; Mark 4<sup>1ff.</sup>; Luke 8<sup>5ff.</sup> (parable of the sower).

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 5 (Israel as God’s vineyard); John 15<sup>esp. v. 14</sup> (Christ the true vine).

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes 8<sup>10ff.</sup> [Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless. When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.]

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8<sup>22f.</sup> [We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.]

<sup>8</sup> Song of Songs 2<sup>2</sup> [Like a lily among thorns/is my darling among the maidens/Beloved.] in this period the image of the cornflowers and thistles among the wheat is a common one, sometimes indicating the eventual victory of goodness.

<sup>9</sup> Lamentations 4<sup>14</sup>. [Now they grope through the streets/like men who are blind. They are so defiled with blood/that no one dares to touch their garments.]

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 40<sup>3ff.</sup> [A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the

follow God's will<sup>10</sup> is the one infallible mark of true apostolic Christianity, gushing out of the hard rock from which the living waters flow,<sup>11</sup> the origin and starting-point for the elect. There is absolutely no other way to help our poor, wretched, pitiable, needy, crude<sup>12</sup> and corrupt Christian people<sup>13</sup> than to direct the elect towards this<sup>14</sup> with all possible urgency, sparing neither work nor effort.<sup>15</sup>

LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will set it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.]; John 1<sup>6ff.</sup> [There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.]; cf. Prague manifesto, p. 372/3.

<sup>11</sup> John 4<sup>13f.</sup> [Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.']; Psalm 16<sup>5, 11-</sup> [LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. . . . You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.]; Psalm 18<sup>2</sup> [The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.]

<sup>12</sup> *grogen*; mystical term indicating bondage to material concerns.

<sup>13</sup> *chrisenheyt*. [Modern *christenheit*, meaning Christendom.]

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 77<sup>1ff.</sup> [I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint.]; John 14<sup>16f.</sup> ['And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.']

<sup>15</sup> Romans 3<sup>1ff., 31</sup> [What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way" First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: 'So that you may be proved right when you speak/and prevail when you judge.' But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (A am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, 'If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner? Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—'Let us do evil that good may result'? Their condemnation is deserved.]; ('Is the law overthrown? On the contrary!').

The result is a deep and rich work that for those familiar with the Bible would have contained many overtones of emotional response and meaning.

### What is He *Not* Saying?

Müntzer never debates what we would call "secondary literature"; he always goes directly to the primary source, in his case the Bible. This is not to say that Müntzer was an uneducated minister out of touch with the theological issues of the day. He was an educated and wide-read

man whose language reflects the fine theological distinctions of the day. That he never draws his authority from the writings of others, despite his considerable knowledge of their works, indicates a mind that finds its source of meaning from within rather than without.

It is also interesting to note that in a superstitious age he never talks about witches or warlocks, never appeals to magic or even mystery—and his reference to the “supernatural” is confined to the gift of the Spirit of “true faith.” C. S. Lewis provides an interesting perspective on Müntzer and other Reformers’ purely Christian message, untainted by pagan beliefs involving magic, though the problem with witches was their alleged pact with the devil:

. . . surely the reason we do not execute witches [in our times] is that we do not believe there are such things. If we did—if we really thought that there were people going about who had sold themselves to the devil and received supernatural powers from him in return and were using these powers to kill their neighbours or drive them mad or bring bad weather—surely we would all agree that if anyone deserved the death penalty, then these filthy quislings did? There is no difference of moral principle here: the difference is simply about a matter of fact. It may be a great advance in knowledge not to believe in witches; there is no moral advance in not executing them when you do not think they are there.<sup>26</sup>

Neither does Müntzer talk about many of the mundane features of daily life: raising a family, saving a marriage, making a marriage, or making a living for that matter—even the nuances of a interior life. But such details of parish life might not have entered the historical record, for he obviously had great appeal to common people, which suggests a close acquaintance with the conditions of toil and strife, uncertainty and conflict, in people’s lives. His own diagnosis and evaluation was grounded in a religious tradition pitting good against evil, God and devil in a final confrontation that would bring the curtain down on the world. His was the reality of reform, and it not reform, revolution, certainly not a quiet life of prayer, reflection and attention paid to the many small things that make human communities work.

Another thing that Müntzer does not mention is women. At least in the public sphere, his was a male-dominated world, one yet untouched by women’s liberation—or by children for that matter.

---

<sup>26</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: HarperCollins, 1944), 24-25.



Basic Question (Intentions)

To encounter Thomas Müntzer is to be challenged by the incarnate meaning<sup>27</sup> of his life; from this challenge emerges the beginnings of an explicit formulation of one's own meaningfulness. But prior to both these is the task of working out this "incarnate meaning" of Müntzer from what clues can be gathered from the writings that have come down to us. There are two different levels of meaning: his role in the dynamics of his time according to the existent world-mediated-by-meaning, and his importance for contemporary scholars and religious people.

Sources of meaning . . .

are all conscious acts and all intended contents, whether in the dream state or on any of the four levels of waking consciousness. The principal division of sources is into transcendental and categorical. The transcendental are the very dynamism of intentional consciousness, a capacity that consciously and unceasingly both heads for and recognizes data, intelligibility, truth, reality, and value. The categorical are the determinations reached through experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding. The transcendental notions ground questioning. Answers develop categorical determinations.<sup>28</sup>

There are two broad approaches to determining the meaning of his life: an understanding of the developmental shifts that place him within the emergent probabilities of his time, and knowledge of the fundamental dialectical oppositions within which his own decisions were made and which constitute the moving force underlying the emerging good of order. The former is genetic method; the latter dialectics. Both rely on heuristic structures to guide the inquiry into Müntzer's orientation, his evaluation of the situation, his advocacy of specific diagnosis with

---

<sup>27</sup> Incarnate meaning can have many dimensions.

[Incarnate meaning] can be at once intersubjective, artistic, symbolic, linguistic. It is the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds. It may be his meaning for just one other person, or for a small group, or for a whole national, or social, or cultural, or religious tradition.

Such meaning may attach to a group achievement, to a Thermopylae or Marathon, to the Christian martyrs, to a glorious revolution. It may be transposed to a character or characters in a story or a play, to a Hamlet or Tartuffe or Don Juan. It may emanate from the whole personality and the total performance of an orator or a demagogue.

Finally, as meaning can be incarnate, so too can be the meaningless, the vacant, the empty, the vapid, the insipid, the dull.

*Method*, 73.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-4.

associated prognosis, and his estimates on scope and constraints on action that together led to his specific courses of action.

There are a number of transdisciplinary variables that may apply.<sup>29</sup> Any understanding of Müntzer and his world will not only include an understanding of how each variable is understood, but the way in which these variables interact with each other—especially since Müntzer’s time was a time of fundamental institutional change. Primary variables include: images of the past and of the future; images of what it means to be a human being; images of social reality; divergent values, norms and demands; power, authority and influence; economic interests; organized groups and institutions; creativity and destructiveness; experiential learning; regulation; ideologies and utopias; and the ubiquity of conflict, competition and co-operation. While the way in which these variables have been actualized in Müntzer’s time has yet to be determined, they do act as a guide to what is and is not significant. For each of them play at least a supporting role in Müntzer’s thinking, while a few define critical areas of dialectical tension where the need for discernment on Müntzer’s part becomes critical.

Then there is the question of what was going forward in history, especially of progress, decline and redemption as manifested in human affairs. At our highest perspective, we have the explanatory model based on the Trinity—a model that brings the Trinity, the worldview of emergent probability, the shift to higher viewpoints through conversion and the notion of community into a single framework within which conversion acts as the essential factor affecting the probabilities of different schemes emerging into history and surviving over time, and even the development of new schemes. However, there is a prior anticipation of history that may distort our understanding, may hide the mystery and awe of encountering God if not the terror of facing the evil that permeates our existence. For destruction is as much a part of human affairs as creation, absurdities as much as intelligibilities. Gertrude Himmelfarb put it very well when she wrote:

---

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix III: *A Transdisciplinary Framework for Professional Practice*.

So too the discipline of history has more than its share of abysses and still more historians prepared to make of them what they will. Like those literary critics who recontextualize and deconstruct texts, or those philosophers who abolish philosophy and aestheticize morality, so there are historians who propose to “demystify” (and, some might say, “dehistoricize”) history. This is the intention behind some of the most fashionable schools of history: that which explains everything in terms of race, class, and gender; that which focuses entirely upon the daily lives of ordinary people (“history from below”); that which “structuralizes” history, displacing individuals, events, and ideas by impersonal structures, forces, and institutions; and that which “deconstructs” it, making all statements about the past aesthetic constructs of the historian.

The effect in each case is to mute the drama of history, to void it of moral content, to mitigate evil and belittle greatness. It is ironic to find these schools flourishing at a time when the reality of history has been all too dramatic, when we have plumbed the depths of degradation and witnessed heroic efforts of redemption. Looking into the most fearsome abysses of modern times, these historians see not beasts but faceless bureaucrats, not corpses but statistics, not wilful acts of brutality and murder but the banal routine of everyday life, not gas chambers and gulags but military-industrial-geopolitical complexes.

Of all these school of, history-from-below may seem most innocent. Yet confronted with the abyss, it is as evasive and delusive as the others. If it cannot take the measure of greatness, neither can it appreciate the enormity of evil.<sup>30</sup>

If the recognition of such an abyss, of the “enormity of evil” in historical affairs, is essential, so too is the recognition of chance, of unexpected and unanticipated links, of accidental conjunctions in human affairs. While innovations lead to further innovations, creating new schemes of recurrence built around innovative things with their original properties, the process is not a linear one. Neither does it fit nicely into a heroic, thematic or periodic treatment of history: elevating great geniuses to the driving force of history ignores not only the fact that such work is built upon the work of many people but also the acceptance and promotion of his or her ideas was a communal effort; dividing history into the history of communications, transportation, warfare only does so after the fact, not within the developments themselves; and breaking history down into periods of reigning monarchs or the fall of an imperial city, as say the Dark Ages or the Renaissance, hides the many things carried over from one such period to another—elements of Roman administrative techniques were carried over into the Dark Ages and the fall of Constantinople meant little to a Europe drawn inwards upon itself.

Although James Burke is primarily interested in the development of technology, he makes several points that flesh out Himmelfarb’s approach to history and Lonergan’s worldview of emergence probability as the heuristic structure anticipating progress, decline and redemption.

---

<sup>30</sup> Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss*, (1994), 17-18.

1. "... an innovation occurs as the result of deliberate attempts to develop it. Napoleon presented the nation with clearly defined goals when he established the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry. One of those goals was the development of a means of preserving food, and it was reached by Appert's bottling process."

2. "the attempt to find one thing leads to the discovery of another. William Perkin was in search of an artificial form of quinine, using some of the molecular combinations available in coal tar, when the black sludge with which one of his experiments ended turned out to be the first artificial aniline dye."

3. "unrelated developments have a decisive effect on the main event. The existence of a pegged cylinder as a control mechanism for automated organs gave Bouchon the idea of using perforated paper for use in the silk loom."

4. "Motives such as war and religion may also act as major stimulants to innovation. The use of the cannon in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries led to defensive architectural developments which made use of astronomical instruments that became the basic tools of map-making."

5. "Accident and unforeseen circumstances play a leading role in innovation. It was only when the bottom dropped out of the acetylene gas market that attempts were made to find a use for the vast amounts of calcium carbide in Europe and Americas: cheap fertilizer was the result."

6. "Physical and climatic conditions play their part. As the European communities recovered after the withdrawal of the Roman legions and the centuries of invasion and war that had followed, reclamation of the land depended for its success on the development of a plough that would clear the forests and till some of the toughest bottom land in the world. These conditions helped to structure the mouldboard and coulter, implements that formed the basis for the radically new plough design that emerged in Europe in the ninth century, and thus helped to move the centre of economic power north of the Alps. The change in the weather which struck northern Europe like a sledgehammer in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provided urgent need for more efficient heating. The chimney answered that need, and in doing so had the most profound effect on the economic and cultural life of the continent."<sup>31</sup>

In summary, the search is for an explicit formulation of Muntzer's incarnate meaning within the context of Lonergan integral heuristic structure of emergent probability, a dramatic and dialectical conception of history, and Friedman's transdisciplinary framework.

There are three primary sources: Muntzer's own writings, the writings of his contemporaries, and the reflections of contemporary historians. The first source provides data on Muntzer's own orientation, his diagnosis and evaluation of his world, and his understanding of the courses of action open to him and those constraints that would be brought to bear; the results are observed in the key events of his life, where expectations were met or denied. The second source provides data on Muntzer's times, specifically the world-mediated-by-meaning extent at that time as well as the primary actors, agents, organizations and institutions—each with their own understanding of the affairs of the time. The third source lies in the significance current historians have

---

<sup>31</sup> James Burke, *Connections* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1978), 289-291.

concerning Müntzer's life, which also includes the reflective distance of 400 years of human development.

For the purpose of this comparative encounter, the primary data is that provided by Müntzer, with the secondary and tertiary sources setting the interpretive context for understanding Müntzer's own writings. In other words, while contemporary understanding of Müntzer's life and times can help broaden any investigation, they provide only extensions to the encounter rather than any objective and historical understanding. The purpose of this encounter is to understand my own foundations through comparison with Müntzer's foundational stance; hence the data relates less to objective historical understanding than to the points of similarity and dissimilarity between Müntzer and me. Even so, it is not so much the similarities that are important as are the dialectical tensions that arise in encountering someone whose life was not only Christian but devoted to ministry.

First of all, there is a matter of control over meaning: who gets to determine the key features of the world-mediated-by-meaning at that point in space and time? Müntzer was part of the ongoing debate over who controlled the meaning of events, had taken a specific stand within the configuration of organizations and institutions existing at his time, within the limits of his own time and space specificness—all outlined in the previous chapter. Now the focus is on Müntzer's own control over meaning.

Secondly, both the emergent trends and the fundamental institutional changes of his times set the broad dialectical context for Müntzer, a context that—if he was truly open to the tension between his own limitations and his need for transcendence—would demand choice. Both the laws of integration, of limitation and transcendence, and of genuineness are operative—at least to some extent verified—within Müntzer.

A satisfactory answer to these questions would require far more work than time and energy—and the requirements of this study—permit. However, these questions do not stand alone. They are subcomponents of the general question behind this study: the adequacy of my

own horizon when it comes to doing theological work. Objectifying my own subjectivity requires an engagement with the lived realities of another person who is similar enough to provide a point of contact yet dissimilar enough to provide the necessary contrast—in the religious area—to bring out the rough contours of my own horizon.

Müntzer's meaning for our own time, at least for the purposes of objectifying my own subjectivity, lies in the degree of authenticity he managed to achieve and maintain (and may have lost) during his own lifetime. While the circumstances are now different, what remains the same is a person's encounter with transcendence, with the results of an disinterested, detached and unrestricted desire to *know*. Authenticity has meaning and importance no matter when or where it exists, for it exists in the stories we tell each other—stories that enable us to recognize ourselves, challenge us, and warn us of dangers and hazards along the path between our limited selves and our desire for transcending our limitations.

### Building a Case History

Why do people study history? The present writer's personal answer would be that an historian, like anyone else who has had the happiness of having an aim in life, has found his vocation in a call from God to 'feel after Him and find Him'. Among innumerable angles of vision the historian's is only one. Its distinctive contribution is to give us a vision of God's creative activity on the move in a frame which, in our human experiences of it displays six dimensions. The historical angle of vision shows as the physical cosmos moving centrifugally in a four-dimensional frame of Space-Time; it shows us life on our planet moving evolutionarily in a five-dimension frame of Life-Time-Space; and it shows us human souls, raised to a sixth dimension by a gift of the Spirit, moving, through a fateful exercise of their spiritual freedom, either towards their Creator or away from Him.<sup>32</sup>

Even taking away Toynbee's tendency to personify "Life" etc., his comments would strike a contemporary professional historian as non-professional. Yet he does emphasize "gift of the Spirit" (religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion) "moving, through a fateful exercise of their spiritual freedom," (potential and actual liberty) "either towards their Creator or away from Him" (progress, decline—with the possibility of reversal through redemption). It is this historical manifestation of the work of the Spirit that lies at the core of any case history.

---

<sup>32</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History, abridgment* of Volumes VII-I by D. C. Somervell (New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957), 350.

A case history starts with an act of orientation: where and when is the broad context to be set? Boundaries are important, because they punctuate history and in so doing establish as fact the starting conditions of the story to be told. Generally speaking, historians place Müntzer at the beginning of the Reformation in the German states of Europe. This in itself establishes a number of things: the dominate issue at that time and place was the need for reforming the Roman Catholic Church; the feudal system that came into being around the intersubjectivity of human community after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire was itself undergoing significant changes with the development of the movable type printing press and global sea exploration; commercial institutions were starting to emerge that challenged the economic authority of the feudal lords; and new centres of intellectual learning known as universities were being constructed in all the major cities of Europe.<sup>33</sup>

There is no reason for rejecting this historical analysis, even though there are various disagreements over the time and importance of various events and trends. But it does suggest that several kinds of history are important if the underlying dialectics of the situation are to be understood. They are, among others things, an understanding of Church history, economic development, the rise of nationalism, the resurgence in learning—all these and other factors that help us identify the fundamental institutional shifts that were going on during this period. It is these fundamental shifts that embody the collective decisions of significant portions of society and demand choice on the part of those living during such times. This includes a post-Müntzer history, for it is through subsequent events that the significance patterns during Müntzer's life may be understood.

In general, there are three distinct levels of history that need to be brought together: basic, special and general. Each level of history is distinct in its own right, yet influenced by each other

---

<sup>33</sup> The significant span seems to start with the fall of the Western Empire, a collective relapse into human intersubjectivity as the primary organizing principle (rather than law) known as the feudal period, and a multi-faceted renaissance in Europe that eventually catapulted a few nation states into global powers.

in the sense that general history sets the context for special history which in turn provides the context for basic history.

Basic history tells where (places, territories) and when (dates, periods) who (persons, people) did what (public life, external acts) to enjoy what success, suffer what reverses, exert what influence. . . .

Special histories tell of movements whether cultural (language, art, literature, religion), institutional (family, mores, society, education, state, law, church, sect, economy, technology), or doctrinal (mathematics, natural science, human science, philosophy, history, theology).

General history is, perhaps, just an ideal. It would be basic history illuminated and completed by the special histories. It would offer the total view or some approximation to it. It would express the historian's information, understanding, judgment, and evaluation with regard to the sum of cultural, institutional, and doctrinal movements in their concrete setting.<sup>34</sup>

These divisions lay out a number of fundamental difficulties in understanding the literature concerning Müntzer. First of all, while it may—more or less—be possible to place the basic historical “facts” of Müntzer's life into the context of special history, the basic historian's intentions and horizons will create a number of historical stories that themselves select what is “fact” and what is not. It goes far beyond the purpose of this study to investigate the roots of such divergences. Secondly, special history has already set out the parameters for this period of European history—the Reformation, institutional shifts from feudal to commercial structures, the Renaissance, the rise of humanism, and so forth—that defines history as historians currently understand it. It is by no means assured that the movements are correctly formed out what is known, for understanding these movements requires a general model of history—an explanatory theory of progress, decline, reversal and redemption. Outside of such ideal models as that used by Toynbee to understand the rise and fall of civilizations, which again go beyond the scope of this study, the only general history is that of my own “moral horizon” sketched out in Chapter Two. The problems of integrating special and basic history into such a broad history means that any pronouncements or judgments made concerning Müntzer's life and times are conditional upon answers to the question of what we as a species are for.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> *Method*, 128.

<sup>35</sup> Answering the question of what was going forward requires a prior understanding of what should be going forward, and the answer to that question requires a shift to a higher viewpoint that transcends what can be known through proportionate being. It is as if one asked an eight year old student to design a plan of study for their own development, knowing nothing of adult life or of the range of what is known and still to



Do these factors constitute an insolvable block? For the purposes at hand, the answer is no. The primary task is to encounter an external reality, the incarnate meaning of another's life, so that by own horizons and foundations are exposed for what they are—not in any absolute sense, but relative to the authenticity encounter in another. As long as the encounter takes place with another, as long as the struggle to identify the incarnate meaning of another's life rests on data that does not arise from my own horizon, then the objectification of my own subjectivity can take place. This task is stimulated by engaging historical material, for the engagement itself exposes my own foundation stance.

As has already been mentioned, there are two kinds of knowledge involved: an understanding of the common sense intelligence at that time and place where Müntzer lived out his life, and the understanding of broad trends and movements that belong to the study of history. In a sense, an historian needs to understand the works that have come down from that period in order to form an appropriate and reliable interpretation of these works. Thomas Müntzer's sermons, letters, commentary, and other writings all require an astute knowledge of what they would have meant to those living at the time if they are to be understood in their own context. Yet, historians are not content with interpretation, seeking rather use such interpretations to tease out the historical realities—the historical “facts”—of what was going on at the time. It is perhaps a truism, but those living in a particular period are often unaware of the trends and movements that form a unity when understood by a subsequent age.

One of these “distortions” derives from our own history of the industrial revolution, the revolutionary movements of both France and the United States of America, and the scientific milieu that we take so much for granted that it is hard to understand any other way of living.

---

be known: such a child could only focus on enhancing what he or she already knows according to their own level of proportionate being. This seems to be the situation that we are in, knowing only what we have already achieved without any—or little—understanding of what we may eventually become. In the end that knowledge resides in God, but we can work out a number of basic principles for development. Being free to exercise a detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know is one important factor, as is an understanding of the basic features of progress, decline, reversal and redemption inherent in the realm of interiority.

Müntzer's world predates all this by a three or four hundred years. Europe at that time had little in which to pride itself, compared to civilizations in China, India and the Middle East. Yet, change was in the air. The plague years that spawned a century's economic depression was coming to an end. Universities were established in all the major European cities, centres which would soon challenge the nearly totalitarian rule of Christendom. Commercial markets were opening up, fuelled by navel explorations and technological developments that expanded the reach of Europeans into the far reaches of the globe. Obedience to the divine will of God, in the sense of a fatalistic attitude toward a sinful world, was being offset by a humanism that empowered the individual.<sup>36</sup>

To encounter Müntzer, then, is to encounter him in two distinct ways: to enter into the common sense intelligence of the time and understand the meaning of his life and work as it would have been understood by his confreres, or to encounter the historical Müntzer understood (grounded) in our current understanding that puts his life and times into a broader perspective. Given the purpose of this manuscript, namely to challenge my own horizon, the second is preferred over the first. It is Müntzer's historical significance that best captures the nature of the challenge.

There is a proviso. The life and times of Müntzer that will be formulated in this chapter will never stand the scrutiny of a professional historian well-versed in this period of history. But there are clues and much work has already been done in understanding what was going forward. And the task of finding intelligible unity in the mass of material that is available provides clues to my own orientation. For this reason, it is important to have a distinct "other" with which to compare horizons. As long as there is that "other", my attempts to understand the other's incarnate

---

<sup>36</sup> Liberty is key components in the human good, for it is only when men and women are free to understand what is going on and have the capacity to do what is necessary that progress can occur. Without liberty, those who make the decisions find it hard to understand the reality of the situation and therefore almost invariably come up with inappropriate plans and policies. Yet, humanism in itself fails to provide that higher level understanding that would enable its practitioners to put themselves into context. In other words, humanism as a terminal value leaves much to be desired.

meaning will take me into areas that not only stretch my own horizon in unexpected ways but challenge my own foundational stance with a call to reform. It is this challenge, this call, this stretching, that forms the core of this study.

What is being sought, then, is any information related to the transdisciplinary variables and framework that sheds light on the historical bases of Thomas Müntzer's general orientation (horizon, intentions), how he went about evaluating the situation, his specific diagnosis of the problem(s) revealed in the evaluation, his estimates on scope and constraints given his understanding of the situation, and how all this worked out in practice—within the context of the general moral horizon presented in chapter two. Although this analytical framework may seem very constraining, it is in fact liberating. To understand the specifics of such interactions is to understand both the horizons being displayed—even if tacitly and pragmatically—as well as the intentions on the part of those who are persuading and in turn being persuaded. Both are signposts to a deeper reality, the reality of the Holy Spirit in action, in history, in the daily conversion processes of men and women. As the unknown writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing* reminds us of the overriding importance of experiencing the attractiveness of the Divine Mystery:

For not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with His merciful eyes; but that thou wouldest be. And Saint Gregory to witness, that all holy desires grow by delays: and if they wane by delays, then were they never holy desires. For he that feeleth ever less joy and less, in new findings and sudden presentations of his old purposed desires, although they may be called natural desires to the good, nevertheless holy desires were they never. Of this holy desire speaketh Saint Austin and saith, that all the life of a good Christian man is nought else but holy desire.<sup>37</sup>

This helps restrict the inquiry to manageable levels, for above all it is necessary to understand (1) the historical conditions under which the Spirit had to operate, and (2) the Spirit's "response" or "corrective steps" that permitted human beings the spiritual freedom to join in the anamesoning of the Triune God. Only when people are free, spiritually free, can they drop the attachments that form their prisons and truly decide for the Divine Mystery. Furthermore, the focus—at the level of positions and counter-positions—lies with the myriad ways in which the

---

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, introduced by Laurence Freeman OSB with original text rendered by Evelyn Underhill (Rockport, Massachusetts: Element, 1997), 191.

various socially and politically engaged participants refuse to understand the deeper richness and complexity of human beings, actively fleeing from taking the next steps necessary to complete their development and so give witness in their lives to the full and unrestricted range of the transcendental injunctions.

### The Writings of Thomas Müntzer

Before choosing and to be counted as “other”, there had to be a significant body of writings to draw upon. Peter Matheson, Professor of Church History and Christian Doctrine at Knox College, Dunedin, has translated both Müntzer’s published and unpublished papers—Latin and German—in one volume.<sup>38</sup> Only the liturgies were excluded, due to fact that including them would have at least doubled the size of the book. Unfortunately, as it turns out, these liturgical works—the *German Church Service*, the *Order and Explanation*, and the *German Mass*—lies at the core of Müntzer’s achievements. Yet, Matheson does provide not only an overview of these works but selected passages from each of these three manuscripts. Furthermore, his extensive introduction to each phase of Müntzer’s work, always set in its historical context, provides the expert opinion necessary to counter more obvious misinterpretations. In other words, not only does Matheson translate the text but he provides a broad intelligent interpretative framework for understanding that same text.

His most important observation, in my opinion, is that virtually *all* of Müntzer’s writings including his unpublished writings and notes are public rather than private documents. His sermons and public exhortations are of course public matters and take the appropriate style; so do his liturgical writings, which are meant as public documents to guide communal worship. But even his letters underwent a sorting process on Müntzer’s part. There are strange gaps: nothing from 1522, almost nothing from the first five months of 1524 while at Allstedt (a most prolific time for him), and the bulk (almost half) from a period of seventeen months from 1524-1525.

---

<sup>38</sup> Peter Matheson, translator and editor, *Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 460 pages, with selected bibliography and list of sources.

On what principles did Müntzer decide to retain or discard letters? We have clear evidence of him blotting, smudging, cutting, ‘purging’ some of his extant correspondence. How much was completely ‘censored’ out of existence? Does so much remain from the later period simply because he had not found time to sift through it?<sup>39</sup>

Even if the latter were true, the very nature of the correspondence with its constant themes of reformation thought and religious argument are a far cry from personal letters of affection doting on neighbourly gossip or the rising price of grain at the market. Perhaps most telling of all, there is no diary or any sign that Müntzer had ever kept a personal record of his own thoughts and musings. Müntzer, then, was a public figure—and he knew it.<sup>40</sup> Müntzer ‘grew’ into the role of prophet; this was his “face” that he cast out upon the world and was in turn acknowledged by it.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>40</sup> A public figure as a prophet:

Müntzer believed that he was a prophet living at the end of time. The apocalyptic struggle between the children of light and the antichrist had begun, and God was sending prophecies and visions to his chosen agents, like Müntzer. He filled his sermons with images of destruction culled from the prophecies of John and Daniel, but it was not always clear whether the pope or Luther was the antichrist. Regardless of who the antichrist was, Müntzer clearly saw himself as the leader of the children of light. He joined in the Peasants’ War, announcing that it was the final struggle between Christ and Antichrist. Unfortunately for him, the eschatological army of righteousness was defeated at the battle of Frankenhausen. The prophet, found hiding in a barn, was tortured and executed by the German nobility led by the Protestant prince, Philip of Hesse.

Craig D. Atwood, *Always Reforming: A History of the Christianity Since 1300* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001), 91.

<sup>41</sup> The notion of ‘face’ is an important one in the social science paradigm of social interaction, for in many ways the unspoken pragmatic forms of face-to-face communication that underlie verbal messages are involved with ‘saving face’, ‘maintaining face’, or avoiding a ‘loss of face.’ This is especially important when it comes to understanding Müntzer, for his life—based on the range of his correspondence and the nature of his profession (ministry)—was very much a public life.

Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a *line*—that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself. Regardless of whether a person intends to take a line, he will find that he has done so in effect. The other participants will assume that he has more or less wilfully taken a stand, so that if he is to deal with their response to him he must take into consideration the impression they have possibly formed of him.

The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. . . .

A person may be said to *have*, or *be in*, or *maintain* face when the line he effectively takes presents an image of him that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through impersonal agencies in the situation. At such times the person’s face clearly is something that is not lodged in

The second point is that Müntzer was not a logical thinker, certainly not in the style of an Aquinas or Aristotle:

Müntzer thinks concretely and visually . . . His writings proceed by a lateral flow of associations—one word, or image, or event, or Biblical theme sparking off another. Exegesis, argument and polemic thus combine in a quite idiosyncratic way; the reader having at times to thread his or her way through a maze of apparent digressions, obscure references, and spectacular abuse. There is, perhaps, some irony and certainly much incongruity about any attempt to apply pedantic, academic analysis to such an iconoclastic figure as Müntzer. His dazzling images and aphorisms, his sharp polarities and polemical broadsides have to be relished, savoured on their own terms. We understand him, if at all, not so much through following his sequences of thought as by imaginatively entering his ‘world’, in which spiritual and political, mystical and apocalyptic, real and fantastical elements are married in ways quite foreign to us. The strangeness of his language signals the alien universe—sometimes forbidding, sometimes alluring—which he inhabits.<sup>42</sup>

In a sense, the broad task is to recover the essentials of this alien universe.

Müntzer’s works break down into the following categories:

1. *Correspondence* numbering 94 surviving letters, drafts of letters, open letters, and letters received—the first one dated 25 July, 1515, the last 17 May, 1525. Together, they allow the reconstruction of the web of interactions that was so much a part of Müntzer’s life, for these are the people and groups that form a rich social milieu that places Müntzer not on the outskirts of contemporary life at the time but very much a part of the ongoing arguments and position taking. Here lies the evidence of whom persuaded whom, and to what ends. Here are laid out the dividing lines staking out positions and counter-positions.

And these are only the written communications that have come down to us. It is easy to imagine the extensive verbal interactions that provide a social richness rarely found today—all the more so since the classes were not sharply set apart in enclaves or in the stratified ranks of multinational corporations or industrialized nations. People of all classes and ranks bumped into each other on a daily basis—hence the need for codified forms of social intersubjectivity giving rank, position, responsibilities, duties, and so forth for every class of people in an agricultural feudal-based civilization. Yet, these codified, unwritten rules were already being challenged by the more formal contractual arrangements of a commercial society. Signs of these conflicts over what role to play are found in this body of material.

2. *Liturgical writings*, in this case selecting passages from the *German Church Service Book*, the *Order and Explanation*, and the *German Evangelical Mass*. Although Müntzer was executed for his (alleged) role in the Peasants’ War of 1523-5, the real focus of his intentions lay with the writing and publishing of these three extensive works all produced while securely employed as a reformist pastor at Allstedt, from Easter 1523 to August 1524. These writings not only expose the raging controversies over public worship that existed in Germany at that time but provides important clues as to the arguments for the liturgical reforms—reforms that were the first of their type in the German Reformation. Müntzer’s arguments in support of his reforms provide insights

---

or on his body, but rather something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter and becomes manifest only when these events are read and interpreted for the appraisals expressed in them.

Erving Goffman, “On Face-Work” in *Interaction Ritual: Essays of Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York, N.Y.: Anchor, 1967), 5–6. Originally published as “On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction” in *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, Volume 18, Number 3, August 1955, 213-31.

<sup>42</sup> *Collected Works*, xii.

into his basic orientation, especially when it comes to his own horizon and intentions. Since his horizon and intentions for liturgical reform are formed around the work of the Divine Mystery, we have here insights into his notion of religious experience, the work of the Spirit, and above all what constitutes progress and decline.

3. *Protestation or Proposition*, written in the late fall of 1523 as Müntzer came into conflict with the Catholic Count Ernest von Mansfeld, is both a defence of a persecuted minority and a conscious exposition of the Christian faith. Here we have a relatively clear analysis—free of the egocentricity that often mars his writings, any semi-Gnostic vocabulary derived from his extensive reading, and any apocalyptic visions that give immediacy to the situation—of the condition of the church combined with an urgent plea to change the structures of church life that rests not on individual piety but on a new form of popular mysticism. The fear of the Lord is considered to be the beginnings of all beginnings, a fear that demands of the church the fostering of a disciplined life whose purpose is to free the chosen—the elect—from a hardening, a gross insensitivity, of the heart.
4. *Counterfeit Faith*, with *Appendix*, is, if anything, a spiritual tract on the concept of unitive discipleship wherein one is Christ-formed. Müntzer's position stands in contrast to the prevalence of a nominal Christianity, one more social than religious, where a superficial faith based on pretence is unrelated to the reality of Christian life. It also stands in contrast to the piety of the day that involved taking on Christ. For Müntzer, the core of religious understanding came as a gift of the Spirit and such "counterfeit faith" finds its undoing in the Bible—the source of striking images that form the language of the soul—where his hermeneutics linking Old and New Testaments strips away the superficiality of traditional church practice to reveal an effective growth toward Christ, which for Müntzer was the Christ of the spirit, of the soul, of the humble and not the lord of all sitting upon his throne in heaven.
5. *Sermon to the Princes*, "Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel", given in Allstedt on 13 July 1524 before Duke John of Saxony, brother of the Elector, and his stoutly Lutheran son, John Frederick, represents one of the most remarkable Reformation sermons. He starts by recalling the need for devoted servants to counter the corruption and idolatry that false prophets have spread among the faithful, but before long—as he shifts from Church to Christ—his tone becomes apocalyptic: Christ will come to smash this divided kingdom and go on to fill the entire earth. Müntzer then shows the path to salvation as giving ultimate concern to the fear of God, looking honestly at the current wickedness, demonstrating full confidence in God's love for his people, and letting go all worldly attachments. Visions are rejected by biblical scholars because such dreams are based on a direct, immediate and personal transformation by God that they lack. For true visions come, unsought and unprompted, during times of fear and tribulation; they can be confirmed through scripture, but not initiated by it. Finally, new rulers are needed who—like Old Testament Kings—would use the sword to restore evil-doers and protect the good.
6. *The Testimony of Luke* and the *Exposé of False Faith* were both written during Müntzer's last few weeks at Allstedt. The Saxon Elector had started to exert pressure on the people and council of Allstedt: property must be respected and the Imperial law observed. By now it was clear that Müntzer and the Wittenbergers had parted ways, to the point where Luther called upon the elector to put the 'Satan of Allstedt' down, not as a false teacher but as a disturber of the peace. Both articles appeal not to the authorities but to public opinion. While both express a pastoral concern for strengthening the elect, they also demonstrate on the home ground of the Wittenbergers a prophetic, spirit-filled understanding of Scripture. His choice of Luke was inspired, for the text brings together Old Testament themes, angelic visions and the Last Days against false prophets that will be destroyed by the hammer of the word.
7. *Vindication and Refutation* is his last major work. Written in response to Luther's *Letter to the Princes of Saxony*, which was published July 1524, it is highly vindictive and polemical—and also

disjointed as Müntzer's rage keeps breaking through.<sup>43</sup> The focus is intensely personal, resulting in a badly structured paper that is neither a systematic exegesis of John 8 nor a point-by-point refutation of Luther's letter. In a state of crises, blocked by Luther and his Elector with his ministry in Allstedt abruptly terminated, he frames his "argument" in the image of Elijah in his cave, determined to resist the godless to the bitter end. Müntzer counters Luther's criticism of stirring up insurrection by pointing out that power resides in the community of the elect, that princes have taken this right for themselves, and as a result the faithful—who are the only ones to be trusted to exercise justice—are justified to take up arms.

There are a other works that have come down to us, but they are either incidental writings or notes of interest to specialists that add little to the emerging reality of Müntzer in this study.

### *Passions and Powerful Convictions*

By the time Müntzer arrived in Zwickau in May 1520, he was ready to establish himself as a strong, rousing and impassionate preacher with a deep pastoral concern for the well-being of his flock. By this time he was already associated with the emerging reform movement whose members some of whom had by now given up on reform within the Church and were now engaging in more virulent attacks.

Müntzer's first sermons [at Zwickau] continued the attack which he had launched in Jüterbog upon the Franciscans. He accused the mendicants of hypocritically soliciting alms from the anxious faithful, who were led to believe that salvation was the reward for the outward observance of Christian precepts. One friar from nearby Weißenfels, in particular, he denounced for belittling the profundity of Christ's passion in denying the need for all Christians to share that Godforsakenness in their innermost selves as the preparation for true faith. . . . Though the ferocity and commitment of Müntzer's preaching threatened to drag Zwickau into unwanted and dangerous conflicts, the council still gave its unanimous backing to Müntzer against the ecclesiastical hierarch. . . . The council as a whole was rather taking a political decision to uphold its right to determine church affairs within the walls, a struggle for autonomy which had late medieval roots in many German cities.<sup>44</sup>

These and other such episodes in Müntzer's life suggest a forceful, exuberant and impatient man passionately involved in creating a league of Christians, the elect, who would live the true Christian faith. These fiery sermons lambasting "corrupt" church practices were not restricted to verbal abuse, but often involved public disturbances:

From the pulpit on St Stephen's Day 1520 [Müntzer] denounced to his face Nikolaus Hofer, a priest from nearby Marienthal, who had accused him of heresy and had come to spy on his sermons. Thereupon Hofer was ejected from St Catherine's by an angry congregation, pelted with dung and stones in the churchyard, and only escaped with his life by taking to his heels out of town. At first

---

<sup>43</sup> Reference to Luther in Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehman, general editors, *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia and St Louis: Concordia, 1955). Cited in *Collected Works*.

<sup>44</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 18-19.



sight this incident seems to confirm the image of Müntzer as a violent and inflammatory agitator so sedulously propagated by his enemies. . . . In fact, such disturbances were part and parcel of the early reforming movement. In many cities crowds, often of youths or students, gathered to attack catholic parsons in rowdy outbursts of anticlericalism. Such incidents, known collectively as *Plaffenstürme*, occurred in both Wittenberg and Erfurt between 1520 and 1523.<sup>45</sup>

There's a social phenomena whenever society splits into two opposing camps: real vehemence is directed not to the other side, which are often cast as ungodly and malevolent, but to "traitors", "turn-coats" and "Judas's" on their own side. The anger focused on scabs during labour strikes shows the depths of such feelings, for they are considered people who have "betrayed the cause."<sup>46</sup> Something of the sort seems to have happened between Müntzer and Luther:

Muentzer's story cannot be written without Martin Luther. Muentzer called him 'Brother Fattened Swine,' 'Brother Soft Life,' 'Dr. Liar,' the 'Pope of the Lutheran Scripture Perverters,' the 'Soft-living Flesh of Wittenberg'—and in each instance more was at stake than personal insult or abusive epithet. A theological *raison d'être* stood behind Muentzer's labels and it may well have been for this reason that they were so poignant and devastating.

The relationship between the two men had not always been of this sort. In 1521 Muentzer had called Luther 'sweetest father,' 'paradigm and light of the friends of God,' and perhaps he had even acknowledged himself one 'who you have created through the gospel.' What echoed here was a comment widely heard in the early years of the Reformation: the acknowledgement of having received from Luther the stimulus for an incisive theological re-orientation. Thus Luther was to Muentzer both a mortal enemy and an important theological influence.<sup>47</sup>

This difference really comes out in a letter from Müntzer to Luther dated Allstedt, 9 July 1523:

Greetings, father, whose sincerity surpasses that of all the others. Your good opinion was never something I held so cheap that I would have lent my ears to any unworthy allegations. After all, from the very beginning I knew for sure that you were not seeking your own interests but those of all men. What really shocked me, however, was that your letters commended to me that most pestilential fellow, Egranus, because with every passing day I realized more clearly what that crow was up to, and that he would soon be casting off the feathers he had stolen and gorge himself on his stinking carcasses, completely turning his back on the ark of righteousness. In short, he emerged in his true colours in the splendid book of his on how to make one's confession, decking himself out vividly for

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>46</sup> All reason seems to vanish when people go to war. Cultures go insane, and probably have to go insane, in order to survive often horrific conditions. This is the same phenomena observed in small groups that feel themselves under threat: leaders are elected not on the bases of wisdom or tolerance but for their aggressiveness, determination and often unstable temperament. It is quite likely that Hitler came to power precisely because he was not a reasonable man. While Müntzer never achieved any political, social or economic power to speak of, he too could raise passions in defense of the group to the point where people would grant him authority.

<sup>47</sup> Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Thomas Muentzer" in *Reformers in Profile*, edited by B. A. Gerrish (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, 213-229), 220-21. Quotes are from Otto H. Brandt, *Thomas Müntzer. Sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Jena, 1933), 187, 190, 201.

his followers as an unctuous servant of his belly, for in it he commends the church of the ungodly and the evil-doers with such erudition—the most helpful thing he has ever done for the wicked. You wanted this fellow, who was so zealous for his own glory, to be reconciled with me to prevent your enemies attacking you en masse; for my part, I pushed myself forward as an immovable wall for the glory of God's name.<sup>48</sup>

The theological roots of Müntzer's opposition to Luther lies in his objection to a two-tiered Christianity: one for the learned and another for the common person. It is a question of spiritual guidance—a question that Müntzer raises in chapter 17 and 18 of *Protestation or Proposition*:

#### Seventeenth

It is the zealous expectation of the word that is the first step to being a Christian. This expectation must begin by enduring the word patiently, and there must be no confidence at all that we will be forgiven eternally because of our works. Then a person thinks he has no trace of faith. As far as he can see there is no faith to be found in him. He feels or finds a feeble desire for true faith, which is so faint that he is scarcely and only after great difficulty aware of it. But finally it has to burst out and he cries 'O, what a wretched man I am, what is going on in my heart? My conscience devours the very marrow of my being, my strength, everything that makes me what I am. What on earth am I to do now? I am at my wits' end, and receive no comfort from God or man. For God is plaguing me with my conscience, my lack of belief, my despair and with blaspheming against him. Outwardly I am visited by sickness, poverty, wretchedness and every manner of distress, by the deeds of evil men etc. And the inward stresses are far greater than the outward ones. What Wouldn't I give to be able to believe truly, since everything seems to depend on this. If only I know what the right way was! Then I'd be ready to run to the ends of the earth to obtain it.' Then the pious biblical scholars when such disheartened people come to them (who are the very best there are) saying, 'Dear, estimable, honourable, most learned sir' and a lot of similar rubbish: 'I am a poor devil at my wits' end. I really have no faith in God or man. I feel so bad that I really don't know if I would rather be dead or alive. For God's sake give me some good advice, for I suspect that the devil has got hold of me.' Then the learned gentlemen, who are always enormously irritated at having to open their mouths, for one word from them costs many a pretty penny, reply: 'Now, now, my good chap; if you won't believe, then go to the devil!' Then the poor creature will answer: 'I'm sorry, most learned doctor, I would really like to believe, but unbelief smothers all my good intentions. How in the world should I deal with it?' Then the learned man says: 'Well, my dear fellow, you should not be concerning yourself with such lofty matters. Just have simple faith and chase these ideas away. It is pure fantasy. Go back to your own folk and cheer up, then you'll forget your worries.' You see, my dear brother, this is the sort of consolation which holds sway in the churches—the only sort! Such consolation has made all serious Christian discipleship abominable in men's eyes.

#### Eighteenth

When a sincere Christian becomes worried that such sharp and bitter thoughts and terrible anxiety will drive him silly, right out of his mind, his rational nature becomes exceedingly suspicious. Surely this is the first [step] of unbelief, that you do not trust your creator, who is so gracious and kind, to keep your sanity for you? It is here one sees quite clearly our lack of faith. If we scholars are to devote ourselves to such matters we must stretch our brains much more. Hence the idle scholars say: 'Of course, if we were to confront the ordinary man with such lofty teachings he would become mad and lose his wits'. They go on to say: 'CHRIST says that one should not throw pearls to pigs. What can the poor, crude man make of such high and spiritual teachings? They should be reserved only for the scholars.' No, no, my dear sir, St Peter tells you who the pigs for fattening are. They are all the unfaithful false scholars, from whatever sect you care to mention, who approve of gluttony and

---

<sup>48</sup> *Collected Works*, 56-57.

boozing and devote themselves to their lusts, living in luxury and snarling like dogs with sharp teeth if one contradicts one word they say.<sup>49</sup>

Therein lays the difference. As father confessor and spiritual guide, Müntzer experienced the profound anxieties on the part of those who believed that they had to have faith in order to face the last days and yet had little faith. That Müntzer eventually founded his approach to true faith on the direct work of the Holy Spirit tested through trials and tribulations—this world of sorrow—comes as no surprise. If authority is no longer believable, having lost through their actions any creditability to setting moral norms, and those scholars who might be expected to know don't care, then only mysticism or spiritualism is left to ground a true belief in Christ.

Müntzer's judgment concerning scholars is likely to be accurate. The obvious reason for scholarly "negligence" is that universities were worlds in themselves, and the jostling for power and influence was just as strong there as it was in the secular world of princes and kings. Scholars and university professors need audiences, both their peers and students who want to study under them. They also need to make a living, either through their wits or through finding a patron. When this happens, it is easy to slip away from the actual needs of people seeking God as part of parish life. Besides, scholarship is a different activity than spiritual direction.

Also, the world of the scholar is a different realm of meaning from that of communicating Christianity, for the first (in Lonergan's terms) involves the functional specialties of Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectics while the latter involves Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics and Communications. Scholars seek to understand Christian worlds as they existed or as they are; ministers are required to convey Christian truths to minds formed in different cultural matrices.

But there is a subtler reason behind existential realities and reflective understanding.

[If] one turns from outward behaviour to inner experience, one finds that it shifts into quite different patters as one engages in different types of activity; absorption in intellectual issues tends to eliminate sensitive emotions and conations and, inversely, mystical absorption tends to eliminate the flow of sensitive presentations and imaginative representations; again, aesthetic experience and the pattern of

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 204-6.

practical activity tend to be mutually exclusive; finally, while the dramatic pattern of one person dealing with other persons draws upon all one's resources, still it subdivides, like the successive coatings in an onion, into a series of zones from the ego or *moi intime* to the outer rim of the *persona*, so that one is aloof with strangers, courteous with acquaintances, at ease with one's friends, occasionally unbothersome to intimates, keeps some matters entirely to oneself, and refuses even to face others.<sup>50</sup>

Müntzer was far closer to people's spiritual needs than most and the very image-filled language that he uses places him in the dramatic pattern of experience. But I think it was Müntzer's notion of a league of true Christians that over time captured his imagination and his passion. But he was a complex man. In the introduction to his translation of Müntzer's works, Matheson writes:

In Müntzer's case the hermeneutical challenge is especially formidable. Contemporary scholarship has yet to resolve the spirited controversies about this theology. Was he primarily a mystic, a Biblical exegete, a social activist or an apocalyptic enthusiast? Virtually every key term can be translated differently according to the interpretive framework chosen.

Matheson goes on to say that in his translations he tried to leave such interpretive questions as open as possible, carefully noting the many places where the given translation is debatable. But what could pull these different talents and interests together, putting each facet of his personality into a coherent whole? The key to a possible unity lies in his use of the word "elect."

All this indicates that Müntzer was an historical figure, one who participated in public events of the time, often in the self-assumed role of prophet. As such, he transcended the narrower issues of home and hearth, making a living, and joining in the collective social and political life of one's friends and neighbours. His was the world of biblical lore, not understood as a scholar might understand, but as a priest who had been touched by the Spirit. He was one of those world-historical personages, a nearly great man of history, an elitist figure who:

. . . [stood] out from the anonymous masses simply by virtue of *not* being anonymous, their having individual, recognizable identities with distinctive roles and accomplishments.

[It is an] elitist theme—the great events of history in which individuals necessarily figure prominently, and the great ideas and books that are the products of great minds.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> *Insight*, 470.

<sup>51</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Of Heroes, Villains, and Valets" in *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Vintage, 1994, pp. 27-49), 37, 38. It is her protest against the kind of historical writing that grounds itself in everyday lives, a methodology that for example would miss the evil of the Nazis by concentrating on the routines of daily living. "[Hegel] had contempt for those

Temperament

To understand how Müntzer exerted control over meaning is first of all to understand his basic temperament. Certainly the language he uses, the images and symbols that he uses, are highly inflammatory; yet he also shows the pastoral and spiritual direction skills necessary for parish work:

Müntzer's penchant for drastic and inflammatory language [in both the *Prague Manifesto* and three years later in the *Sermon to the Princes*] far outruns any apocalyptic intentions, but it gives a telling insight into his mental world. The images of sundering and winnowing, the stark counterpoint of godless and elect, false and true faith, suggests a strongly dualistic mind married to a schismatic temperament, unable or unwilling to prevaricate or compromise. Müntzer was a man of passion whose encompassing solicitude and warmth towards his flock were mirrored by hatred and defamation of his enemies. And, as so often with such men, those who Müntzer had once admired became most bitterly to detest.<sup>52</sup>

Is this a divisive temperament in action, a foundational stance that affected both his horizon and intentions, anticipating conflict, seeing everything in black and white with little areas for compromise? Perhaps, but he was also a tender Shepard of his flock. Whatever his temperament, it was exacerbated by the confrontational nature of the time and in the end:

[Müntzer's] uncompromising and implacable anticlericalism has been seen as the linch-pin of his theological development. His mystical approach to faith which saw the everlasting word of God reach out into men's hearts beyond the dead letter of Scripture led Müntzer to denounce not only clerics of the old faith or humanist intellectuals such as Egranus, but the moderate utraquists, and possibly the Unity of Czech Brethren as well, whose biblical devotion he must have regarded as a hollow sham.<sup>53</sup>

Yet such a divisive temperament has a practical purpose. One feature of a radical organiser, according to that 20<sup>th</sup> century American radical Saul Alinsky, is the ability to polarize situations, to mobilise people without necessarily becoming a true believer in the cause. After all, people are reluctant to devote themselves to an issue on the basis of a number of conditions or possibilities; war in whatever form requires concentrated effort. The problem with Müntzer was that he was a true believer and true believers never compromise their position, whereas to a radical organizer in

---

small-minded men, men with the souls of valets, who reduce historical individuals to their own level of sensibility and consciousness." Himmelfarb, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Thomas Müntzer* (1989), 38.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 31.

the end it all comes down to compromise.<sup>54</sup> But Müntzer could polarize situations in the best style of an evangelistic “hell-fire” preacher.

Müntzer was also an autodidact: self-taught people have their own questions, need to find their own answers—and Müntzer had questions no one in the university or ecclesial world could answer, questions that ultimately had to do with the formation of a true catholic league of the elect. Hillerbrand is perhaps a bit too negative, but still perceptive, when he notes that:

[Müntzer] took some university work and in all likelihood received a theological degree, but his studies appear to have been a bit erratic and disorganized, characteristic of the brilliant and sensitive student who can't quite adjust to the pedestrian routine of academic procedure. We know far too little about him, although one fact is, interestingly enough, attested: he was an avid reader of everything he could lay his hands on—Plato, Augustine, Jerome, to name but a few.<sup>55</sup>

If true, then Müntzer's world-mediated-by-meaning may well have transcended more specialized concerns. Still, there is a question of the extent to which he mastered such material, but mastery falls into scholarly research, interpretation, history and dialectics and he operated in the second half of Lonergan's functional specialities: foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications. Although he was very much a communicator, his primary interest was I think foundational, i.e. the basic terms, horizon and intentions that ground all further understanding of doctrines, systematics and communications. Although his ecclesiastical perspective was apocalyptic, his anthropology was mystical—suggesting an internal control over meaning. Müntzer controlled meaning not through scholastic standards or church teachings but through the development of who he was as a theologian and pastor. His was a foundational transformation, driven by an authenticity grounded in the tension between whom he was (an itinerant pastor) and

---

<sup>54</sup> See Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971). Arthur Koestler makes an interesting comment on exactly this issue:

We are thus driven to the unfashionable conclusion that the trouble with our species is not an excess of *aggression*, but an excess capacity for fanatical *devotion*. Even a cursory glance at history should convince one that individual crimes committed for selfish motives play a quite insignificant part in the human tragedy compared to the numbers massacred in unselfish loyalty to one's tribe, nation, dynasty, church, or political ideology, *ad maiorem gloriam dei*. The emphasis is on unselfish.

Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (London: Pan, 1978), 14. Koestler's italics.

<sup>55</sup> Hillerbrand, “Müntzer” in *Reformers in Profile* (1967), 214.

the need for self-transcendence (as prophets, as a servant of God). In many ways, this was the criteria he used to evaluate people. Like recognize like: bankers recognize other bankers; egotists recognize other egotists; academics recognize academics; religious people recognize other religious people, even when their religions may be very different. And so Müntzer recognized others like him who were caught up in this tension of genuineness, which gave him a sensitivity to those who for other reasons—money, power, fame?—were not.

The drawback was that all this put him at odds with others. But who he was and who he was becoming struck a cord with the emerging reform movement; he had an audience and this audience was part of how he controlled meaning. Things had to make sense for his evangelical practice, both in his sermons and liturgical innovations, so this pastoral feedback constantly challenged and tested his ideas and beliefs in ways that Luther, for example, could never experience.

### Imagery

There is another clue to how Müntzer exerted control over meaning: the startling imagery that fills his writings:

We Christians throughout the world have gorged ourselves so excessively with foul dregs that our mouth reeks hideously and unrecognizable from the stink of them.<sup>56</sup>

Or the entire eleventh section of *Protestation or Proposition*:

If I then go on to look at the Turks I find that in the Koran, which Mohammed has written, JESUS of Nazareth was the son of a pure virgin but (he goes on to say) it cannot be true that he was nailed to a cross. The reason: God, one and mighty, is far too gentle to allow evil men to perpetrate this. Hence (he says) God kept faith with his son by putting an evil-doer in his place to be crucified, thus deceiving the stupid men, who did not even perceive the almighty power of God. Judge for yourself, you miserable, false brother: isn't our whole world today party to a similar fantastic, sensual, deceptively attractive way of looking at things, although it still likes to dress up neatly in Holy Scripture. It makes a great song and dance about the faith of the apostles and the prophets, but apparently the only price we need to pay for the faith so bitterly gained by them is to stagger round mad-drunk. Come on, my dear lords, give up! Toss the cosmetic jars to the devil, don't paint yourselves like Jezebel, who likes to do Naboth to death. As yet, however, the dogs have not completely devoured her; she still lives on, a real tough specimen, torturing the servants of God.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *Collected Works*, Section 9 of *Protestation or Proposition*, 196-97.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-98.

Or:

All I have done to that wily black crow [Luther] released by Noah from the Ark as a sign is this: like an innocent dove I have flapped my wings, covered them with silver, which has been purified seven times and gilded my back, Psalm 67, and flown over the carrion on which he likes to perch.<sup>58</sup>

Or even in his correspondence. In a draft of an open letter to his brothers in Stolberg dated July 18, 1523, he writes:

But before one can be sure of salvation torrents of water come again and again with thundering so fearsome that one loses the will to live; for the waves of this wild, surging ocean swallow up many who think they have already won through. So one should not flee these waves but negotiate them skilfully, as wise helmsmen do; for the Lord only gives his holy testimony to someone who has first made his way through perplexity.<sup>59</sup>

Matheson puts it best when he observes that:

Müntzer thinks concretely and visually, rather than logically. His writings proceed by a lateral flow of associations—one word, or image, or event, or Biblical theme sparking off another. Exegesis, argument and polemic thus combine in a quite idiosyncratic way; the reader having at times to thread his or her way through a maze of apparent digressions, obscure references, and spectacular abuse. There is, perhaps, some irony and certainly much incongruity about any attempt to apply pedantic, academic analysis to such an iconoclastic figure as Müntzer. His dazzling images and aphorisms, his sharp polarities and polemical broadsides have to be relished, savoured on their own terms. We understand him, if at all, not so much through following his sequences of thought as by imaginatively entering his ‘world’, in which spiritual and political, mystical and apocalyptic, real and fantastical elements are married in ways quite foreign to us. The strangeness of his language signals the alien universe—sometimes forbidding, sometimes alluring—which he inhabits.<sup>60</sup>

In a way, his was a very mystical world.

## Mysticism

Müntzer’s mystical streak emerged early on in his career:

[While at Orlamünde in 1519] Müntzer immersed himself in a study of Johann Tauler, the most practical of the medieval German mystics, whose doctrine of the reception of the Holy Spirit in the ‘abyss’—the innermost depths—of the soul as the precondition of true faith was to become the cornerstone of his mature theology. Although he may well have encountered Tauler and the works of other German mystical writers in Wittenberg (Luther, who had read Tauler’s sermons, embraced a theology of the Cross which echoed the mystics’ concern with the tribulation of the soul, though his theological interpretation of suffering differed from theirs), Müntzer approached Tauler with intentions quite different from those of Luther. His reading, according to the one extant report, appears to have been inspired by Karlstadt’s cook at the Orlamünde rectory, by all accounts a woman of unusual piety and holiness. Müntzer, therefore, was not looking at Tauler through the eyes of a

---

<sup>58</sup> “Vindication and Refutation”, *Collected Works*, 333.

<sup>59</sup> *Collected Works*, 61.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.



textual scholar and intellectual but rather as a seeker after mystical enlightenment, who appreciated the spiritual wisdom to be found in a simple, unlettered woman.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, Müntzer relies on a mystical spiritualism to not only assess the world-mediated-by-meaning proposed by the Church but to set the meaning of scripture through suffering with Christ rather than finding the meaning of the text within the text itself. It is not that one finds faith through scripture; faith is found and scripture confirms. And faith itself is developed through suffering, not through the fine words of scholarly theologians or the “empty” rituals of Church services filled with Latin incantations and Priestly mediations between humans and God. As a former Catholic priest:

[Müntzer] had made a wide/ranging study of the Bible, the church fathers, and the German mystics, and had early become a follower of Luther. In 1521-522, he worked as an ardent evangelical preacher first in Zwickau and then in Bohemia, where he hoped to build ‘the new apostolic church,’ in the conviction that the church had long since fallen from its original purity owing to the treason of the scholars and priests. In 1523, he became minister in the Thuringian town of Allstedt, where he offered an interpretation of the Gospel and a reform program that broke openly with Luther’s views.

Müntzer advocated a thoroughgoing spiritualism that rendered the Bible subject to the test of religious experience: only the Spirit-possessed can rightly understand the Scriptures. The Spirit is bestowed solely upon the elect, those who have been reborn by passing through the abyss of self-despair and who have taken upon themselves the cross of the ‘bitter Christ.’ Hence, the inner baptism of the Spirit is the one true baptism; outer baptism through water is unnecessary.<sup>62</sup>

Teresa of Avila describes what happens in a vision, especially an intellectual one where a person has a strong feeling of *presence*. She makes a sharp distinction between true vision, which is rare, and the more common experience of presence that many people enjoy in lower levels of prayer:

A genuine vision has several distinct characteristics:

1. It is *gratuitous*, which means that it is beyond our control, and nothing we do can bring it about.
2. It is *sudden* and *unexpected*, not subject to our beck and call. It seldom occurs during contemplation. In other words, God’s self-revelation is usually not offered to a person *at* prayer, but to a person *of* prayer.
3. It is *brief* and passes quickly, like a streak of lightening, if it is imaginative. An intellectual vision, however, being formless and therefore more interior, can last many days and sometimes even more than a year.
4. It is *certain*. Though there may be an initial healthy caution and fear of delusion, eventually doubt has no force.

---

<sup>61</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 11-12.

<sup>62</sup> Williston Walker, Richard A. Norris, David W. Latz, and Robert T. Hariday, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner, 1985), 436-37.

5. It is *enlightening*. Without any effort to study or learn, one is instantly knowledgeable and wise.

6. It is *hidden*. The true visionary is utterly discreet, reveals his or her secret only to the appropriate persons, and would rather die a thousand deaths than to have these experiences publicly known.

7. It is *not sought after* and in fact is strongly resisted.

8. Its *effects* are *extraordinary*. The person that experiences visions does not continue to lead an ordinary, mediocre life. The true visionary becomes enflamed with extraordinary virtue, especially humility and obedience, and lives a life of *heroic* service and suffering.<sup>63</sup>

There is no way to tell if Müntzer had a vision or even if he did whether he met Teresa's criteria for a true vision. Only three points fit what we know of his life: there's a certainty to his writing that he attests comes from the Spirit; there's a depth of knowledge of scripture, wisdom if you like, that doesn't seem to have been derived from a scholarly appreciation of this sacred work; and he certainly displayed a life of heroic service and suffering both in his itinerate life and in his devotion to those to who he ministered. So the possibility of a mystical vision is there.

Whether he had a vision or not, it is clear that Müntzer believed that true Christian faith rested on an inner authority granted each of the elect by the Spirit and not externally imposed either through tradition or established authorities. In effect, neither Church authorities, religious tradition, scriptural studies nor lawful rulers had the right to tell the elect what to believe; only the collective judgment of the elect had the power to sit in judgment. This was a fundamental position of Müntzer, grounded in the discernment of true faith and supported by a community of like believers who themselves form an authentic Christian community. But unlike Ignatius Loyola, who between 1521 and 1548 developed rules for the discernment of spirits known as *The Spiritual Exercises*, Müntzer never set criteria for true faith other than a personal rebirth through despair so deep, so mystical, that it could only be called existential.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Terra Bielecki, *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Writings* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1994), 170-71.

<sup>64</sup> There is always the criteria that "like are attracted to like", which in this case means that a member of the elect would recognize another of the same ilk. Sinners are quick to recognize other sinners, and saints to recognize other saints, all because there are experiences, objects, intentions and questions typical of each group that make no sense to the other. Such differences are acute when people operating at different levels of religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion interact with each other share the same world but from widely different worlds-mediated-by-meaning. The same goes when a non-differentiated mind encounters a fully differentiated mind: the lack of controls over meaning on the part of the non-differentiated mind only leads to confusion.

Visions and mysticism go together. But mysticism is one of those terms that is notoriously hard to pin down; Christian mysticism even more so. Modern usage considers a mystic to be:

... a person whose experience of the presence of God is intense, direct, and transforming, but not necessarily accompanied by extraordinary phenomenon. Mystics experience a deep communion of love and of knowledge with God and, in God, with other people and all reality. ... Christian mysticism is rooted in the baptismal call of all Christians to enter into the Divine Mystery through exposure and response to the Scriptures, liturgy, and sacraments. This, rather than an interest in subjective experiences, was the understanding of 'mysticism' in the early Church. ... In all Christian mysticism there is a movement toward greater simplicity and stillness and a growing realization of the inadequacy of human images for God. However, because mysticism is always particular and contextual, it is possible to speak of various types of Christian mysticism in which the emphases differ.<sup>65</sup>

It is hard to consider Müntzer seeking 'greater simplicity and stillness', given the socially and politically activist he was. Yet his sojourn at the convent as father confessor to nuns was a time of quiet reading and reflection that could be explained, as Goertz suggests:

... by the persuasive force of the message of mysticism. Mystical *Gelassenheit* meant disregard of the self, and preparation for a task whose actual content only gradually became clear. Müntzer had not yet matured into the reformer who ... began to see the Reformation as 'the fundamental re-modelling of earthly life and hence as a revolution.' Only an anti-clericalism directed towards Reformation, and a conspicuous tendency towards mystical piety have so far emerged from the sources, not a theological programme, much less a revolutionary one.<sup>66</sup>

And anyone steeped in the mysticism of the medieval period would have known of Kempis' spiritual classic, *The Imitation of Christ*:

Why do you seek rest when you were born to work? Prepare yourself for patient suffering rather than for consolation, for bearing the cross rather than for rejoicing. Who is the man in this world who would not gladly welcome spiritual joy and consolation if he could always have them?<sup>67</sup>

Müntzer's encounter with Nicholas Storch while at Zwickau may have given concrete reality to a mystical and spiritual position he was only starting to formulate:

The sources give little information about Nicholas Storch. He was the scion of an old but by then impoverished cloth-making family, and belonged to the corpus Christi Brotherhood, which had formed around the cloth-makers' altar in St Catherine's. In the figure of Storch, Müntzer must have seen the pious man as Johannes Tauler had depicted him: a person seriously concerned about his salvation, mistrustful of the church's offer of salvation in its cultic externalisation, directly touched by the spirit of God—a man of strikingly unpretentious originality.

---

<sup>65</sup> Richard P. McBrien, general ed., *The Harpercollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, first edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 900-901.

<sup>66</sup> Hans- Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 54. Quote taken from Manfred Bensing, *Thomas Müntzer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Leipzig: 1983), 33.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, revised edition, edited & translated by Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. (New York: Vintage, 1998), 62.

The cloth-worker was the antithesis of the priest, as Müntzer saw it; a model not only of the pious layman but also of the priest in general; and so it sounds entirely credible when Müntzer is quoted in a polemical pamphlet as having praised this cloth-worker from the pulpit and having suggested that 'the laity must become our prelates and parsons.'<sup>68</sup>

People collect stories, events and personalities that become deeply meaningful to them.

Storch may have been such a symbol for Müntzer, when:

... he realized that the Reformation was being hindered not only by the clergy of the Old Church, but also by the humanism of Egranus. Nicholas Storch could once more serve him as an example: the simple uneducated layman stood as the antithesis of the humanist scholar. The interpretation of Holy Scripture was to be entrusted to a soul open to direct instruction from God, not to philological reason.<sup>69</sup>

A deeper clue to Müntzer's mysticism may be found in Forde's analysis of the mysticism to which Luther was most antagonistic, a matter of clear difference between Müntzer and Luther.

Very briefly:

Mysticism appears, perhaps we can say, when the old gods of the myth or the prophetic revelation or the sacramental-priestly system have failed. The mystic, however, in no way wants to deny or alter or downgrade the tradition. The mystic, I think we can say, seeks a new relationship to the *text*, the 'letter,' the historical deposit. Whereas once, perhaps, the text accurately or truthfully signified or mediated what could be believed about the gods in unbroken manner, it does so no longer. Either the myth is 'broken'—to use Tillich's word—or the text has been translated into a dogmatic or scholastic language which no longer edifies or feeds the soul. So the mystic seeks a new way in which to appropriate the text. Usually this is done by means of what Thomas Aquinas called *cognition Dei experimentalis*—the fundamental experience of immediate contact with God or the metaphysical 'first cause.' The 'letter' of the text is internalized by being translated into the language of the *cognition Dei experimentalis*, the language of the soul and its experience of God. Without for a moment denying the 'letter' of the revelation, the mystic nevertheless tends to dissolve its tie in the once-for-all historical and prophetic referent and turn it into the eternal language of the individual soul and its inner life. Thus what is the holy scripture was *exoterically* intended acquires an *esoteric* meaning for the initiated mystical soul. The mystic is therefore never divorced from the historical revelation but the mystic transcends its sense individually even though the 'letter' is never altered. The consequence of this internalization is one the one hand that the mystic generally tends to border on and to flirt with heresy and on the other hand that mysticism cannot in the long run maintain itself in separation from its historical religious background.<sup>70</sup>

Religious conversion is rarely of the intellect. Instead, it involves images, stories, tales of the past, hopes, dreams—in short, religious conversion has at its center an *emotional* reorientation

---

<sup>68</sup> Hans- Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 64-5. Quote from Johann Karl Seidemann, *Thomas Müntzer—Eine Biographie* (Dresden/Leipzig: 1842), 110.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>70</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, "When the Old Gods Fail: Martin Luther's Critique of Mysticism" in Carter Lindberd, ed., *Piety, Politics, and Ethics: Reformation Studies in Honor of George Wolfgang Forell*, vol. 3 of *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies* (Bkrksville, Missouri: The Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1984), 17-18.

that gives depth, weight, and flavour to the judgements and decisions we make. A longing, a yearning for something not felt nor seen, a discontent—an inner discontent that can never be filled by wealth or achievement nor ignored through hectic activity, buried under a frantic pace of life that does not leave any space for the Divine.

Müntzer does not appeal to the intellect through careful definitions and reasoned argument, but to the emotions through the use of vivid images and striking turn of phrases. In many ways, his words are intended to bring a person up short, to jolt her into a new reality that makes clear the need for clear choices between the world of men and the world of the Divine—as well as the necessity of taking up suffering in the search for faith. In Müntzer's own words:

The recognition of the divine will, which should fill us with wisdom through Christ, with a spiritual and infallible understanding, this knowledge of God is to be possessed by all (as the apostle teaches the Colossians), so that we may be seen to be taught by the mouth of the living God and may know with complete certainty that the reaching of Christ was not devised by man but comes to us from the living God without any shadow of deception. For Christ himself wants us to have judgement over his teaching. May the lord prevent the opposite happening, for some flies want to contaminate our gentle ointment (which teaches all things). As John 7 says, 'If anyone wishes to do his will, he will know from my teaching whether it derives from God or whether I am just speaking for myself.' No mortal man knows this teaching or knows whether Christ is mendacious or truthful, unless his will is conformed to the crucified one, until he, too, has first endured the swells and surges of the waters, which for most of the time are cascading over the heads of the elect from all sides. After a struggle, however, he is rescued again, having cried out hoarsely and learnt to hope against hope and to seek his will alone on the day of visitation that comes after prolonged waiting. Then his feet will be set upon the rock and the Lord who works wonders will appear from afar; at long last authentic testimonies of God will be rendered. But anyone who disdains all this, expecting the Lord to be always at hand, is quite at variance with the entire body of scripture. Nor should those who boast about Christ be believed unless they have his spirit, Romans 8, that he may testify to their spirit that they are sons of God, Isaiah 8. Moreover, no one is a son of God unless he suffers with him and becomes as a sheep for the slaughter all the day long. Let God not spare himself, but forsake him for a while, until at length he is assured that no created thing can detach him from the living God and from the absolutely true testimony of the Scriptures. This assurance enables him to distinguish by divine revelation between the work of God and that of the malignant spirits; here he draws quite legitimately on really genuine appearances and hidden portents, discerning profound mysteries from the very mouth of God, Corinthians, chapter 2; Isaiah 8: 'The people will demand from their God a vision of behalf of the living and the dead for a law and a testimony greater etc.' Anyone who spurned this 'is to be denounced before his king and his God' etc.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> "On the issue of revelations", part of a letter from Müntzer to Luther dated Allstedt, 9 July 1523. *Collected Works*, 56-58. Thomas H. Green, S.J. deals with a similar problem in prayer in *When the Well Runs Dry: Prayer Beyond the Beginnings*, new revised edition (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1998; originally published 1978). His answer is that long periods of desolation don't do anything for God, but it does allow us to truly know that even when there are no rewards involved we are still for God.

## Scripture

“The eternal language of the soul” is as good a phrase as any to describe Müntzer’s voluminous use of scripture. And this eternal language passed through two filters: the ‘mystery of the cross’ that made necessary the suffering of the spirit in imitation of Christ and an apocalyptic horizon of imminent transformation. The former confirmed the divine origin of his reforming mission; the latter made it necessary to gird one’s loins and take up the fight between good and evil. Both themes emerge in his letter to Nicholas Hausmann dated 15 June 1521:

May you know, may you know, my sweetest brother, that I desire nothing else but my own persecution, so that all may profit and be converted through me. You should realise that I visited Bohemia not for the sake of my own petty glory, not from a burning desire for money, but in the hope of my coming death. By these words I want to prevent the mystery of the cross, as I have preached it, from being eradicated. If you or my successor Zeidler are intending to root out the tender shoots of the word which I have watered you should be aware that boys and old men will confound you. For it is impossible for the word of God to return void. Nor will that same word allow itself to be directed by the teaching authority of men or to be darkened by the headstrong counsels of the untested and the effeminate. The time of Antichrist is upon us, as Matthew 24 makes so clear: When the Lord introduces the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom throughout the world then the abomination of desolation is revealed. But no credence is to be given to the reprobate; as in the days of Noah we should care not a straw for them. All of those who say that the late pope [Julius II] was the Antichrist are in error. For he is a true proclaimer of the same, but the fourth beast will have dominion over the whole earth and his kingdom will be greater than all others. . . . Farewell. In the year of the Lord 1521 on the very day of St. Vitus and St. Modestus.<sup>72</sup>

Müntzer’s reference to Matthew 24 speaks volumes:

. . . the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us’ they said, ‘when will this [not one stone will be left on another] happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’

Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.’

‘Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.’

‘So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those

---

<sup>72</sup> *Collected Works*, 35.

days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and False prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.'<sup>73</sup>

In "On Counterfeit Faith" (Allstedt 1525) Müntzer ends with his position vis-à-vis scholars.

The scholar cannot grasp the meaning of Scripture, although the whole of it has been expounded to him in a human way, and although he may be about to burst apart [with his knowledge]; he has to wait until the key of David has revealed it to him, until he has been trodden underfoot with all his habitual ways in the winepress. There he will obtain such poverty of spirit as to acknowledge that there is no faith in him at all; only the desire to learn true faith. This, then, is the faith which becomes as small as a mustard seed. Then man must see how he is to endure the work of God, in order that he may grow from day to day in the knowledge of God. Then man will be taught by God alone, person to person, and not by any created being. Everything known to created being will become bitter gall to him, since its ways are perverse. God preserved all his elect from them, and save them when they have fallen into them. CHRIST bring this to pass. Amen.<sup>74</sup>

In short, scripture is not the source of faith; it can only confirm it.

#### Non-differentiated Mind

There is one final question to be asked: does Müntzer have a non-differentiated mind where different realms of meaning collide? Or does he differentiate along certain lines? As a tentative hypothesis, I would suggest that Müntzer's mind is differentiated into three four realms: common sense (shown through his evangelical work), scholarly (revealed in his technical use of theological terms), transcendental (expressed in his passion for the Divine Mystery) and artistic (his use of imagery). What is clearly not differentiated, because such a differentiation was still in its embryonic form, was the explanatory realm of the empirical sciences; the same goes for entry into the realm of interiority.<sup>75</sup> The result is a mind clearly at home with people, capable of recognizing the movement of the Spirit in himself and others, and aware of the scholarly methods, yet confused when it came to the disciplined mind of dispassionate and disinterested inquiry (no one could accuse Müntzer as being dispassionate and disinterested, even in his quest

---

<sup>73</sup> NIV. Matthew 24:3-25.

<sup>74</sup> *Collected Works*, 224.

<sup>75</sup> Because Müntzer lacked entry into the realm of interiority, as understood and defined by Lonergan, these different areas tended to meld: imagery entered into the mystical, common sense with scholarly and the transcendental with all. In other words, just because Müntzer was familiar with these different realms does not mean that he knew the methods appropriate to each.

for true faith) and following a naïve realism that found the world of things and conjugates to be “out there.”<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Müntzer had poetry in his soul, tainted somewhat with a vindictive caustic wit never at a loss for the perfectly damaging image to libel his opponents:

Just as in our time—when God is sending his light into the world—the godless, senseless human powers and authorities betray themselves by all manner of arbitrariness, and by openly ranting and raging with all their might against God and all his anointed one Psalm 2[:1ff], 1 John 2[:16-20]. Some are now really beginning to fetter and shackle their people, to flay and fleece them, menacing the whole people of Christ in the process, and cruelly torturing and killing their own subjects and other with ruthless severity.<sup>77</sup>

These are not the words of a dry theologian but a passionate man with a gift for the perfect turn of phrase, who found drama in fulfilling a biblical prophetic role. It was this dramatic form that expressed who he was and what he should do—his orientation, in other words. To understand and appreciate Müntzer is to enter into the common sense world of subjective drama as he delves into the biblical play as scripture unfolded in their own lives.

Liturgy is drama. Giving a sermon—delivering a sermon—is to engage in public drama. The constant tension between good and evil is a dramatic device for heightening tension. Freedom from oppression: drama! All played out in the familiar time-tested world of appearances, i.e., the realm of common sense intelligence. Clearly, the hypothesis of a four-fold differentiated mind is not true. His was a common sense mind exploring new territory, having to fit new meanings in old expressions, operating in different realms but controlling meaning not through explanatory theory but common sense intelligence.

---

<sup>76</sup> There are two things that go against this hypothesis. The first is that his use of terms grounded in a spiritual revelation are no longer purely scholarly or theological—they are used in an evangelical way that even through new meanings are being expressed in the older “wine skins” of common words; he used his wide range of meanings to give depth and expression to his own common sense use of terms. The second is not “mystical” as such, but belong more to the discernment of spirits (mystical being considered as something not expressible in words, where the world is somehow all right).

Clearly there is far more work to be done in this area.

<sup>77</sup> Müntzer, “A Manifest Exposé of False Faith” (Mühlhausen 1524), in Matheson, *Collected Works* (1988), 280.



## *Müntzer on the Good of Order*

### A League of Their Own

If anything, this phrase describes Müntzer's ideal good of order for society, built around the elect and dedicated to the exercise of Christian discernment and judgment in the world. In a letter to "the God-fearing people of Sangerhausen" dated Allstedt, c. 15 July 1524, he writes:

Let God's word be presented to you in the fear of God, as it is written, Psalm 118: Ordain your word to your servant in your fear. Then you will shed all your mistrust and unbelief; then you will find that this is the way to discern God's judgement, in instruction and self-abandonment. But you can only fear God genuinely by running the risks of which we are so foolishly afraid on earth. For our fleshly understanding is by nature incredulous. Let the divine goodness prompt you, whose resources are now so abundant that *more than thirty leagues and covenants of the elect have been formed. The same game will be set in motion in every country. To sum up, then, we have to take the consequences; we are in it up to our neck.*<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore:

There is no doubt that during these months [at Allstedt] Müntzer came nearer to realising his vision of a purified community of God's elect than at any other stage in his career.<sup>79</sup>

This vision was expressed in the German evangelical liturgy he developed and put into practice. This was part of an emerging approach to religious life that was very different from the medieval emphasis on ritual and sacramental forms of piety, moral conduct brought into line with Church teaching and no or little separation between religious practice and secular activities. The situation was an interesting one, for:

The removal of all mediating authorities between God and man, and man's new inability to draw on particular means of acquiring grace (for instance, through the performance of religious practices), forced all individual Christians to come to terms with themselves and their God. Of course the Christian was to trust God and act in God's name, but taking personal responsibility for his own actions for the first time meant facing the world with a sense of full accountability. . . .

The new religious subjectivity, an awareness of oneself and one's own abilities, did not exclude responsibility for public conduct in the family and at work. On the contrary: it was in his public commitment and the face he deliberately turned to the world that the Protestant bore witness to the truth of the Christian faith. The churches gave support to the faithful, encouraged them to be active and even prescribed detailed patterns of behaviour, but every Christian had to take his own final decision on his faith and his social and political conduct. The old sense of safety and relief provided by an abundance of rituals, both ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical, was gone. . . . In general, this challenge appealed more to the new elites than the common people, and to stand out in estatist society through its public assumption of responsibility became the mark of a new elite.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> *Collected Works*, 84. Matheson's italics.

<sup>79</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 57.

<sup>80</sup> Dülmen, "The Reformation and the Modern Age" *The German Reformation* (1999), 215.

Müntzer—with his university degrees, liturgical publishing record, public exhortations, involvement with the Peasants' War and his self-declared prophetic role—was an historical figure, one who took it upon himself the responsibility for deciding his own faith and conduct in society. But unlike many egotistical persons that consider themselves as being special, as standing above others, Müntzer was decidedly for the common person: he railed against ecclesiastical authority and the nobility alike, built an impressive evangelical following at Allstedt with his parish and liturgical work, and supported the common folk in their "Peasants' Revolt" against the unjust practices of nobility and church.

### Conflict with Luther

Another clue to Müntzer's concept of the good of order lies in his conflict with the Wittenbergers now under the growing power and influence of Luther. Personalities aside, it was a conflict between reformation and revolution, with Luther firmly on the anti-revolutionary side.<sup>81</sup> Although one of the key issues of the day had to do with predestination, this was secondary to a conflict that had cosmological and eschatological dimensions.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> This fundamental foundational difference explains the systematic discrimination of Müntzer on the part of the Wittenbergers.

Even when Müntzer was under lock and key and had already undergone interrogation under torture, Luther's wrath was still not assuaged. Evidently for Luther too much had been at stake, not only the promising start of Reformation, but even the proclamation of God's word itself. Luther did not let slip the opportunity to dispatch Müntzer in literature, before judgement had been pronounced and the executioner's sword raised. In great haste the Reformer provided a foreword and post-script to some seditious letters written by Müntzer and the rebels which had been sent from the encampment to Wittenberg, and added some defamatory marginal notes. He launched the whole thing upon a society shattered by the Peasants' War, calling it *A Terrible History and the Judgement of God upon Thomas Müntzer, in which God openly punishes and condemns a Lying Spirit* (1525). The Wittenberg Reformer represented Müntzer's fate as God's victory over the assaults of the Antichrist, and suppressed any scruples about the bloody massacres of the fleeing peasantry at Frankhausen.

Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1993), 8-9.

<sup>82</sup> In "A Letter to Luther" dated 12 July 1520, Müntzer writes: "Predestination is an imaginary thing; it should not be included in faith, so that we base our confidence on it rather than on works . . ." *Collected Works*, 20. In another letter to Luther dated July 1523, Allstedt, when the dispute between Müntzer and Luther had already started but the two were still corresponding, he wrote:

By the time of the Peasants' War, Müntzer had already laid out the fundamentals of a theology based on faith generated through direct spiritual enlightenment brought about and tested through suffering. Reading scripture could confirm and deepen one's faith but could not create it. Ecclesial authorities could pronounce doctrines and perform rituals designed to provide order in society, but again could not generate true Christian faith. What was needed was a league of their own, guided and directed by the elect according to the norms and strictures of an evangelical faith. Perhaps he had hoped that those rebelling against church and state could form the beginning of such a league. Certainly his language was the language of religion; it never really developed into a language of political action.

In addition,

[Müntzer] was also influenced by Quintilian's great work on rhetoric, the *Institutio oratoria*, and seems to have taken the Latin teacher's concept of a natural order (*ordo rerum*), the relationship of the parts to the whole in both logic and nature, as the framework for his own distinctive doctrine of the 'order of all creatures', a universe in which God and man were originally and mutually conjoined.<sup>83</sup>

The "order of all creatures" is a medieval concept of a single unified entity where everyone is assigned at birth a place in the scheme of things. Like the feudal period in Japan, there were the warrior/aristocrats at the top, then artisans and business people with farmers at the bottom: born samurai, you were always samurai; born a farmer, you were always a farmer. The same would have held true for Europe at that time, if it were not for the equalizing power of the Church that provided authority, power and influence to priests and clerics not born of noble blood. And these fractured and contentious times allowed for individual choices that would have been suppressed during more centrally regulated and stable times.

---

You objected that certain terms sickened you. I do not know which they are, but surmise: perseverance, tribulation, gifts of the spirit, etc. Best of fathers, I know that the apostle has imposed a rule upon me, that profane novelties and pseudo-knowledge are to be shunned. Believe me! I will say nothing that I cannot back up with the clearest and most opposite of texts. If I fail to do this do not judge me worthy of life.

*Collected Works*, 59.

<sup>83</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 9-10.

## Apostolic Authority

Furthermore, it was a good of order independent of apostolic authority (Müntzer always claimed he was acting directly as a prophet, as an “earnest servant of God”). This in itself was a radical challenge:

Whatever we think of the historicity of the orthodox account, we can admire its ingenuity. For this theory—that all authority derives from certain apostles’ experience of the resurrected Christ, an experience now closed forever—bears enormous implications for the political structure of the community. First . . . it restricts the circle of leadership to a small band of persons whose members stand in a position of incontestable authority. Second, it suggests that only the apostles had the right to ordain future leaders as their successors. Christians in the second century used Luke’s account to set the groundwork for establishing specific, restricted chains of command for all future generations of Christians. Any potential leader of the community would have to derive, or claim to derive, authority from the same apostles. Yet, according to the orthodox view, none can ever claim to equal their authority—much less challenge it. What the apostles experienced and attested their successors cannot verify for themselves; instead, they must only believe, protect, and hand down to future generations the apostles’ testimony.<sup>84</sup>

While it was bad enough that Luther wanted to return to the authority of scripture, but for Müntzer to take on the authority of the apostles? Yet this is exactly Müntzer’s position, even if it’s never spelled out: to gain the gift of faith through the Spirit is to participate in the same transfiguration that took place with the apostles. In both cases the authority of the Pope was the issue; in both cases, “divine truth” had dominion over the Pope—it was only a question of the source of this divine truth: Scripture or Spirit? The dispute between Luther and Müntzer became a bitter one, their differences perhaps best expressed in their respective evaluation of the Peasants’ War.

## The Peasants’ War

The Peasants’ Revolution was an event open to multiple interpretations. Our own interpretation is likely to rest on the “natural” rebellion of a repressed and exploited people, for we no longer attribute religious worlds-mediated-by-meaning to social-political matters. But even though Müntzer’s time was a time dominated by religious meanings, there were fundamental opposed interpretations to the same event:

---

<sup>84</sup> Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 10.

Müntzer perceived the revolution as the judgement of God upon a world ruled by the godless; Martin Luther also gave this event an apocalyptic interpretation. On the field of battle Luther saw a mob of peasants unleashed by Satan rush to their destruction. Strange to say: in what was perceived subjectively as the end of the world, one can trace, objectively, the beginning of the modern era.<sup>85</sup>

Here, in one concise statement, are three basic interpretations of one of the central defining events of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Müntzer and Luther, both deeply involved with Christendom's world-mediated-by-meaning, both seeing the end days erupt around them, yet at odds over whether or not the war was "just." ("just", in apocalyptic terms, meant whether or not the instigators of the conflict were on the side of God or Satan; there could be no other choice). For Müntzer, those rising up against authority had good cause: they were god-fearing people (he hoped) made desperate by the unchristian behaviour of both churchmen and lay rulers. What else could they do but take up arms in this battle against evil exploiters? Luther, on the other hand, only saw the unlawful usurping of the legitimate power of civil authorities acting in defence of Christendom to restore law and order to rebellious (as Satan was rebellious) masses. In the end, their disagreement had nothing to do with scripture or spirit, and everything to do with law and order: Müntzer wanted a new order while Luther wanted to reform the evils of the old. Müntzer no longer thought reform possible; Luther no longer thought radical change necessary.

Once apocalyptic interpretations were removed, it becomes possible to understand the Peasants' War in historical rather than religious terms. This is the second of the two dialectical positions, this time between the religious world of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary world of the 20<sup>th</sup>. In retrospect the Peasants' Revolt can be understood as the end of the more radical elements of medieval religious life and the beginning of the self-reliance, self-motivating individually-responsible Protestant, who had to make her own way according to her own conscience. Eventually, at least in the public sphere, the Age of Reason set aside religious matters

---

<sup>85</sup> Goertz, *Müntzer* (1993), 30. Note the way the author indicates that this is what they "saw", as if one had only to look to see what was real. This is one of the reasons the debate became so deadly: there was no way of mediating between different worlds-mediated-by-meaning. There could be no control over meaning because the intellectual tools to exert such control, based as they are in the realm of interiority, did not yet exist and traditional authority—exercised in the name of the Pope—was no longer reliable.

as irrelevant to human living. Now one of the fundamental norms of Western organizational life is that plans and policies cannot be justified by authority or tradition alone, but have to be grounded in reason.

### *Müntzer's Involvement with Fundamental Institutional Change*

Müntzer's was involved in the fundamental institutional changes of his time in three distinct yet interrelated ways. First of all, he was part of a larger social movement of church reformers that had started after the Great Schism of 1378-1417, where two or three rival popes all claimed legitimacy, and gained momentum with the folly of a series of popes that were more Renaissance princes than spiritual leaders. Secondly, when he had a stable position at Allstedt he developed and promoted an evangelical German mass that shifted attention from the mediating role of the priest to the ministering role of a fellow spiritual traveler taking care of the spiritual needs of the elect through exhortations, spiritual development and the sharing of experiences—and engaged in trying to change the attitudes and behaviour of those in power. Thirdly, he shifted away from trying to change the attitudes of princes to working in defence of the weak and poor, a situation perhaps not instigated by him but certainly one in which his own interests ensnared him—only to end up tortured and executed for his involvement with the Peasants' War. Eric Gritsch called Müntzer's life "A Tragedy of Errors", and perhaps it was.<sup>86</sup> Yet his was also a life passionately lived for others.

But Müntzer's life was played out in the political theatre, in the constant tensions and continual negotiations between Pope, Emperor, territorial rulers and Imperial Cities over political power, the right to act as judge and jury, and economic clout. Although Müntzer's ideas were formed under the general anti-clerical attitudes of his time, his revolutionary attitude toward radical change threatened all interested parties and wherever he went made him a lightning rod:

---

<sup>86</sup> Eric W. Gritsch, *Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989). Müntzer's life certainly ended badly, at least in human terms, so in that context his life was tragic. Yet contexts change and in other perspectives a very different picture may emerge.

Wherever [Müntzer] appeared, the authorities turned their attention to him at once; the council in Zwickau, the courts at Weimar and Dresden, the subordinate powers in Saxony and Thuringia, the municipal council of the Imperial city of Mühlhausen in the Harz, and finally the landgrave of Hesse.<sup>87</sup>

Like it or not, Müntzer was no longer a church reformer, if indeed he ever was, but a political radical of the sort that can safely be ignored in stable times but can easily upset the existing institutional structure during times of fundamental institutional change.

And what change? In Müntzer's sermon on the *Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel*, Allstedt 1524, before the "great and revered dukes and rulers of Saxony", he declared:

This text of Daniel . . . is as clear as the bright sun, and the work of ending the fifth Empire of the world is now in full swing. The first Empire is explained by the golden knob—that was the Babylonian—the second by the silver breastplate and arm-piece—that was the empire of the Medes and Persians. The third was the Greek Empire, resonant with human cleverness, indicated by the bronze; the fourth the Roman Empire, an Empire won by the sword, an Empire ruled by force. But the fifth is the one we see before us, which is also of iron and would like to use force, but it is patched with dung (as anyone can see if they want to) that is, with the vain schemings of hypocrisy, which swarms and slithers over the face of the whole earth. For any one who does not practise deception is regarded as a real idiot. What a pretty spectacle we have before us now—all the eels and snakes coupling together immorally in one great heap! The priests and all the evil clerics are the snakes, as John, who baptised Jesus, call them, Matthew 3[:7], and the secular lords and rulers are the eels, symbolised by the fishes in Leviticus 11[:9-12]. Thus the kingdoms of the devil have smeared themselves with clay. O, my dear lords, what a fine sight it will be when the Lord whirls his rod of iron among the old pots, Psalm 2[:9].<sup>88</sup>

What was meant as a warning was perceived as a threat, for to those in power the words "the elect must destroy the godless in righteous retaliation for their merciless oppression, in fulfilment of God's will, not their own" was a further call to dissent in an age where serfs and impoverished non-people tended to be a rowdy lot.<sup>89</sup>

But by then:

Müntzer had burnt his boats. With the *vindication and Refutation* he severed all remaining links with the official Reformation in Saxony and with its sponsors, the Ernestine princes. Religiously and politically he had reached the point of no return, a martyr to his own transcendent vision. His last letters to the people of Allstedt were signed 'Thomas Müntzer, a servant of God'. It was that sense of mission which sustained him in adversity as he crossed the borders of Saxony to find shelter in Mühlhausen. The contrast between the quiet little Saxon town, upon which he had left so deep a mark, and the much larger city, already in the throes of political and religious upheaval, could scarcely have been greater.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 26.

<sup>88</sup> *Collected Works*, 244-45.

<sup>89</sup> Scott, *Müntzer*, (1989), 107.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

By this time, less than a year before his execution for his involvement with the Peasants' War, Müntzer was at least locally a public figure. His evangelical work with a reformed liturgy had given him a great deal of influence in that section of the world; he had acquired public recognition and reputation. Already he and Luther were at odds as each sought space for their own views. But when he moved to Mühlhausen he ran into a city seized by internal strife between the guild craftsmen and the city council over proper political representation.

As an imperial city Mühlhausen owed allegiance to the Emperor alone, although its political independence was compromised by the proximity of large princely territories—those of the archbishops of Mainz, the electors of Saxony, and the Saxon dukes. In the previous century it had been obliged to sign unwelcome protective agreements with both the Saxon duchies and with the landgraviate of Hessen. By the beginning of the sixteenth century Mühlhausen was the second largest city of Thuringia after Erfurt, with up to 8500 inhabitants. Another 2500 or so subjects lived in seventeen villages scattered round the city in a small rural territory which formed a modest counterweight to Mühlhausen's powerful neighbours. Despite its size, its prosperity was declining in the face of competition from new commercial centres to the east, notably Leipzig, which left Mühlhausen and Thuringia in the west increasingly cut off from the major arteries of trade. As a consequence, the fragile political balance in a commune characterised by considerable social division and dominated by an oligarchy drawn from the minority of enfranchised burgers was upset, as the commons pressed their economic grievances upon the council.<sup>91</sup>

It was a situation guaranteed to attract Müntzer, for this could have been the work of God in raising a revolt against the “snakes and eels.” Accounts differ as to his involvement with the Peasants' Revolt, from Müntzer as a minor figure caught up in something greater than himself to Müntzer as the prime instigator of this uprising against lawful—but fundamentally immoral—rulers. After five centuries it is difficult to sift truth from propaganda, a difficulty that applies equally well to Müntzer's own writings. In an age where the mass media was just starting to emerge in the form of the Press, when telephone, telegraphic, radio and television did not exist, and travel did not offer the conveniences of today, the pulpit was one of the major forms of mass communication equivalent to some degree with today's editorials. Propaganda was the name of the game, one that Müntzer was particularly adept in playing—at least when it came to rhetoric. Times of fundamental institutional change bring out propaganda on all sides.

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 109.



### *Conclusions*

Up to now, the main task was to gather data on Müntzer to building up an image of who he was and what he stood for. This involved playing the detective in a murder mystery, searching for clues, working out possibilities, until at the end the data comes together to establish beyond doubt who committed the crime. Whether or not Müntzer committed a crime, the process of inquiry is much the same—a search for clues to understanding whom he was in light of the conditions of his time, working out the basic facts and drawing conclusion from what is known.

Now the focus shifts to a higher cognitive operation than coming to understanding, namely judging whether the results of what is understood are true. This final act of judging is provisional, conditional, subject to change due to a number of answered questions or partially answered questions concerning Müntzer and his times. Yet, though incomplete and provisional, it does set out a basic incarnate meaning that further work could affirm or deny, a basic meaning that through the very process of working it out provided insights into my own subjectivity, my own horizon, intentions, positions and counter-positions. For Müntzer's incarnate meaning is a double one: the meaning of his life as understood by his contemporaries, and the meaning of his life understood in retrospect five centuries later.

The image of Müntzer that emerges in his own time is that of a religious revolutionary seeking to create a utopian society based on what was known of the early church. He was part of a reform movement that had started within the Church during the fifteenth century but, in the face of continual resistance, was forced to work outside the ecclesial structure. By Müntzer's time, the reform movement was just starting to take institutional shape and the direction it was to take not yet clear. Müntzer was one of a number of early players in this dialectics of position and counter-position concerning the true nature of faith, and hence of the church. In the end, the Wittenbergers under Luther prevailed in that part of Europe, quite possible because Luther was a reformer who stood behind the establishment while Müntzer certain was not—and Luther had the

protection of powerful aristocratic authorities against any attempt by the church at Rome to bring him to heel.

The image of Müntzer that emerges five centuries later is that one of a number of Christian reformers who were attempting to restore Christendom at a time when the dynamics of the situation were combining to destroy it—trying like the fabled Dutch boy to plug holes in the dyke. By the time the period known as the Reformation ended, not only was the church divided against itself but it had lost its favoured position as an institution within society. Müntzer's own time saw the break-up of the two estates, church and feudal, that allowed for individual initiative and small city-state development where the twin principles of subsidiarity and fiscal accountability promoted not only accurate assessments of the situation but the actualization of potentialities for the creation of wealth and fuller being that up to then had been suppressed by both church and state. In a sense, Müntzer was both a symptom and cause of decline: a symptom inasmuch as he gave personal meaning to the loss of order and authority in his world; a cause inasmuch as he set out to change things and in doing so contributed to the very fragmentation of authority that was to lead to the confessional system and the emergence of secular societies.

As for Müntzer himself, he was not a systematic thinker, either in the sense of a Scholastic theologian following Aquinas or a rigorous reflective philosopher. If anything, he seems more poet and priest of a rather independent, creative and argumentative turn of mind living during a time of uncertainty concerning the very (Christian) foundations of European life. What emerges is:

. . . Müntzer's extraordinary synthetic power, his ability to absorb and reconcile multifarious strands of inspiration into a distinctive personal theology. He succeeded in sublating mysticism (which assumes the essential unity of man and God) and spiritualism (which affirms that the gulf between God and man can only be bridged by the Holy Spirit) in a new synthesis which he embedded in an understanding of creation framed by humanist intellectual categories and a reading of history derived from biblical apocalypticism—a bewitching amalgam of bewildering variety.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), xviii.

If there is one thing about Müntzer's life it is that it gives witness to a Christian failure for practical compassion. In a supposedly Christian world where the golden rule is to love others as yourself, the prevalence of injustice, resentment and pain on the part of the common people was ignored on the part of both the church and its secular wing, whose collective group bias blinded them to the real needs of those who—at least in Christian theory—they were to serve. In the face of such recalcitrance, it is no wonder that the demands for reform could only escalate into violence—in the end that was the only option left to those reformers interested in improving the lives of people rather than reformulate church doctrines or engage in feudal conquests for land and power. If one took Christian faith seriously, then something had to be done; otherwise, any professing of Christian beliefs could only be understood as being based on a false or counterfeit faith. This was his situation, one familiar to any person seeking authenticity in a tradition that itself was riddled with inauthenticities.

The pragmatics of the situation suggest an escalating symmetrical interaction between would-be power holder reformers driven toward radical stances and current power holders whose power would be undermined should they actually act on the reformers' proposals even in the simplest cases of injustice.<sup>93</sup> It was the claim to equality on the part of the reformers that made the difference, for otherwise it was a situation of forced complementarities:

... symmetrical and complementary interaction ... can be described as relationships based on either equality or difference. In the first case the partners tend to mirror each other's behaviour, and thus their interaction can be termed *symmetrical*. Weakness or strength, goodness or badness, are not relevant here, for equality can be maintained in any of these areas. In the second case one partner's behaviour complements that of the other, forming a different sort of behavioural Gestalt, and it is called *complementary*. Symmetrical interaction, then, is characterized by equality and the minimization of difference, while complementary interaction is based on the maximization of difference.

There are two different positions in a complementary relationship. One partner occupies what has been variously described as the superior, primary, or "one-up" position, and the other the corresponding inferior, secondary, or "one-down" position. These terms are quite useful as long as they are not equated with "good" or "bad," "strong" or "weak." A complementary relationship may be set by the social or cultural context (as in the cases of mother and infant, doctor and patient, or teacher and student), or it may be the idiosyncratic relationship style of a particular dyad. In either case, it is

---

<sup>93</sup> The one thing about an agricultural solar-based economy, there is not much "float" (excess resources) left over once basic needs had been met. The likelihood of famine was an ever-present reality in European life and poverty in such major cities as Paris was desperate. To undermine their support base was to lose power, and to lose power could be very dangerous.

important to emphasize the interlocking nature of the relationship, in which dissimilar but fitted behaviours evoke each other. One partner does not impose a complementary relationship on the other, but rather each behaves in a manner which presupposes, while at the same time providing reasons for, the behaviour of the other: their definitions of the relations fit.<sup>94</sup>

The problem was, the relationship between those who had and those who did not have power, once considered part of the natural order of the universe in the manorial system of mutual yet complementary relationships, had been subverted by the “upper classes” growing reliance on legal and military force to impose unjust arrangements on those whose only form of redress was limited to rebellion or revolution—which of course changed the nature of the relationship. It was in the interests of the nobility and the clerics to maintain a clear complementary distinction between lords, ladies, bishops and archbishops and the crude and unrefined rabble, peons, serfs and other lower status groups collectively known as the “simple.” It was in the interest of Christian reforms to make real the Christian doctrine that all people are born equal. These opposing foundational stances grounded two distinct and contradictory images of the good of order.

But if there is one driving idea behind Müntzer’s life, it is a consistent desire to create a league of the elect based on his own ideas about bringing Christians together. As MacCulloch writes:

One person in particular has been given a prominence in the events that he does not deserve: Thomas Müntzer, a sometime protégé of Luther’s, a sensitive musician and hymn writer, charismatic preacher, and inspired deviser of new liturgies for reformed communities. Newly arrived as vicar of St. John’s in the Saxon town of Allstedt in the heady year of 1524, Müntzer developed his own ideas about uniting Christian rulers and people in a ‘Christian League’ against ungodliness. He was happy then to recognize the power of secular rulers, given that the Last Days were at hand—an attitude to worldly power not that different from Luther’s at the same time. Unlike Luther, however, he encouraged his flock in iconoclasm and non-payment of tithes in order to usher in paradise. After the elector Friedrich’s family forced Müntzer out of Allstedt, he took up a ministry in the nearby Thuringian city of Mühlhausen, jettisoned his interest in enlisting the authorities, and tried to turn the growing disturbances toward his own apocalyptic vision of world transformation.

It was very useful for Luther to draw attention to Müntzer in disassociating himself from the Peasants’ War: In his May 1525 tract he insisted that ‘in particular it is the work of the archdevil who rules at Mühlhausen, and does nothing else than stir up robbery, murder and bloodshed.’ Equally, the communist regime of the German Democratic Republic, building on Marxist historical misuse of

---

<sup>94</sup> Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 68-69.

1525 from Friedrich Engels onward, found it useful to elevate Müntzer into an earlier incarnation of Lenin. In reality Müntzer was an impractical mystic and dreamer (although his dreams were frequently vicious and bloodthirsty); far from his being a Marxist *avant la lettre*, his talk of the new elect Church of the Holy Spirit echoed Abbot Joachim of Fiore, and he had in interest in the material betterment of the poor. His contribution to 1525 was marginal, apart from its result in leading himself and his scanty band of followers to a wretched death.<sup>95</sup>

“An apocalyptic vitriolic mystic engaged in a visionary scheme to create a new Christian league” seems to me to pretty much describe Müntzer—that and an artistic and dramatic temperament that tended to over-ride common sense intelligence. He just didn’t know how to get things done, relying instead on the historical methods of the prophets to guide his actions. It was a mutually reinforcing scheme: the more he acted as prophet the more people objected to what he had to say; the more people objected to what he had to say, the greater the objective proof that he was a prophet.

Matheson summarizes Müntzer’s life as follows (after all, carefully translating the works of another gives insights into the author in ways readers can never achieve):

In many of his later letters Müntzer writes on behalf of, and in conjunction with, a whole ‘community’, of Allstedt, or Mühlhausen, or the peasant army. Even in his earlier letters many are not personal, private correspondence, but have a public, proclamatory, didactic, almost ‘apostolic’ character. They are addressed, in the name of Jesus, to ‘dear brothers’ and signed not by an individual, nor [after July 1523] in Müntzer’s formal capacity as pastor, but as the servant of God, the disturber of the godless, the wielder of the sword of Gideon. Thus his letters, as *Sendbriefe*, open letters, or *Unterrichtung*, as ‘instructions’ are intimately related to other aspects of his ministry, his liturgies, his sermons, his tracts. The reversion, in his very last letter, to the simple signature, Thomas Müntzer, indicates the collapse of his mission.

Yet this moving, dignified letter [*Müntzer to the people of Mühlhausen. Helldrungen, 17 May 1525*], after defeat and torture and on the eve of his death, reveals again the caring pastor (and husband), the ardent pursuer of divine truth. Largely self-taught, an exile from every kind of security, he emerges in his letters as a very vulnerable person, too open to the sufferings of others for his own good. If he resorted in the end to utopian violence it was because he could not remain passive while others suffered. If he became censorious and dogmatic it was because his genuine questions had remained unanswered. Out of the most unpromising circumstances, and working with very ‘ordinary’, in his words, ‘crude’ people he won for himself, for a time, room to create and foster new forms of individual and communal life and thought. If his militancy had been more disciplined and his mysticism less moralistic perhaps the integration he sought might have been achieved. As it is his fragmented vision mirrors the crisis-torn society to which he sought to minister.<sup>96</sup>

For myself, and in light of Heschel’s comment quoted at the end of Chapter One, I would say that Müntzer was the man who said “NO!”: he didn’t accept the evils of his day; he didn’t

---

<sup>95</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2003), 156-57.

<sup>96</sup> *Collected Works*, 4-5.

withdraw from human affairs; and while he certainly was not efficient, tending like so many others of his day to engage in rhetorical demands and political infighting, he was effective in the sense of deciding for the more important issues rather than the most convenient.

But in the end, the image that stays in my mind is that of Müntzer leading his congregation in prayer and song, chanting and psalms, before God—all in the language of the people. Perhaps this was his true work, creating a community living in true faith; the rest was a good man caught up in the evils of his time, now passed down in history by those who preferred to create a rebel standing up for the down-trodden than a god-filled man seeking to do what needed to be done. The true answer is probably lost in time. At any rate, there was more to Müntzer than his social activism; he was a complex character with many facets.

## CHAPTER 5

### POST-ENCOUNTER REFLECTIONS

*Human kind  
cannot bear very much reality.*

T.S. Elliot

There is a proviso to all that follows. Although it may seem that I am advocating this or that position, arguing against this or that counter-position, these reflections on meeting Müntzer are less a matter of intellectual stances as a bringing to consciousness parts of whom I am that up to now remained murky and unformed. Like any scientist engaged in a dispassionate and disinterested desire to know, I too seek to know more about myself—not in the realm of the common sense drama of human living but as a creature seeking to understand who is interested in finding the grounds of that understanding. Part of this project involves a prolonged still incomplete encounter with Bernard Lonergan, S.J. Another part involves a heightening of reflective self-consciousness through a growing awareness of whom and what I stand for, and who and what I am against. Together they express a foundational stance that not only grounds future inquiries but serves as the starting point for present and future decisions.

Objectifying subjectivity is not a matter of looking within:

On the counter-position there is an ultimate duality between knower and known; for objectivity is conceived on the analogy of extroversion; and so knowing is essentially a looking, gazing, intuiting, beholding, while the known has to be something else that is looked at, gazed upon, intuited, beheld. On the position, such a duality is rejected; knowing is knowing being; in any given case the knowing and the known being may be the same or different; and whether or not they are the same or different, is to be determined by making the relevant correct judgements.<sup>1</sup>

To “know” Müntzer is to know myself as knower with reasonable judgements concerning the accuracy and reliability of having brought Müntzer into being in Chapter Four. This Müntzer I affirm as being real has been brought into existence through the upper blade of theory and the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Insight*, 646.

lower blade of data—specifically a translation of Müntzer’s writings, several commentaries on Müntzer’s life and basic historical accounts of his times written for the most part long after the events they describe. In no way can this understanding of Müntzer be considered anything more than conditional, suggesting directions and possibilities rather than firm judgments. Yet the upper blade does provide a structure that is in many ways far more accurate and reliable than its actual execution would suggest, and this upper blade applies equally well to me as well as Müntzer. It is within this context of the upper blade of theory that this “encounter” with Müntzer took place.

In the similarities and contrasts between this emerging Müntzer and myself, my own subjectivity is objectified. Why do I do what I do? Think the way I think? Answers are grounded in the positions I have chosen—subconsciously through cultural assimilations, accidentally as I sided with one side against another, deliberately through the choices I have made when confronted with the need to take a position—that together form the horizon and intentions of my foundational stance.<sup>2</sup>

Usually we focus on things exterior to us; rarely do we focus on our own beliefs. As Melchin puts it:

... behind the familiar objects of our experience lies an inner realm which is quite strange. This is the realm of ourselves as subjects. Most of our lives we spend experiencing things, examining things, doing things, with our attention focussed on the things before us. Yet all the while we are being moved through our actions by invisible inner forces and operations that subtly evade our attention; these are the forces and operations of the experiencing, the examining, the doing themselves.

The forces do not come from outside us, but rather from inside. And while we often play a deliberate role in mobilizing or guiding the operations, still they have an energy and a direction of their own that almost invisibly carry us through much of our lives. To understand moral responsibility requires that we turn our attention away from the objects of our experience and towards these ever-present forces and operations that carry us through the various stages of responsible action. For most of us, this is unfamiliar terrain. It is the terrain of self as mystery.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> And the process is far from being complete. In the worldview of emergent probability there is always incompleteness, possibilities, mistakes:

The undeveloped is prior to the developed; there are false starts, break-downs, failures; advance is at the price of risk; security is mated with sterility; and the life of man is guided by an intelligence that has to develop and a willingness that has to be acquired.

*Insight*, 667.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth R. Melchin, *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics based on Bernard Lonergan* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 17–18. There are then two forms of knowledge. As Lonergan puts it:



### *A Similar Pattern*

I doubt that I would ever have chosen Thomas Müntzer, a radical evangelical German reformer eventually executed for his involvement with the Peasants' War of 1524-25, as someone I would ever want to meet much less come to know. He was chosen by the simple expediency of opening a volume of church history and stabbing a finger down at random until a name came up whose writings were available and yet was not so well known as to pose insurmountable problems in coming to understand.

Who would have thought that I would have encountered a somewhat kindred soul? Both of us are appalled by the state of affairs of our respective societies and although we come from quite different cultures we both are concerned with improving the general level of competence and wisdom. Where we differ is in our social involvement: Müntzer was always directly involved in people's lives while I over time have concentrated on the related problems of discernment (in planning and policy-making) and moral courage to see things through explanatory theory rather than rely on common sense expediency. We're both stubborn, testy at times, intensely put out by the unreasonableness and pettiness of people, but willing to put our work to the test as long as the test is a fair one. In that sense we have both put our lives on the line for something we believe in. It is that Protestant idea of individual moral responsibility before God that resonates with my own foundational stance.

It is that apparent failure on the part of so many people who restrict their responsibilities to themselves or their group that I find so incomprehensible. Or rather it is a failure to transcend such interests to work for someone with a far deeper understanding of human needs and wants

---

[In] each of us there exist two different kinds of knowledge. They are juxtaposed in Cartesian dualism with its rational 'Cogito, ergo sum' and with its unquestioning extroversion to substantial extension. They are separated and alienated in the subsequent rationalist and empiricist philosophies. They are brought together again to cancel each other in Kantian criticism. If these statements approximate the facts, then the question of human knowledge is not whether it exists but what precisely are its two diverse forms and what are the relations between them.

*Insight*, xvii.

that puts me in the same “unrealistic” category as Müntzer. How can one go back to a “normal” life after knowing about the “Private-Profit, Common-Costs *but don’t tell*” game, the tragic consequences of pretending that we live in a commons of unlimited resources, the subsurface “daemons” of blindfullness and willfullness that color totalitarian closed, the reality of nuclear power given to a race filled with human errors and misjudgements—how can one not raise one’s hands to the sky and scream in terror? Perhaps we cannot face too much reality, having evolved as a species in low density population levels without the complexities of a liberal industrial society with all its rules and regulations now made necessary through an “over-age” of people.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps we are better off blinding ourselves to reality, knowing deep down that we will never be able to meet the intellectual and moral demands that our situation now forces upon us. Yet, how can one go before God knowing that one did not try to do what was required? And even though our part of this universe may end up a mess, what we do does—for those who accept its reality—ripple in the multi-verse.

It seems like an apocalyptic image of the future accompanies any Cassandra who, looking into the future, sees the folly of the present but is unable to convince others as to the lack of wisdom of their actions. How similar this is to Müntzer apocalyptic image of the Last Days, or even his anthropological reliance on the spirit?

Two eternal questions resonated with me in this encounter with Müntzer:

1. What *is* the source of true wisdom? (For Müntzer, What is the source of true faith?)
2. Why don’t people do what is right? (A question behind his Sermon to Princes and Müntzer’s later involvement with the Peasants’ War.)

In the face of obvious deficiencies in wise discernment and faced with the dynamism of the human spirit toward the good (I doubt if we are naturally destructive), where do we go to improve

---

<sup>4</sup> “Over-age” of people as opposed to a “short-age” of resources. The very way we phrase the problem as shortages rather than overages tells us much about the human capacity for self-deception and the avoidance of hard truths. As to the former, our society demands at least a college level IQ to navigate through its complexities; all else need not apply.

our capacity to recognize the good?<sup>5</sup> Knowing what needs to be done and recognizing people's failure to do what needs to be done, what can be done to improve the moral fortitude and courage of those facing evil? I suppose these are the questions behind Professional Practice. For our times demand a facing up to reality, a removal of bias and the development of a rational self-consciousness that is committed to cosmopolis. Müntzer sought to bring a deeper awareness of the spirit in an age where ghosts, goblins, myth and mystery were bound up with divination on one hand and the Church with its emphasis on pay-your-way indulgencies and a faith only loosely practiced. He sought to expand human awareness through a prophetic call to a spiritual awakening given meaning through the signs and symbols of the Bible—all expressed in an emerging concept of ministry that challenged the traditional church to reform.

In our own times spiritual discernment is not enough. Not only has the very advance in scientific and technical know-how not been matched by a corresponding gain in human wisdom, but an increasingly congested world demands levels of regulation not possible under a traditional model based on a agrarian solar-based economy. A failure of intelligence and/or a lack of moral fortitude in one area of the world can dramatically change the living conditions of those living halfway around the globe. Crowded conditions make for uneasy relations. After all,

The very advance of knowledge brings a power over nature and over men too vast and terrifying to be entrusted to the good intentions of unconsciously biased minds.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> That human beings are not naturally destructive is one of the fundamental Jewish-Christian beliefs: the two stories of creation in Genesis both affirm that humans were created by God and were created in God's image. Destructiveness in the human condition is explained as a falling away from God out of a desire to become as god, knowing good and evil. It turns out that this theological tale is very much a part of my own foundational stance. I "encounter" others as being intrinsically good, subject to the same transcendental injunctions as I, yet operating at different levels of conversion—conversions that when absent limit the good that people can do. We now know that such development is natural to any rationally self-conscious species, for we are as individuals and as a species born incomplete and have to work through our own growth.

From where does this foundational position come? Partly it's a matter of my own temperament, being a rather gentle person at heart (yet also "violent", in the sense of making things happen rather than trying to understand and go with the flow). But that is an incomplete explanation. There's a clear choice in the dialectics of human goodness between the Gnostic attitude that the world and the humans that live in it were not created by God but by a lesser flawed being—the Demiurge. Given a choice between the two, I prefer a world created by the Divine Mystery rather than live in a garbage dump.

<sup>6</sup> *Insight*, xiv.

What is needed is a higher viewpoint of what it means to be human, a viewpoint grounded in the unfettered and normative cognitive operations of the human mind extended into the realm of the Divine Mystery. As such it includes the material sciences, the human sciences, philosophy and theology—in fact all of the realms of meaning, the polymorphism of human consciousness and a call to a higher mode of being. But a higher viewpoint in itself is not enough. There needs to be some way of making this viewpoint operative in human living, so that what is known can be put to use in practical ways that promote progress and avoid decline, that adds to the light in the world rather than dims the lamp.

Many things have changed since Müntzer's time. The differentiation of the human mind into different realms of meaning has continued with the emergence of historical scholarship, scientific methods and insights into interiority. A post-agricultural global economy has been created, one that frees many people from the uncertain and restricted conditions of a solar-powered agricultural-based economy. And a whole new set of academic disciplines have arisen, disciplines that seek to understand ourselves in dispassionate terms—to observe ourselves as an outsider might rather than through the lens of our own need to look good.

Though conditions may have changed, the essential dynamism of the human mind has not. Müntzer was as much a dedicated explorer and creator as any contemporary innovator; only his horizon and intentions differed according to the unique time-and-space-specific circumstances of his time. To encounter Müntzer, then, is to encounter this dynamic spirit in operation. To learn from Müntzer—to be challenged by Müntzer—is not to carry forward the historical baggage of his times, including the positions he affirmed and the counter-positions he denied, but to learn of his moral courage and fortitude in the face of opposition to do what he, living in the tension between transcended and transcendent self, decided what the right thing was to do. Moral courage, fortitude, resiliency, the transformation of suffering, dispassionate intelligence, an inquiring mind—all these and more are as much a challenge for us today as they were back then. The only difference now is that we have, as a species, far too much power to influence events and

far too little regulatory skill to exert control. Now the consequences of dark hatreds as opposed to love, of self-seeking as opposed to seeking the good of order, of living in a world of naïve realism rather than the interiority of intellectual conversion are so much greater.

*A Strange Sort of Christian*

But there's a huge difference between me and Müntzer, a difference manifested in ways in which we enter into social life. Müntzer was a highly social person, embedded in hundreds of social relationships that included ministering to those living in Allstedt. But he was not a political animal. My foundational stance is highly political yet not at all social—a seeming contradiction when it comes to Professional Practice. Yet it is this very lack of a social sense, in its most immediate manifestation in human interactions, that allows for the development of this notion of Professional Practice at a time when the vast majority of people are content to do what they do without taking advantage of the body of knowledge of what it means to be human acquired through the dispassionate and disinterested investigations of sociologists, social psychologists and other scientific observers of the human scene.

From my very first encounter with Müntzer (through his correspondence), it was clear that if I was a Christian I was a most particular type of Christian. To some extent this was nothing new. I already understood that I didn't go for the social "community" of being Christian, that my interests were not on the intersubjectivity between human beings, that conversion though real was not a matter of conceiving Christ as ruler of all (a Constantine requirement). For me, Christ while divine was an elder brother I could relate to in the same way I can relate to Müntzer; The Holy Spirit permeated and galvanized all of human life toward transcendence; and the Father ruled over all with an awesome might and power. The dual nature of Christ was necessary both to understand and appreciate the incarnate message of his life of suffering and the affirmed reality of his resurrection on the part of his early followers. While there is no experiential evidence that Christ rose from the dead, we do have the evidence provided by early followers of the Way who

understood and affirmed the reality of this event. To face Jesus' question, "Who do you say I am" and to answer it as they did is to understand the core of Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

Whether or not this is correct (whether it accords with the time-tested doctrines of the Church), whether my own understanding is flawed to the point that I have distorted "real" Christianity, is a crucial question for assessing the reliability of my own horizon and intentions when it comes to incorporating the Divine Mystery into emerging ideas of Professional Practice. In a sense, the answer to this question depends on the level of my own conversion—especially as they relate to Lonergan's notion of a universal viewpoint. If my foundational stance does not have the potentiality of rising to a universal viewpoint, then any understanding or appreciation of Christianity will automatically be compromised.

### *Descriptive Differences*

Two questions began to emerge. First, what was this difference between Christian practices and my own emerging understanding of Christianity? And second, how to explain this descriptive difference? For I suspected that Christians like Müntzer and similarly devout people of our own time can understand each other: they speak the same language, live in the same world-mediated-by-meaning. Yet I don't understand them, even if I do share a number of fundamental Christian positions.

The best description that highlights the differences goes back to those three questions of Sean McEventue: In what realm of meaning, or human activity, does the Speaker expect revelation or salvation to occur? In what precise way is salvation or revelation expected to be experienced by the Speaker/reader? What demands upon the reader, what conversions and what

---

<sup>7</sup> Like this encounter with Müntzer, meeting Christ involves both the Father and the Holy Ghost through the impact that they have on human affairs. But it is important to keep clear the difference between the work of all three of the Triune God in Müntzer's time or in Christ's time, and the movement all three evoke in the unique time-and-space-specific circumstances of our own times. The common sense of another time, now lost to all except specialists in these areas, cannot be brought wholesale into the common sense of our own cultural matrix.

practices, are implied and demanded by this foundational expectancy?<sup>8</sup> When these questions were raised in the particular group referred to in Chapter Two, my own responses had to do with planning and policy making. Of the three others who were asked these questions, one responded that salvation lay in asking questions, while the other two found family life to be the key.<sup>9</sup>

Was the key difference, then, to be found in foundational expectations between two extremes: interpersonal relationships within family, tribe or clan and the “rational” objective tasks of deciding on proper courses of action that result from group efforts to set policy and work out plans of action? No wonder my “Christianity” is so different; no wonder that I’ve had to work out for myself various ways to make sense of the higher intersubjective personal involvement with Jesus and the demands of planning and policy-making. The result, as crude and untested as it is, was objectified in Chapter Two.<sup>10</sup>

This may describe the differences, but how to explain why I chose an explanatory theory of Christianity over a personal response? The first real clue to the nature of these differences came while reading Rosemary Haughton’s *The Transformation of Man*.<sup>11</sup> In order to create a common experience, she starts with the story of two children:

Two children are quarrelling. One is a boy, aged twelve, imaginative, touchy, withdrawn. The other is a girl aged eight, obstinate, impulsive, generous. It could have been any other two children, or any grown-ups, of any age and any assortment of temperaments. But people are never any age or any temperament, only their own at a given moment, and what is common is only real in what is particular. So these two particular human beings are engaged in that most frequent of human occupations—disagreement.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> McEvenue, *Interpreting the Pentateuch* (1990), 62.

<sup>9</sup> These questions were put to the four original members of the *Word in the World* team of graduate students in Theological Studies, as part of a series of group development sessions. I suspect that in most congregations people would relate to the realm of intersubjective family life. At times church life seems to me to be more social event than Christian discipleship, but then I’m prejudiced in this matter.

<sup>10</sup> One has to start somewhere, and this is where I start. The important point is not the starting place but whether the person has the capacity or potential to follow the data where ever that data may lead. If so, then further inquiries will lead to a closer approximation of the truth; if not, then the truth—that intelligibility what ever it may be in the mind of God—will be truncated, distorted at some fundamental level that mistakes Christianity as understood by God for a more human creation.

<sup>11</sup> Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community* (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1980). One of the most important transitional periods of Müntzer’s life was a religious transformation—a direct gift of the Holy Spirit—that changed in a fundamental way his understanding of (reformed) Christian life. Trying to understand Haughton’s work, and finding her world both strange and bewildering, started a major transformation of my understanding of myself.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

She describes what was going on in their minds and in the mind of their mother who had to deal with a dispute between them. For five pages, Haughton delves into their mental states and the ongoing interpersonal dynamic between all three—and I didn't understand a word of it.

To be more precise, I didn't understand how she could understand the minds of these three people in such rich and personal detail. Even granted she was a woman and hence more likely to be aware of subtiles of human social dynamics than most men, there was still a level of appreciation that I should have had yet did not—something key when it comes to objectifying my own foundational stance. It took over a year of further research to isolate the particular skill that she had and I had not (or rather that she was a genius at while my own skill level was at best rudimentary): she was gifted at reading minds.

#### *Accounting for these Differences*

Reading minds is a highly specialized skill that human beings develop at an early age. It accounts for the high levels of intersubjectivity and mutual awareness among human beings, an essential survival skill for living in complex hierarchical social and political tribes and clans where being able to understand the intentions and purposes of others may make the difference between life and death. It is a skill so automatic, so nearly instantaneous, that we are not aware of what we are doing. It takes an explanatory theory to reveal the essence of what is going on. One such theory is that of mindblindness, by Simon Baron-Cohen.

The "Theory of Mind" hypothesis maintains that:

You and I are mindreaders. I don't mean that we have any special telepath; I just mean that we have the capacity to imagine or represent states of mind that we or others might hold. Mindreading is nothing mysterious; however . . . it is impressive.

Notice that . . . our way of thinking about mental states is prefixed by 'maybe.' We are never 100 percent sure what others are thinking (since mental states are to some extent hidden from view), but we nevertheless find it easy to imagine what others may be thinking.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), 2.



It is important to have a clear idea of what mindreading entails:

Joe and Tim watched the children in the playground. Without saying a word, Joe nudged Tim and looked across at the little girl playing in the sandpit. Then he looked back at Tim and smiled. Tim nodded, and the two of them started off toward the girl in the sandpit.

As mindreaders, we make sense of the situation in mentalistic terms right from the start. For example, we might come up with a rather sinister reading of the situation:

Maybe Joe and Tim had a **plan** to do something nasty to one of the children. Joe **wanted** Tim to **know** that their victim was to be the little girl in the sandpit, and he **indicated** this by the direction of his gaze. Tim **recognized** Joe's **intention** and nodded to tell Joe he had **understood** the **plan**. Then they went over to the little girl, who was **unaware** of what was about to happen.

Or we might come up with a more rosy reading of the situation.

Maybe Joe **wanted** to point out to Tim who it would be fun to play with. Tim **agreed** with Joe's **idea**, so they went over to ask the little girl in the sandpit if she **wanted** to play.

Not that both of these interpretations are littered with mental-state concepts and with terms that express these concepts (Just look at the bold type.) Indeed, it is hard for us to make sense of behaviour in any other way than via the mentalistic (or 'intentional') framework. We just can't help doing it this way; . . . it is a consequence of our biology.

When someone points out all this mindreading to you, it hits you with some force. Recall the apocryphal man who was shocked to discover he had been speaking in prose all his life. We mindread all the time, effortlessly, automatically, and mostly unconsciously. That is, we are often not even aware we are doing it—until we stop to examine the words and concepts that we are using.<sup>14</sup>

It is possible to explain my own understanding of Christianity if I tend not to make sense of situations in mentalistic terms from the very start; instead, I usually rely on explanatory theory to make sense of human behaviour (explanatory theory also provides a deeper level of understanding that goes beyond surface appearances). If so, this not only explains a preference for the sciences, where one is concerned with things and the relationships between things as opposed to the humanities where the emphasis is on words, but a recurrent difficulty with metalanguage or the pragmatics of human communication—that unspoken exchange of meaning that constitutes a good 90% of all human communication. Without a deep awareness of this exchange, arrived at through the neurological modules that provide human beings with an almost instantaneous understanding of another's state of mind, one is left with the objective communication—what is actually said—as the sole governor of meaning. This poses problems, for there are actually two

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3.

purposes to language—one to reveal, the other to conceal—that can only be differentiated through a highly tuned sensitivity to deception and misdirection.

But for anyone concerned with understanding the true state of affairs rather than the apparent common sense appreciation of reality, this inability to quickly and easily read minds is a boon. For better or worse, and it certainly makes human relationships a highly problematic matter, the mind is free from the tacit rules and codes that otherwise interfere with the dynamism of the human spirit to know. Topics such as Islamic Jihad or the Anglophobia of Quebec's political class can be considered in their own right without having to take into account prevailing unwritten codes that forbid these and other topics from ever being mentioned in polite company. Even though I have a high drive to succeed according to conventional standards of success (see "Autodidactic"), since modified through adopting as best I can the intelligible standards of the Divine Mystery, I have an even greater need to know at least in outline all that there is to know. It is to those who seek to know that I give my allegiance, that I stand for; all others are relegated to counter-positions unless convinced otherwise. This is my immediate problem with Christianity as currently practiced, for at times it seems to me to be more concerned with the irrational and unintelligent—hence a need to study theology to start to free my mind of such misconceptions, if these they are, and find out what those who seriously think about Christianity actually believe. Such a quest is undertaken not to support my own beliefs, but as a way of trying to understand the Divine Mystery's understanding of the universe.

#### *A Mathematical Mind?*

There is a curious connection between my interest in the functional speciality of Foundations and a long term interest in mathematics (history of math and biographies of mathematicians—not to mention computer programming, game theory, etc.): math deals with fundamentals, i.e. the basic way in which we conceive. Game theory deals with the underlying essentials of interactions involving a number of people all interested in a given issue, providing the basic conceptual terms

for understanding the dynamics. Probability and statistics deals with chance, useful not only in understanding the worldview of emergent probability but for understanding the common mistakes non-mathematical people make when it comes to understanding coincidence and random occurrences.

This is a further reduction in horizons. It's clear that I don't share a humanities approach to theology, far preferring a social science approach (key indicators of authenticity, explanatory higher perspective in Trinitarian doctrine, basic doctrine set for Christianity [incarnation, resurrection and atonement—atonement being the reason for the incarnation, which itself is proved true through the resurrection of Christ]). But there's a further reduction within this social science approach of "professional practice" and that is the pure "mathematical" expression of the true fundamentals, grounded in dialectics for sure yet not grounded in any experimental verifications understood as social science "research." Mind you, such research probably belongs in the functional speciality of Systematics rather than Foundations, while Foundations has its own data set in Doctrines and the notion of conversion.

It is also clear from this encounter with Müntzer that I do not care for evangelical work, with rhetoric, or with the functional speciality of Communications.

What I find interesting is that my horizon seems to be less that of a social scientist, applied or otherwise, and more of a mathematician interested in underlying truths. Certainly the Moral Horizon sketched out in Chapter Two resembles a form of mathematical analysis laid out in point form then a humanities or even social science approach to encountering the Divine Mystery. In fact, it is one way to give form to that encounter with the source of intelligibility and love, to tighten up the language and explore the relationships between the different components irrespective of one's personal involvement with God.

Müntzer's mind was neither mathematical nor explanatory—although his commentary on the mass certainly displays a depth of explanation based on the bible as understood through his own experience of a spiritual conversion. His was the familiar world of persuading and being

persuaded, of instructing and being instructed, of acting with authority and listening with patience—all familiar to the humanities' student. His use of images in his sermons and writings suggest a strong attachment to the oral traditions of the past, understandable in terms of the rhetoric of the day, yet devoid of that academic approach that he so detested in Luther and the other classically trained reformers. His was a personal world, a common sense world that relates everything to human interests, a transformed world reorganized through a spiritual experience into a holy world—or at least a world that could be transformed if people so wished.

Bridgman puts my dilemma into focus:

An honest question, as distinguished from a rhetorical question, implies an answer, and 'answer' implies the property of being 'right' or 'wrong', and 'right' or 'wrong' operationally implies the possibility of making some sort of test to determine whether the answer is right or wrong (at least I find this implication in the way that people ordinarily use the words right and wrong). Now it is possible to frame questions in such form that the very wording itself rules out, either explicitly or implicitly, the possibility of making any test to determine whether an answer is 'right' or 'wrong'. There is, for example, the celebrated question of W. K. Clifford; 'May not the entire universe be uniformly contracting in dimensions, everything together, our standards of length as well as everything else?' The physicist reacts to this question without the slightest hesitation, for the operations by which he defines length demand comparison with a standard, and if the standards themselves are 'changing', what shall we mean by a change of length? In other words, the question is so framed as to make impossible any check of the correctness of the answer, and it thus defeats its ostensible purpose. The physicist would describe such a question as 'meaningless'. If he asked such a question in the first place, this analysis would show him that he did not accomplish what he wanted to with the question, for the question fails to correspond in an important respect to the actual situation. The physicist has come to recognize that it is unpleasantly easy to put words together into formal questions which admit of no possible operational check on the correctness of the answer, and in making this recognition and in learning to avoid 'meaningless' questions he has acquired an important tool in aid of precise thinking. He recognizes, furthermore, that this is merely a special case of the more general fact that words sometimes become our masters.

How will the theologian or mystic react to Clifford's question? At least some will say that there is perfectly definite meaning in the question, because there is such a thing as absolute length, independent of any standards of length, namely the length perceived in the mind of God. As before, the meaning of 'perceived in the mind of God' must be sought operationally in what the mystic does in applying this concept to the present situation. The meaning which the mystic attaches to length is also operational, as well as the meaning of the physicist, but the operations and therefore the meanings are different. Observation will show that the operations of the mystic include arguing for some system of philosophy. An important difference between the physicist and the mystic is to be found in their estimates of the significance of the respective operations and in their underlying purposes. The purpose of the physicist is tacitly to find some method of dealing 'correctly' with the 'external' world. His experience as a physicist has so convinced him of the futility of the method of the mystic for this purpose that it simply does not occur to him as a possibility, and he brusquely characterizes the question 'meaningless'.

This is doubtless an extreme example, but it makes the point. As long as one is dealing with as homogeneous a body of people as physicists with as definitely understood a common purpose, one may profitably talk about 'meaningless' questions in the sense just discussed. . . . But now that the inquiry is to be extended to cover activities so remote from physics as that of the mystic I believe that the use of 'meaningless' in this somewhat technical sense may sometimes lead to confusion, for

obviously the mystic did ‘mean’ something by his question in spite of the fact that it would have been impossible for a physicist to go on asking the question after he had discovered the implications.<sup>15</sup>

Such is the problem with the break-down in valuation.

There’s also a profound difference between a spectator attitude and caring about what one is doing that has nothing to do with intelligence or innate ability. In Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*, he runs into the mystery of non- or anti-technical people who avoid having anything to do with machines even though they know that even a rudimentary knowledge would help. He determines that the issue for such people is not technology or even one’s position on technology; it is a question of caring. They simply do not care about technology, and don’t want to care. Not caring means snap judgements, quick and often foolish assumptions that play havoc with getting things done. It means hurrying through a task because you either want to be somewhere else or doing something else.<sup>16</sup> It is as if one went to a concert, sat down to enjoy the opening chords only to realize that the keys to the car were in the car and the car had been left unlocked on the street. How can one enjoy the concert when one wants to be out on the street and how can one get out on the street when the concert has already started?

Ultimately, Pirsig uses a dichotomy to understand two kinds of thinking.

I want to divide human understanding into two kinds—classical understanding and romantic understanding. In terms of ultimate truth a dichotomy of this sort has little meaning but it is quite legitimate when one is operating within the classic mode used to discover or create a world of underlying form. The terms *classic* and *romantic* . . . mean the following:

A classical understanding sees the world primarily as underlying form itself. A romantic understanding sees it primarily in terms of immediate appearance. If you were to show an engine or a mechanical drawing or electronic schematic to a romantic it is unlikely he would see much of interest in it. It has no appeal because the reality he sees is its surface. Dull, complex lists of names, lines and numbers. Nothing interesting. But if you were to show the same blueprint or schematic or give the same description to a classical person he might look at it and then become fascinated by it because he sees that within the lines and shapes and symbols is a tremendous richness of underlying form.

The romantic mode is primarily inspirational, imaginative, creative, intuitive. Feelings rather than facts predominate. ‘Art’ when it is opposed to ‘science’ is often romantic. It does not proceed by reason or by laws. It proceeds by feeling, intuition and esthetic conscience. In the northern European cultures the romantic mode is usually associated with femininity, but this is certainly not a necessary association.

---

<sup>15</sup> P. W. Bridgman, *The Intelligent Individual and Society* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1938), 75-77.

<sup>16</sup> Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: Bantam, 1974), 26-27.

The classic mode, by contrast, proceeds by reason and by laws—which are themselves underlying forms of thought and behaviour. In the European cultures it is primarily a masculine mode and the fields of science, law and medicine are unattractive to women largely for this reason. . . .

Although surface ugliness is often found in the classic mode of understanding it is not inherent in it. There is a classic esthetic which romantics often miss because of its subtlety. The classic style is straightforward, unadorned, unemotional, economical and carefully proportioned. Its purpose is not to inspire emotionally, but to bring order out of chaos and make the unknown known. It is not an esthetically free and natural style. It is esthetically restrained. Everything is under control. Its value is measured in terms of the skill with which this control is maintained.

To a romantic this classic mode often appears dull, awkward and ugly, like mechanical maintenance itself. Everything is in terms of pieces and parts and components and relationships. Nothing is figured out until it's run through the computer a dozen times. Everything's got to be measured and proved. Oppressive. Heavy. Endlessly grey. The death force.

Within the classic mode . . . the romantic has some appearances of his own. Frivolous, irrational, erratic, untrustworthy, interested primarily in pleasure-seeking. Shallow. Of no substance. Often a parasite who cannot or will not carry his own weight. A real drag on society. By now these battle lines should sound a little familiar.

This is the source of the trouble. Persons tend to think and feel exclusively in one mode or the other and in doing so tend to misunderstand and underestimate what the other mode is all about. But no one is willing to give up the truth as he sees it, and as far as I know, no one living has any real reconciliation of these truths or modes. There is no point at which these visions of reality are unified.<sup>17</sup>

And there are interesting misperceptions. Pirsig uses motorcycle maintenance as an analogy to classical (or explanatory) thinking. His description of a mechanic solving a problem is exactly what I experience when working with fluent wordsmiths, who are often not aware of either the underlying diagnostic process or the realm of interiority.

[The mechanic] sets up hypotheses for these and tests them. By asking the right questions and choosing the right tests and drawing the right conclusions the mechanic works his way down the echelons of the motorcycle hierarchy until he has found the exact specific cause or causes of the engine failure, and then he changes them so that they no longer cause the failure.

An untrained observer will see only physical labor and often get the idea that physical labor is mainly what the mechanic does. Actually the physical labor is the smallest and easiest part of what the mechanic does. By far the greatest part of his work is careful observation and precise thinking. That is why mechanics sometimes seem so taciturn and withdrawn when performing tests. They don't like it when you talk to them because they are concentrating on mental images, hierarchies, and not really looking at you or the physical motorcycle at all. They are using the experiment as part of a program to

---

<sup>17</sup> Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: Bantam, 1974), 66-68. The synthesis lies in Lonergan's "higher perspective", which brings all forms of human understanding into a common framework based on the implications of the common cognitive operations of the human mind. The "romantic" corresponds with dramatic and aesthetic patterns of experience in the realm of common sense intelligence, while "classical" thought belongs to the explanatory realm of classical and statistical heuristic structures.

This difference is inherent in the notion of Professional Practice: the "romantic" world of things as they relate to us is essential to Orientation; the "classical" world to Diagnosis & Evaluation. Using Lonergan's "higher perspective" it is possible to bring both together as part of a comprehensive and cohesive planning or policy-making process designed to bring relevant knowledge together from a number of diverse sources. In many ways, the notion of Professional Practice is my schematic for understanding human behavior.

expand their hierarchy of knowledge of the faulty motorcycle and compare it to the correct hierarchy in their mind. They are looking at underlying form.<sup>18</sup>

Müntzer was not a “classical” thinker; with his images, sermons and various publications he clearly belongs to the artistic and dramatic side of human living. He doesn’t explain Christian faith as much as seek to ground it in personal experience, especially in the drama of salvation through suffering. That I recognize this is a function of my own preferred mode: my encounter with him took place in the “classical” (explanatory) rather than aesthetic and dramatic (common sense) mode of understanding.

There is a curious “side-effect” to the explanatory mind: outdated theories are cast aside in favour of current validated laws and principles at what-ever level of explanation they are to apply. No serious scientist ever studies “ether” or elements of alchemy; they have been set aside as inadequate theories some time ago. However, scholarly thinking may consider Aristotle or Aquinas as “outdated”, yet still study such masters for the insights they provide into history and into the student’s own attempt to reach up to the mind of such masters. While this encounter has shown the need for both kinds of thinking, my own tendency is to ignore or set aside any explanation that is not compatible with a metaphysics and ethics grounded in proportionate being, i.e. created through the cognitive operations of the human mind.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: Bantam, 1974), 103. The formal structure of Professional Practice takes that classical form of hierarchical knowledge (see appendix II for details). When faced with a problem, the practitioner—like the mechanic—has to sort through these hierarchies, trace problem symptoms to their explanatory roots, design ways to test these hypotheses, carry out the tests, and pull everything together to correct the situation. The hierarchical form of Professional Practices contains the ideal against which the current situation is evaluated.

<sup>19</sup> The notion of proportionate being seems to refer to the different levels of existing that are operative in the human mind. At the lowest level, that of experiencing, we “passively” taste, smell, hear, touch and see. At the next highest level, that of understanding, we become detectives engaged in giving form to the potential in data. At the level judging, we act to create reality, affirming that such-and-such is true and therefore real, or false and therefore imaginary. At the level of deciding, we enter a state of existence in which we affirm true value, where we in a sense create ourselves. Finally (at least for me), there is a further level of love, the acceptance of which fundamentally changes who we are. Being is thus proportionate, dependent upon the current level at which our minds are operating; but proportionate being is also a unity, for the various stages operate together in common purpose. Proportionate being thus grounds both metaphysics and ethics as part of the dynamism of the human mind that ultimately leads to transcendent knowledge born of love.

“Proportionate being may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” *Insight*, 391. Although true, this neat definition hides the fact that

## Religiosity

Müntzer's age was a religious age; the very order of the universe depended on Christian beliefs. Answers to religious questions made a difference between being part of the legitimate Church order or being an outcast, a rebel, a disturber of the peace. Take for example the eleven questions George Spalatin, court preacher of Weimar, put to Müntzer: they were designed to elicit his beliefs before the formal authorities of the Church. What surprises me, a fact that sheds lights on my foundational stance, is that these questions obviously had great meaning for Müntzer's time but little or no meaning for me. They made a difference.

The questions challenging Thomas Müntzer in 1523 were:

1. Which, and what, is truly Christian faith?
2. How is faith born?
3. Where does one seek faith and enquire about it?
4. How can faith be secured?
5. How are we to be taught faith to our profit and well-being?
6. How can we be sure of our faith?
7. How can, and ought, each individual test his faith?
8. Who are the true followers of Christ?
9. What are the trials under which faith is born, bears seed, and grows?
10. How can faith maintain itself under trials and emerge as conqueror?
11. Which faith saves and how?

Among other things, for this work is also meant to be an exposition of Matthew 16, Müntzer answers these questions in *On Counterfeit Faith* (December 1523). Perhaps question # 8 rings a bell, for does my "moral horizon" of Chapter Two gain me entry into the Body of Christ? But

---

higher levels subsume lower, so that the choice of terminal values at the level of deciding also changes what is to be understood at lower levels of experiencing, understanding and judging. This is particularly evident at the level of experiencing, for our world-mediated-by-meaning guides our senses to the point where things outside our horizon are literally not experienced.

While it is certainly useful to compare this approach to that of other philosophers, the comparison only goes to show the inadequacies of the counter-position to fully explain the data. Lonergan does this at least twice in *Insight*: first in contrasting his world-view of emergent probability with the world-views of Aristotle, Galileo, Darwin and the current indeterminism of quantum mechanics (128-128), second in the dialectic of method in metaphysics, where deductive methods, universal doubt, empiricism, common-sense eclecticism, Hegelian Dialectic and the combination of scientific method and philosophy are compared with Lonergan's generic method that grounds metaphysics in proportionate being (410-429).



other than that, these questions—in this form—have little or no meaning within my foundational stance (they fall outside my horizon of legitimate questions). While I can understand how such questions would be crucial for any Christian at a time when traditional patterns of faith are falling by the wayside in an explosion of cultural worlds mediated by meaning mixed with the polymorphism of human consciousness, they have meaning only as tests—or rather criteria—for assessing the state of one's own faith and the faith expressions of others. In other words, these may well be control questions designed not only to sort the unchristian heretic from the true Christian but to guide true Christians into a better understanding of their own faith.

Part of the reason these questions have little meaning for me is that in my foundational stance the burden of proof lies with Christians, not with those engaged in being responsible members of an open society. Does Christianity meet the dynamism of the human mind to understand itself and the universe as upright and moral beings involved in the continual tension between transcended and transcending self? How well does the Christian foundational stance, expressed in doctrines, explained in systematics and presented in ecclesial life from small parishes to the grand See in Rome, meet these transcending needs? Do Christians of all stripes show an understanding of the problems and issues of our times, or do they retreat into a world that either dismisses these problems or imposes meaning upon the world-mediated-by-meaning of others without taking into account the protestations of others?<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> These questions reveal an horizon where religion is on the outskirts, rather far away from the intentions and concerns of someone raised in an Enlightenment age of scientific development, post-agricultural economies, and regulatory problems stemming from an overage (as opposed to a shortage) of people living within a fixed resource base. Yet, they are legitimate questions even for Christians of deep faith, for the core question behind them all is whether or not the Church (considered in a broad sense) is still living in a past that no longer exists. This is a particularly acute problem for anyone with my type of design/planning background who, having accepted fully the presence of a Divine Mystery grounding the universe in intelligibility, is interested in getting closer to the truth of what is going on. The gap between the language of religious expression and thought is too far from the language of explanatory scientific thought and the process mind (how does it work?) of post-agricultural industrial and commercial worlds-mediated-by-meaning. It is as impossible to talk about faith and grace in an urban planning meeting as it is to talk about the three preplanning stages of Orientation, Diagnosis and Evaluation, and Estimating Scope and Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change at a Synod meeting. Yet from my perspective both bodies would improve if what they now neglect is admitted into their respective horizons.

As far as salvation goes, there is also a sharp difference. Without going into theological subtleties that I am not equipped to handle, Luther found salvation in faith, the medieval Church in its mediating activities, and I in my own reaction to standing before God at the time of my death. This latter operational definition of salvation (based partly on latent desires to please my father, partly on the desire to give expression to the dynamism of the human spirit toward transcendence, and partly on the Protestant ideal of individual responsibility for the state of one's own soul) places me at the moment of death before God. At this moment I will know for the first time the real and true meaning of my life, for this will be revealed through being in God's presence and not my own world-mediated-by-meaning emerging over time in that shift from a sensate to Divine world of the triune community. At that moment it will not be God's judgement that will bring me into his realm or consign me to "hell", it will be mine. If I can stand before God knowing truly who I am, filled with all my mistakes and errors and inadvertent pain that I have caused others, and still remain there because I prefer goodness, then I am "saved." If I can't stand being in the presence of God and immediately turn to flee, then I am "doomed to hell for all eternity." Since isening postulates a point with no extension, it is for ever and for no time at all.

But the situation is quite different if salvation is to be found in correct faith—a situation complicated in Müntzer's time by the reality of Christendom. When the Church claimed total power over the world-mediated-by-meaning, not to belong to that world is to be cast outside not only worldly affairs but down into the pits of hell. And the medieval imagination was quite good at devising images of eternal torment.

At some point in this encounter with Müntzer I realized that my foundational position concerning the Church is far more Protestant than Roman Catholic. Without being consciously aware of it, I've taken the position the Roman Catholic Church's claim to act as mediator between man and God is a counter-position to the revised role of priest as minister equally

---

The question is remarkable similar to the tension in Müntzer's time between the churches' requirements for membership and the spiritual needs of human beings.

involved with spiritual direction, religious education and a deepening discernment concerning God's likes and dislikes—but without any special mediating powers. It is within this position that taking personal responsibility for crafting one's own self through dialectics and foundations becomes a good and desirable intention, and that I prefer at some gut level an open rather than closed society. For part of the problem of a mediating Church organized around one greater redeemer is that it sets up a pattern of dependence that in the past has opposed the dynamism of the human spirit:

We forget—and the young people don't know since they don't read history—that we are heirs of two thousand years, more or less, of a most tyrannical regime, beside which Hitler, Stalinism, are babes. Not that modern tyrants have not learned from the churches, some consciously. About the time of the First World War, the churches lost their teeth and ceased to become the major influence on our Western societies. Now they are amiable, often orientated towards work that is indistinguishable from social and charitable work, infinitely divided, and while some of the sects are totalitarian, it is not possible for the Church—as was the case till only yesterday, historically speaking—to dominate a whole society as the sole arbiter of conduct and thought. But for two thousand years Europe was under a tyrant—the Christian church—which allowed no other way of thinking, cut off all influences from outside, did not hesitate to kill, extirpate, persecute, burn and torture in the name of God. To remember this history is not for the sake of keeping alive the memories of old tyrannies, but to recognize present tyranny, for these patterns are in us still. It would be strange if they were not.<sup>21</sup>

These patterns run deep (I find traces in my own thinking). They are also surprisingly similar to Müntzer's own radical and revolutionary program.

Communists and socialists believe that the system in which we live is evil, that capitalists and businessmen are wicked, at the best well meaning, that there is no way out of this except by total change, almost certainly violent—a revolution that will demand blood and sacrifices. Extremists and fanatics of the Right and the Left believe that this change will be accomplished by a leader, to whom extravagant homage is given. There will be a period after the change-over from one system to another of much adjustment and preparation and discomfort—you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs—but the people must be purged of their errors that stem from the past. And after this purgative period, there will ensue a time of absolute happiness and fulfilment, full socialism, full communism, when sin will cease to exist. This is the structure of Christian thinking and the structure of political thinking on the Left and of many political groups not on the Left, but who believe in violent and drastic change because all heretics and evil ones have to be hounded to their deaths or 're-educated.'

Described like this, it sounds like a kind of lunacy—which it is. A lunacy of immense strength.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Lessing, *Prisons* (1986), 30.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32. On the other hand, Alasdair MacIntyre describes the basic Christian theme as:

God is our father. God commands us to obey him. We ought to obey God because he knows what is best for us, and what is best for us is to obey him. We fail to obey him and so become estranged from him. We therefore need to learn how to be reconciled to God so that we can once more live in a familial relationship with him. These themes are of course susceptible of doctrinal development in a number of quite different directions.

Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 111. Phrased in this way, Christianity seems less a kind of lunacy—although it is a position that only makes sense if one

That is one way to understand Müntzer, as a lunatic of immense strength. The leader is not Müntzer, who is but a prophet of the true leader, Jesus Christ, Son of God. And for Müntzer the errors of his time were many, from the rapacious behaviour of princes and kings to the equal avarice of the Archbishops, from counterfeit faith found in scripture or in the mediating role of the Church, and so forth. Redemption through the Spirit given depth in this “vale of tears.” The pattern is all there, including the ultimate theme of revolution against the evil and deceived people who had lost their way. With the elect, all would be turned around and peace restored once again on earth. It is this underlying pattern that lays waste to his message of spiritual rebirth, of cultivating a league of true Christians, of seeking to improve the world according to God’s

---

belongs to a Judaic-based religious tradition. Note that a ‘familial relationship’ belongs to the realm of common sense meaning.

There is also a central paradox in Christianity: both Jesus and Paul expected the immanent reign of God—Jesus of the Last Days and Paul of the coming of the resurrected Christ. But this never happened. Instead Christians were left in history to live with an ethics devised with the end of history in sight. When such an orientation dominates the existing world-mediated-by-meaning, as it easily can when situations seems dire, only an apocalyptic diagnosis and evaluation serves to make sense of what is going on. This is what happened to Müntzer, and it destroyed him. Even if one believes in the reality of both Transcendent Being and transcendental knowledge, as I do, this is a misleading evaluation of what is really going forward is history and the diagnosis of a falling away from God—though perhaps true in a common sense way—does not expose the real roots of the dysfunctional situation. Arthur Koestler has to my mind a better diagnosis:

From the dawn of civilization there has never been a shortage of inspired reformers. Hebrew prophets, Greek philosophers, Chinese sages, Indian mystics, Christian saints, French humanists, English utilitarians, German moralists, American pragmatists, Hindu pacifists, have denounced war and violence and appealed to man’s better nature, without success. . . . The reason for this failure must be sought in the reformer’s mistaken interpretation of the causes which compelled man to make such a disaster of his history, prevent him from learning the lessons of the past, and which now puts his survival in question. The basic fallacy consists in putting all the blame on man’s selfishness, greed and alleged destructiveness; that is to say, on the *self-assertive tendency* of the individual. Nothing could be further from the truth, as both the historical and psychological evidence indicate.

. . . throughout human history, the ravages caused by excesses of individual self-assertion are quantitatively negligible compared to the numbers slain *ad majorem gloriam* out of a self-transcending devotion to a flag, a leader, a religious faith or political convictions. Man has always been prepared not only to kill, but also to die for good, bad, or completely hare-brained causes. What can be more valid proof for the reality of the urge towards self-transcendence?

Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (London: Pan, 1978), 77-78. This is of course Lonergan’s group bias. While Koestler is correct, he does miss a deeper cause of decline: a general common sense bias that over the long term fragments society into smaller and smaller pieces of intelligibility surrounded by a growing world constructed of various irrationalities and social surds.

standards. This is an excellent example of utopian thinking to mobilize a wide number of people around a common cause.

This is one of the reasons I find Müntzer so hard: my foundational stance places him as yet another misguided and misleading radical out to change the world in one foul swoop. Compared to that, his theology, his spirituality, his evangelical achievements are next to nothing. Part of me resonates at least emotionally with his radical approach, but for me this is the easy way out. Far harder is finding the underlying forms of change and principles of direction that will mean more in the long run, for radical change often does little more than set up a historical precedence for more radical change that continues to play havoc with the good of order.

Yet if that pattern of thinking is stripped away? I realize that for me at this point in time other religions than Judeo-Christian need not apply (this is not to say that they are wrong, only incomplete when it comes to reaching an adequate higher perspective on human affairs). Ignoring for the moment the possibility that the various confessional faiths and the variety of expressions of being Jewish are tainted by an unauthenticity due to homo sapiens' moral incapacity to follow the good for any extended period of time, I "know" without exactly knowing how I know that Jewish/Christian worlds-mediated-by-meaning sets the only proper course to working out fundamental principles for human development.<sup>23</sup>

I also find that like Müntzer I rely on an internal sense of discernment apparently granted by the Spirit. While it goes against my personality to rant and rave in the style of Müntzer (at least out loud!), I do find an internal unease when dealing with a scholarly or ecclesial approach to understanding—not that such understanding of Church and Scripture is inaccurate or misleading,

---

<sup>23</sup> Cultures or civilizations that reach the stage where it becomes possible to plan for their own development run into a paradox: the knowledge necessary to develop adequate strategies exists only at the end of the process, not the beginning. It is as if one asked a small child to design a plan of study for her own transition into adulthood. Her plans will reflect only what she knows of what she and her world is, not what she could or should be. What can be established are certain principles of development that can be used as guides to fuller being, e.g. the notion of transcendence arising from the unrestricted desire to know that challenges each level of understanding to ascend to a higher more comprehensive perspective, the world-view of emergent probability that explains how such higher systems come into being, and the transcendental injunctions that shift people into the tension of genuineness—the only assurance that we are moving toward the light and away from darkness.

just that in the thick of things it does seem irrelevant. I am surprised to find that for me a simple piety combined with an open mind filled with a dispassionate, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know has more appeal than scholarly research or ecclesial pronouncements. Müntzer had his Tauler; I have my de Mello.

Perhaps this is why I prefer a “toothless” rather than tyrannical Christianity: the very lack of power forces attention on really important matters. And the apparent radical in me is equally against Christianity as a purely social and charitable organization. But as this encounter has made clear to me, I may perceive a need for radical revisions especially in the way that we think but I would choose the gentlest of means to bring this about. Müntzer may have thrived on conflict; I certainly do not. The fact that both are there at a foundational level means a certain tension that in some ways defines my life, an intellectual demand made upon my more subjective tendency to withdraw from all conflict, all hostility.<sup>24</sup>

And there is one other factor. Christianity tends to be a very emotional religion that demands a personal affective response to Jesus and to the community of those followers of “The Way.” I find all such displays of emotion vaguely repugnant.

#### *Autodidactic*

It is surprising the extent to which both Müntzer and I are self-taught. We are avid readers of just about anything we can get our hands on; we buy books that interest us, even if money is tight; we need to have the world make sense to us, rather than accept the standard positions of academic or common sense intelligence; we ask questions that fall outside the horizon of most of our contemporaries; we spent years in universities without becoming part of the academic scene. And we both get in over our heads and have to struggle through as best we can (Müntzer with his

---

<sup>24</sup> This may or may not be true. I suspect that given power I would be as ungentle in operation as any other tyrant—perhaps more so given this bias toward success at any cost (see “Autodidactic”: the Enneagram THREE) combined with this lack in quickly reading the nonverbal aspects of human communication. But it is certainly true that my mind in seeking the underlying forms of what is going forward has reached a place where I would personally do not want to be.

evangelical reform movement, me with my notions of professional practice). And we are both innovators.

Part of this is due to my own limitations when it comes to interpreting the pragmatic elements of human communication, which means that I'm not subject to the same tacit agreements that govern most human thinking (there are no taboo subjects; being politically correct only distorts understanding; and I prefer clarity of thought and language over sliding meanings governed by human intersubjectivity). All this is definitely part of my foundational stance that explains my own position concerning a master's degree in theology: the idea of earning a degree for professional or other purposes is secondary to my own need to come to understand conversion and the way conversion operates to change who we are. Having to ask these questions within an academic context provides a better control over meaning than working on my own, but there is a drawback: I'm not "at home" in an academic theological setting simply because I find it hard to accept standard prejudgments and preunderstandings that tend to limit the current practice of theology.

Nor do I suspect that I want to become a theologian, in the sense of belonging to such a professional body. For me one of the dominant problems is the lack of communication between people who belong to different realms of meaning—scholarly, artistic, scientific, philosophic, common sense, etc. There is so much that is known in different fields, yet little or none of this knowledge makes its way into common sense planning and policy-making. This problem demands the type of work that Lonergan does in *Insight* and in *Method*, and so this is where I work.

Neither do I belong in traditional planning and policy-making circles. As an autodidact, I've been led by my own questions and by the data into realms where most planners and policy-makers fear to tread: the power of religion in human affairs, the need for ecological theory to ground economics, and participating in the emergence of a higher viewpoint of what it means to be human. In such areas, the dedicated amateur has far more scope than professionals who are

restricted by the demands of their profession. As uncomfortable a position as it might be, I still prefer that to the social and political limitations imposed by having to make a living off professional skills. The problem is that this runs in the face of another foundational position, one made at the early age of six or seven: a drive to be successful, success being defined by current norms of success.

Part of my investigations into objectifying my own foundational stance involved an understanding of the Enneagram. Unlike most personality profiles, the Enneagram system postulates an existential need for a decision to provide order and direction to our lives at that early age where we first encounter social realities outside of family and friends. According to this theory, there are a limited number of life paths—nine in all—that we can choose to take, and each one of them is only part of a whole self (the complete person would have all nine features, as Christ seems to have had). Without going into detail, and after a number of false starts, I've verified that my own bias is that of a THREE.<sup>25</sup>

THREES avoid *failure*. Something drives them to be always working for *success* in their lives. Their personality actually identifies with the successes they attain. Consequently, they will seek to avoid failure of any sort, even at great cost to themselves and others.

THREES move against their compulsion of aggressive behaviour by taking on the pride of the SIX, who characteristically says, "I am loyal" (to the norms of the group). SIXES, therefore, are faithful to relationships with the group. This fidelity gives them an acute sensitivity to the wishes of those in authority.

By moving toward the SIX, THREES take on a greater loyalty to their whole group of co-workers and make group norms binding on themselves. This prevents them from falling into their tendency to use the group for their own ends and advancement. They also need to take on the *conscience* of the SIX as formed by external authority. THREES tend to disregard laws and social norms in their quest to achieve their own ends. They take advantage of others, often through deceit. To avoid this lack of personal integrity, they benefit by submitting their business activities, as well as their private lives, to the moral code and civil laws. By taking on the self-image of loyal and obedient citizens and members of society, they move away from their compulsion to be successful at any cost. It is also important for THREES to take pride in being faithful and devoted to their family relationships because they tend to identify their lives with their ambitions.<sup>26</sup>

Was Muntzer a three? I'm not that much of an expert in the Enneagram to tell. But defining myself in terms of success, being an autodidact involved with my own projects and having what

---

<sup>25</sup> The Enneagram system uses numbers rather than names to designate the nine primary biases to avoid the distortions due to common images. It is traditional to use capital letters.

<sup>26</sup> Maria Beesing, O.P., Robert J. Nogosek, C.S.C., and Patrick H. O'Leary, S.J., *The Enneagram: A Journey of Self Discovery* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1984), 11, 161. Beesing's italics.



is sometimes known as the “ultimate male mind” (rational, non-relational—one outcome of not being able to “read minds” at the pragmatic level) are all part of who I am.<sup>27</sup> These facets of my personality have now been objectified.

The problem is that there is a paradox in my foundational stance: at the overt level I stand for an open society; at a covert level I stand for getting my own way. When it comes to bringing about change, the damage that this paradox can do is immense. For example, Saul Alinsky maintains that successful community organization rests on one principle:

‘The dignity of the individual.’

If you respect the dignity of the individual you are working with, then his desires, not yours; his values, not yours; his ways of working and fighting, not yours; his choice of leadership, not yours; his programs, not yours, are important and must be followed; except if his programs violate the high values of a free and open society. . .

It is difficult for people to believe that you really respect their dignity. After all, they know very few people, including their own neighbors, who do. But it is equally difficult for you to surrender that little image of God created in our own likeness, which lurks in all of us and tells us that we secretly believe that we know what’s best for the people.

. . . Denial of the opportunity for participation is the denial of human dignity and democracy. It will not work.<sup>28</sup>

And therein lies a problem: to use theology as a data source on conversion to be used as part of this emerging concept of professional practice, or to accept the bounds of ecclesial authority

---

<sup>27</sup> A clue might be Müntzer’s “I am powerful” attitude, if indeed that is what it is. This would make him an EIGHT, the type of compulsive personality that avoids weakness at any cost. Such people glory in being strong persons, something Müntzer expresses not only in his belief that one must undergo suffering in order to know true faith (the way of the cross) but in the uncertainties and risks of his own itinerant life. Another clue might be Müntzer’s sense of injustice, a strong indicator of EIGHTS who tend to see injustice everywhere. There is also the question of Müntzer’s “converted” self (in Enneagram terms of conversion, i.e., acting against the compulsive self). EIGHTS focus on what is unjust, something they will determine on their own. The converted EIGHT is released from this need to judge by moving toward service, in this case Jesus’ own way of dealing with injustice: compassion and forgiveness. In this way, such people avoid the tendency to sit in judgment over others rather than imposing their own sense of injustice.

It is interesting to speculate that Müntzer’s life may have been caught up in this need to work against his own compulsive self by seeking to be of service to others (evangelical spreading of the faith, revising the liturgy to meet new norms of priestly behaviour, compassion for the weak of the world). If true, this would explain the swings between lambasting the ecclesial and secular authorities on one hand and providing spiritual direction and ministering to his flock on the other.

<sup>28</sup> Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971), 122. The solution, mentioned above, is to move toward being a SIX.

and do this or other work within the Church? Either there is some way to resolve the differences, or it becomes necessary to set one or the other aside in favour of only one path.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> There are two positions, part of my foundational stance, that would make it hard to submit to the religious authority of any Christian denomination (given my level of foundational discernment, while Judaism—Christianity's roots—has a legitimate call, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam do not; even Zen Buddhism with its ideal of satori fails to meet the demands of the time).

The first position is well stated in a footnote in Rowan Williams' *On Christian Theology* (2000):

Angela Tilby (who has for some years done much to deepen the seriousness of religious broadcasting in the UK) writes in an essay entitled 'Spirit of the Age. A reflection on ten years of theology, television, mad vicars and magazines' (*Christian* vol. 5, no. 3 [1980]): 'I am disturbed to discover that the playwright Dennis Potter who has through this decade been intensely aware of the pain and ambiguity of our condition feels he *cannot* enter the community of formal Christian believing because he believes the jollity, the triviality and the half-truths masking suffering would deprive him of his power to write' (p. 12).

Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 40. This chapter on the judgment of the world was originally printed as "Postmodern Theology and the Judgment of the World" in *Postmodern Theology. Christian Faith in a Pluralist World*, ed. F. B. Burnham (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989), 92-112. Italics in the footnote.

The second position is a Lonerganian one, personally affirmed through a two plus year group slow-read of *Insight*, a communal process of self-affirmation of one's own rationality.

Essentially the problem [of liberation] lies in an incapacity for sustained development. The tension divides and disorients cognitive activity by the conflict of positions and counter-positions. This conflict issues into contrary views of the good which in turn make good will appear misdirected and misdirected will appear good. There follows the confounding of the social situation with the social surd to provide misleading inspiration for further insights, deceptive evidence for further judgments, and illusory causes to fascinate unwary wills.

The solution has to be a still higher integration of human living. For the problem is radical and permanent; it is independent of the underlying physical, chemical, organic, and psychic manifolds; it is not met by revolutionary change, nor by human discovery, nor by the enforced implementation of discovery; it is as large as human living and human history. Further, the solution has to take people just as they are. If it is to be a solution and not a mere suppression of the problem, it has to acknowledge and respect and work through man's intelligence, and reasonableness, and freedom. It may eliminate neither development nor tension yet it must be able to replace incapacity by capacity for sustained development. Only a still higher integration can meet such requirements. For only a higher integration leaves underlying manifolds with their autonomy yet succeeds in introducing a higher systematization into their non-systematic coincidences. And only a still higher integration than any that so far has been considered can deal with the dialectical manifold immanent in human subjects and the human situation.

There is needed, then, a further manifestation of finality, of the upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism of generalized emergent probability.

*Insight*, 630, 632-3.

If there is a choice to be made, it would not be toward theology but toward joining the emerging "Lonergan Community." For this "thesis" itself shows a deep commitment to Lonergan's methodological work (for me the religious or theological work, though important, is secondary). At the moment I consider Lonergan's generalized empirical method as the equivalent to calculus in the hard sciences: both are *the* language within which meaningful statements about reality can be stated and affirmed. It would be a short step to join those who are seeking to build upon his work.

From this it can be seen that autodidacts have a particular problem, a tendency to use other disciplines for their own purposes. As this entire study shows, this willingness to enter into the culture of another discipline (theological studies, or theology in general) on its own terms is simply not there.<sup>30</sup> It took Lonergan's methodology to provide a bridge from my own starting point to even start to understand that culture. But Lonergan is not mainstream theology; his work cannot be considered to be the norm when it comes to understanding Christian life. And deciding to follow his work did not arise from a dialectic within theology, but a dialectic within planning and policy-making, i.e., the tension between a limited discipline such as urban planning and a truly transdisciplinary discipline of Professional Practice.

In my cruder moments, I raid theology for anything appropriate to my own interests. Yet these very excursions into unknown territory bring me face to face with another way of existing, the possibility of emerging into a fuller level of existence than that grounded in my initial foundational stance. There is a dialectic there that still needs refinement and objectification before foundational discernment can be brought into play.

### *Our Own Cultural Projects*

What are the primary architectural forms of our times? The great banking towers, tall glass temples to commerce, that dominate city skylines. And what are the atrocities that we legitimize through our cultural project? Environmental degradation, forced climatic change, extinction of species, loss of families and households, weak or elitist cultural institutions, cities in economic crises and an overage of people that increases the need for human regulation beyond our capacity to respond.

---

<sup>30</sup> This tendency is bad enough in itself, but when the self-directed study is toward transcendence and a higher perspective than *any* discipline other than those relating to the realm of interiority are limited aspects of a greater unity of purpose and intent. Thus, the emerging notion of Professional Practice, which incorporates what is to be known in order to upgrade human performance, becomes the dominate context; Theological Studies is relegated to secondary status. Furthermore, there is an issue of authentic tradition: to what extent is the new discipline—in this case, Theological Studies—a truly authentic one?

It is not as if we seek to do evil.

In my years of consulting, one important thing I've learned is that most people do not want to do unethical things. Usually, unethical or illegal behaviour happens when decent people are put under unbearable pressure do their jobs and meet ambitious goals without the resources to get the job done right.<sup>31</sup>

And then there are Cassandra mechanisms, a structural evil evident in both government bureaucracies and commercial enterprises. In the primitive wisdom of Greek myth:

Cassandra, daughter of Hecuba and Priam (the last king of Troy), promised to shack up with Apollo if he would first bestow on her the gift of prophecy. He did so. Then the foolish girl defaulted on her promise. Why, one wonders? 'Apollo' is the very name for male beauty; moreover, he was a god. Perhaps he lacked a subtle something.

Be that as it may, the divine one dealt with the perfidious maiden in a devilishly clever way. He left her in full possession of her prophetic ability but decreed that henceforth no one would believe her.

The mechanism of standing for re-election in a representative democracy tends to suppress unpleasant prophecies. The more distant the prophecy, the less a candidate can gain by voicing an unwelcome truth.

The same mechanism operates in private businesses . . . The difference between business executives and elected officials is not as great as many detractors of bureaucracy would have us believe. Both are subject to all-too-human pressures not to disturb our equanimity by looking beyond a rather near horizon.

In group dynamics short vision usually pays off better than long. To lose in the struggle for the group's attention is to lose power. History is written by the winners. Education in the broad sense—which includes all forms of advertising—is hemmed in by the necessity to please.

All parts of the economic system conspire to deprive Cassandra of power. There's nothing personal in this conspiracy. We must remember that the word 'conspire' literally means 'to breathe together.' Impersonal mechanisms cause the participants to breathe together, as it were, to keep Cassandra from being heard. When we understand how the world works we realize that there is no *Cassandra-person*, only *Cassandraic mechanisms* that insure that precious few people will believe and act upon unwelcome predictions.<sup>32</sup>

The authorities of Müntzer's time did not face the same need to be elected or to meet shareholder's demand, yet the need to please combined with the distorting effects of human intersubjectivity on civil life placed a similar limit to the extend of one's horizon. Once again, common sense intelligence refuses to accept as legitimate the theoretical concerns that extend human time-spans further into the future.

All these things are very much a part of my foundational stance, the objects or things to which I intend. This encounter with Müntzer has shown me that I care deeply about long term

---

<sup>31</sup> Barbara Ley Toffler, *Final Accounting: Ambition, Greed, and the Fall of Arthur Andersen* (New York: N.Y.: Broadway Books, 2003), 69.

<sup>32</sup> Hardin, *Folly* (1985), 145, 146.

conditions that transcended day-to-day operations or interests. It has also shown me that I am not content with common sense expediency, that uncritical non-explanatory thinking that so characterizes common sense bias. Like Müntzer, I have this feeling of the last days—but not in the religious sense of the end of time. Rather, it is in the sense that we are running out of time to deal with critical problems that transcend our institutions' ability to handle. And when this happens, as Jane Jacobs points out, we are likely to enter into a dark age where current institutions simply become irrelevant to daily living.<sup>33</sup>

All this matters to me. And the more that I know, the more I feel responsible for doing something about the situation—even if I know how improbable it is that anything can be done (another part of my inner life—an “arrogance” so necessary to making things happen that is either disappearing or being refined, I’m not sure which).<sup>34</sup> The one thing that I do know about myself is that, unlike Müntzer, I’m not a very effective social leader or organizer—something that stems from this difficulty in “reading minds.” What I am good at is getting to the core of things, finding the essentials and digging deeper into reality than most people are willing or able to go. This same lack of understanding the pragmatics of human communications has its positive side: it allows me to go where few others go, simply because I do not receive those tacit non-verbal

---

<sup>33</sup> Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004).

<sup>34</sup> “Ego” is one of those concepts, like power, that have taken on a variety of meanings—not all of them positive. Yet Saul Alinsky, that great social radical of the 70’s and 80’s notes that “anyone who is working against the Haves is always facing odds, and in many cases heavy odds. If he or she does not have that complete self-confidence (or call it ego) that he can win, then the battle is lost before it is even begun.” Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1971), 60.

Ego is not to be confused with egotism. The “arrogance, vanity, impatience, and contempt of a personal egotism” only alienates; “no contrived humility can conceal it.” *Ibid.*, 61.

Ego moves on every level. How can an organizer respect the dignity of an individual if he does not respect his own dignity? How can he believe in people if he does not really believe in himself? How can he convince people that they have it within themselves, that they have the power to stand up to win, if he does not believe it of himself? Ego must be so all-pervading that the personality of the organizer is contagious, that it converts the people from despair to defiance, creating a mass ego.

*Ibid.*, 61.

communications that tell most people when they should stop—an interesting capacity for unlimited questioning that is so much a part of Lonergan’s method.

This questioning, combined with the essential features of my foundational stance, leads me to the position that it is not commercial enterprises—the great international banks, multi-national corporations and trading blocks—that define our cultural project; it is the way the “development” game is played. I would agree with Garrett Hardin’s position: the fundamental project of our own culture is the Common Costs—Private Profits *but don’t tell* game already cited in Chapter Two. For the sake of private profits, great atrocities are committed.

Müntzer’s age had as its primary purpose the salvation of souls based on true rather than counterfeit faith; ours age favours private profit. But the PP-CC game is a flawed strategy for development. In a sense, my terminal value is true development, true cumulative and progressive steps toward a sane, intelligible world. Counter-positions involve those who deliberately blind themselves, the Haves whose positions of wealth and power lead them into their prime concern, the ideological justification of their possession and use of such wealth and power. Müntzer too fought against the ideology of the Haves of his day, an ideology based on the authority and power of ecclesial authorities. Müntzer’s position on faith as a gift of the Spirit through suffering exposed the ideology of the powerful as non-Christian “counterfeit” faith. But while this falling in love with the Divine Mystery is very much a part of my own religious “conversion” (at least asking questions about how our world seems from a divine perspective), this transformation only resets my foundational stance. It does not change, at least at first, the fundamental objects and concerns that dominate my own appreciative system.

Our age has different developmental problems, which seem to reflect a transition toward a truly authentic post-agricultural economy. The industrial revolution, liberal democratic institutions, limited corporations and Victorian ideas of material progress all melded with science and technological development to form an incredibly powerful economic system that surpasses

our regulatory abilities and certainly our wisdom and moral courage.<sup>35</sup> And this is reflected in my own thinking, for in encountering Müntzer's life I realize that my own is heavily committed to science, even though:

. . . science is . . . mistrusted by those who don't like its discoveries for religious, political, ethical, or even esthetic reasons. Some thoughtful people complain that science has erased enchantment from the world. They have a point. Miracles, magic, and other fascinating impossibilities are no longer much encountered except in movies. But in the light shed by the best science and scientists, everything is fascinating, and the more so the more that is known of its reality. To science, not even the bark of a tree or a drop of pond water is dull or a handful of dirt banal. They all arouse awe and wonder.<sup>36</sup>

And science is extremely important:

Despite all of science's shortcomings as a source of perfection, it still remains that the wealth, well-being, and creative power of our culture, and increasingly of South and East Asia as well, depend heavily on science and technology.

What is this valuable thing? It isn't a thing but a state of mind. Its aim is to get at truths about how reality works. . . . [It] is distinguished from other pursuits by the precise and limited intellectual means that it employs and the integrity with which it uses its limited means.<sup>37</sup>

The scientific "dispassionate and disinterested" state of mind:

. . . demands integrity, awareness of evidence and respect for it, and attention to new questions that arise as immediate practical problems to be grappled with, or else as more abstract and postponable.

If a body of inquiry becomes disconnected from the scientific state of mind, that unfortunate segment of knowledge is no longer scientific. It stagnates. Intellectually, it is poisonous, because thereafter almost everything the stagnated and warped knowledge touches is harmed by it. Nazi ideologies of race, Marxist ideologies of economics and social utopias, capitalist confusion of commercial competition with Darwinism, along with the elimination of cooperation from understanding of evolution, are all examples of inquiries claiming scientific validity that were disconnected from the scientific state of mind and sank into dogma.<sup>38</sup>

Such a state of mind permeates my subjective horizon. In many ways, achieving such a dispassionate, disinterested, methodical and systematic mind is a clear intention of mine—but this

---

<sup>35</sup> See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, first released in 1944 (Boston: Beacon, 1957). For an analysis of the regulatory problems such a powerful economic system generates and our inability to change our appreciative systems fast enough to keep up with current changes, see Sir Geoffrey Vickers, *Freedom in a Rocking Boat: Changing Values in an Unstable Society* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970).

<sup>36</sup> Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), 64-65. The abandoning of a scientific mentality is one of five primary signs she identifies as initiating a dark age in our society. The others are: families rigged to fail, credentialing versus educating, dumbed-down taxes and the subversion of professional self-policing.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 65. Although this is true, it is also incomplete. The defining characteristic of science is not its methodology, as important as it is, it is a shift from understanding things as they relate to us (the realm of common sense) to explaining how things relate to each other (the empirical sciences). Since explaining how things relate to each other is to enter a strange alien world, great care must be taken to devise a precise language and an exact methodology to ask questions of reality in such a way that the answers shed light on how the universe and everything in it functions.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 69.

is entirely different from Müntzer's flow of theological images and passionate exhortations. Such expressions run counter to my own affirmation of explanatory intelligence.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, they run counter to the creation of wealth that otherwise would leave the majority of mankind living in dire poverty—a point made by Nathan Rosenberg:

Initially, the West's achievement of autonomy stemmed from a relaxation or a weakening, of political and religious controls, giving other departments of social life the opportunity to experiment with change. Growth is, of course, a form of change, and growth is impossible when change is not permitted. And *successful* change requires a large measure of freedom to experiment. A grant of that kind of freedom costs a society's rulers their feeling of control, as if they were conceding to others the power to determine the society's future. The great majority of societies, past and present, have not allowed it. Nor have they escaped from poverty.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> This is why *Method* is such a fundamental work for me (next to *Insight*, which explores the exercise of intelligence in a quest for a higher perspective of what it means to be human): Lonergan provides as rigorous a methodology for doing theology as scientists have for doing scientific research. Thus my own love of science can be mapped onto theology in such a way that theology becomes real for me as a legitimate area of inquiry as fully grounded as scientific methodology. This doesn't mean that I have succeeded in making this transition, only that it may be possible. This thesis is a test to see if someone with my foundational stance and interests can make such a shift without distorting theological insights. Even after this thesis, the jury is still out on that question. But with the beginnings of a universal perspective, it does seem possible.

<sup>40</sup> Nathan Rosenberg and L. E. Birdzell Jr., *How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World* (U.S.A.: Basic, 1986), 34. Rosenberg's italics. Even with global communications that dramatically increase cross-cultural encounters, we still find it hard to imagine the kinds of poverty characteristic of much of contemporary Third World countries and of Müntzer's own time. According to Fernand Braudel:

What appears to have happened in the West was that the great division of labour between town and countryside that took place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, had left a permanent mass of unfortunates unprovided for, with nothing left to do. The fault lay in society no doubt and its usual evils, but it was perhaps even more to be found in the economy, which was powerless to create full employment. Many of the poor eked out a living somehow, finding a few hours work here and there, a temporary shelter. But the others—the infirm, the old, those who had been born and bred on the road—had very little contact with normal working life. This particular hell had its own circles, labelled in contemporary vocabulary as pauperdom, beggary, and vagrancy.

Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, translated by Sian Reynolds (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1979), 506. This is a point worth underscoring:

We often underestimate how drastic change stemming from novel technology can be, because it occurs slowly and is not an immediate and obvious consequence of readily identifiable inventions. It is too easy to forget that not much more than a century ago, the average European was an illiterate villager who never went beyond walking distance from the village, from birth to death, and who had little idea of what was happening outside it. It was not the power of an idea that urbanized and educated the western masses and put them in touch with the whole world, but the proliferation, within the economic sphere, of innovations in transportation, communication, and production that enabled, and indeed compelled, the western masses to exchange the darkness of village life for the lights of the city.

Rosenberg, *How the West Grew Rich* (1986), 265.



There is another passion of mind: a love of machines, especially beautiful functional machines that result from the exercise of intelligent design—and not the “intelligent design” of creationists seeking to transfer religious beliefs to the realm of scientific explanatory theory. When the quest for intelligence is mixed with technology and the education of many:

In the last twenty years television has brought a wide spectrum of affairs into our living-rooms. Our emotional reaction to many of them—such as the problem of where to site atomic power stations, or the dilemma of genetic engineering, or the question of abortion—reveals the paradoxical situation in which we find ourselves. The very tools which might be used to foster understanding and reason, as opposed to emotional reflex, are themselves forced to operate at a level which only enhances the paradox. The high rate of change to which we have become accustomed affects the manner in which information is presented: when the viewer is deemed to be bored after only a few minutes of air time, or the reader after a few paragraphs, content is sacrificed for stimulus, and the problem is reinforced. The fundamental task of technology is to find a means to end this vicious circle, and to bring us all to a fuller comprehension of the technological system which gives and supports our lives. It is a difficult task, because it will involve surmounting barriers that have taken centuries to construct. During that time we have carried with us, and cherished, beliefs that are pre-technological in nature. These faiths place art and philosophy at the centre of man’s existence, and science and technology on the periphery. According to this view, the former lead and the latter follow.

Yet, as this book has shown, the reverse is true. Without instruments, how could the Copernican revolution have taken place? Why are we taught that we gain insight and the experience of beauty only through art, when this is but a limited and second-hand representation of the infinitely deeper experience to be gained by direct observation of the world around us? For such observation to become significant it must be made in the light of knowledge. The sense of wonder and excitement to be derived from watching the way an insect’s wing functions, or an amoeba divides, or a foetus is formed comes in its greatest intensity only to those who have been given the opportunity to find out *how* these things happen.

Science and technology have immeasurably enriched our material lives. If we are to realize the immense potential of a society living in harmony with the systems and artefacts which it has created, we must learn—and learn soon—to use science and technology to enrich our intellectual lives.<sup>41</sup>

If it wasn’t for a series of experiences that convinced me of the reality of the Divine Mystery, Burke’s position would be my own. As it is, I still think there is something profoundly wrong in people who do not appreciate the beauty revealed through scientific exploration or take the time to think things through. Given my foundational stance, I automatically perceive such people as having entered the realm of word magic and power-seeking rhetoric guided by intelligence cut off from the dispassionate and disinterested exercise of the human mind. Müntzer had his priests and theologians to revile; I seem to have firebrands like Müntzer. What I need to remind myself is that counter-positions do contain some element of truth, something real that

---

<sup>41</sup> Burke, *Connections* (1978), 295. It comes back to a question of caring.

even if misdirected or misunderstood is still valid. It took courage for Müntzer to live the itinerate life that he did, a steadfastness that kept him going despite hard times. It took courage for him to work out his own approach to the faith problems of his day, to spend the time thinking things through, to eventually pull much of it together in his German Evangelical Mass.

Yet, if we are honest with ourselves we will admit like Harris that:

We delude ourselves that we want to implant 'honesty' in our children; what we really want is to imbue them with our particular kind of dishonesty, with our culture's dishonesty, our class's dishonesty, our cult's dishonesty.<sup>42</sup>

Self-delusion seems to be a part of our nature, part of our heritage, part of our cultural project—and certainly part of our language, for language is equally used to conceal as it is to reveal. And part of what it conceals is the presence of a “group mind.”

People who have experienced a lot of groups, who perhaps have observed their own behaviour, may agree that the hardest thing in the world is to stand out against one's group, a group of one's peers. Many agree that among one's most shameful memories are of saying that black is white because other people are saying it. . . .

This mechanism, of obedience to the group, does not only mean obedience or submission to a small group, or one that is sharply determined, like a religion or political party. It means, too, conforming to those large vague, ill-defined collections of people who may never think of themselves as having a collective mind because they are aware of differences of opinion—but which, to people from outside, from another culture, seem very minor. The underlying assumptions and assertions that govern the group are never discussed, never challenged, probably never noticed, the main one being precisely this: that it *is* a group mind, intensely resistant to change, equipped with sacred assumptions about which there can be no discussion.<sup>43</sup>

Although Müntzer had sharp disagreements with many of his contemporaries, he also shared in a collective mentality, a collective orientation to the world that could only be called Christian: the appreciative system that brought into existence a sinful world in need of redemption through an all-powerful being. It comes as a surprise to me that I too have that same pattern of a world in urgent need of recovery, though not in quite the same way as Müntzer. From an emergent probability worldview, the emergence of a higher order intelligibility from sensate “reality, is less a matter of a sinful world as an incomplete world in transition.

Lessing asks:

---

<sup>42</sup> Sydney J. Harris, *The Best of Sydney J. Harris* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 133.

<sup>43</sup> Doris Lessing, *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside* (Massey Lectures, 24<sup>th</sup> series. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986), 51-52.

Do people really have to be such sheep?

Of course, there are original minds, people who take their own line, who do not fall victim to the need to say, or do, what everyone else does. But they are few. Very few. On them depends the health, the vitality of all our institutions . . .

It has been noticed that there is this ten percent of the population, who can be called natural leaders, who do follow their own minds into decisions and choices. It has been noted to the extent that this fact has been incorporated into instructions for people who run prisons, concentration camps, prisoner of war camps: remove the ten percent, and your prisoners will become spineless and conforming.<sup>44</sup>

Müntzer was probably one of those ten percent.

### *Transcendence*

At some level, it is remarkable the extent to which Müntzer and I stand as creative individuals (or stubborn fools) seeking the true roots of social and political life, the difference being that he operated within a world-mediated-by-meaning deeply embedded in Christendom while I find my own roots in the transcendental seeking of the human mind grounded in the evolutionary shift from sensate animals to the kind of being compatible with the divine life of the Trinity. The significance of both our lives lies in this uneasy relationship with a divine power: he as a matter of faith given by grace and transformed through suffering, I as a deepening awareness of my own limitations as general manager of the universe and a preference to put myself under the operating orders of a higher power than either myself or other human beings. As a result, both he and I share a common sense of working for God, a dual project that involves not only being willing to be sensitive to God's presence as an active force in human evolution but to act in ways that help this process along.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>45</sup> This is a dangerous place to be: the ego is strong, liable to take over at any time. And many of the great tragedies in human history have been due to religious people.

However, there is a strong difference in our respective styles. Müntzer identified himself with the prophets, something quite compatible with his role as priest and minister as spokesperson for the divine, while I on one level envision myself as a private in an army who is being trained for certain kinds of tasks that are very much beyond my own comprehension. But there's an inherent "specialness" in this role, quite equivalent to Müntzer's: a sense of being called. There is of course no rational explanation for this, it simply is as something experienced—the best approximation being that tension of genuineness that emerges from the dynamism of the human mind. Needless to say, such a feeling if acted upon can get a person into trouble; it certainly played such havoc that Eric W. Gritsch called Müntzer's life "A Tragedy of Errors." Gritsch, *Thomas Müntzer* (1989), the subtitle to his work.

It is this stance that modifies the initial ideas of Professional Practice as a three-stage process or Orientation, Diagnosis & Evaluating, and estimating Scope & Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change. It is clear, from this encounter with Müntzer's own ideas of faith grounded in the pure gift of the Spirit, that there is a prior stage: the development of a critical and creative self around such notions as transcendental method, finality, cosmopolis, emergent probability, discernment, authenticity and the tension of genuineness reflected in the gap between our sensate roots as *homo erectus*, our current status as *homo sapiens* and our possible emergence into *homo spiritus*.<sup>46</sup> In much the same way that Müntzer believed true faith as opposed to the counterfeit faith of church or scripture was grounded in personal conversion, the prior need for religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion grounds Professional Practice. This is the point of "there is only one truly critical instrument", the second of the twelve common sense generalizations listed in Appendix VI.

Is such transcendence revolutionary or a matter of reformation?<sup>47</sup> Hans-Jürgen Goertz argued that Müntzer represented a revolutionary part of German history while Luther represented a reformational approach to change.<sup>48</sup> Current common sense usage identifies "revolutionary" with radical change, that is change of a fundamental, original or primary nature, and "reformation" as the restoration of peace through the removal of faults or abuses. So in this sense Goertz is correct: when it came to the Peasants' Revolt, Luther stood on the side of peace and order while Müntzer rallied the troops on the opposite side.

---

<sup>46</sup> Our species' problem seems to be a moral impotence whereby the higher levels of discernment and value creation are subverted by our intersubjective needs to be part of a human group. We seem to be able to know the good without having the capacity to exercise that knowing over our sensate past both as a species and as an individual growing up as part of a human family, tribe, clan or their equivalent in our own day and age.

<sup>47</sup> This is an important question for me. To the extent that the underlying pattern to Müntzer and I is similar, my own approach would have to be considered revolutionary; if not, then Professional Practice is a matter of reform.

<sup>48</sup> Goertz, Hans-Jürgen. *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquetry, edited by Peter Matheson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 19.

But I suspect the difference may be a matter of degree rather than type; sometimes the only way to achieve peace is through radical change.<sup>49</sup> Not being a social activist, I find the thought of radical social and political change rather disconcerting; in comparison with Müntzer, I am a most gentle person. Yet this encounter has brought me face to face with the question of the kinds of changes implicit in both Lonergan's work and my own attempts to work out the notion of Professional Practice: are we like Müntzer truly revolutionists, or like Luther seeking reforms to restore peace? Since a lot of Professional Practice depends on Lonergan's work, the question is, is Lonergan a revolutionary? For if he is, so am I.<sup>50</sup>

Certainly Lonergan never engaged in political life and even within the Church he was a firm traditionalist. A life-long Jesuit who studied and taught theology at Rome who spent eleven years of his life apprenticed to Thomas Aquinas, he was more scholar and educator than revolutionary. Even *Insight* was written in a highly scholastic and formal style that makes it a difficult read for those not familiar with that milieu. No, he wasn't a revolutionary—but he was a radical. His search for the roots of human understanding in a world where relativism and naïve realism held sway, where the polymorphism of human consciousness was self-evident and where Christians

---

<sup>49</sup> A dubious proposition if those who take over have the same biases and preunderstandings as those they replaced. Besides, there is the good of order to consider: radical change can alter the underlying good of order, leading to a state of decline where social and political—not to mention spiritual—progress is no longer possible. Yet, there are times when there is no other choice, when the good of order is so distorted and dysfunctional that reform is not possible.

My own position is that the choice of one or the other depends not only on one's personal orientation, but on an accurate diagnosis and evaluation of the unique time-and-space-specific situation at hand. Estimating scope and constraints in the light of this evolution and diagnosis will then lead credibility to one or the other form of intervention. The difference between a radical and a reformer is only a difference in the depth assigned to the causes of the symptoms of public conflict and disorder: if superficial, then reform; if deep, then revolution.

<sup>50</sup> There is an interesting twist on this question, for it raises another possibility. I've "always" assumed a conservative approach to change, taking what is good in what already exists and expanding it into the future. But what if the reality is that the "message", like Lonergan's, is really radical implying revolution rather than reformation and I've been working using a reformational model of change? Such a mismatch implies a failure in D&E leading to estimates of S&C based on a need for reform when the real need is for radical change. To understand Professional Practice as a tool for revolution rather than reform, and myself as a "radical"—for recent history has given a distinct political tone to the word—requires a substantial change to my image of who I am. I've never cared for the word "creative", for like any person with explanatory needs the free-flow association and unbridled artistic expression are perceived as undisciplined and irresponsible (which is not the case, I now realize), and cared even less for revolutionary attempts to political and social reform (probably because I dislike conflict in any form). Yet there it is, this question.

could only impose a normative culture on converts rather than convey Christian doctrines through the world-mediated-by-meaning of other cultures with other traditions and modes of living, led him to an understanding of human understanding itself that became the rock upon which further developments were made (including *Method*).

His notion of self-appropriation is as radical for our day as faith given directly as a gift of the Spirit was for Müntzer's time. Both, when expanded upon, lead to conclusions that are radically different from the existing good of order. For Müntzer, true faith based directly on the gift of the Spirit and tested through suffering exposed as counterfeit faith the Wittenberger's reliance on scripture and the Churches' belief in themselves as mediators between God and men. Lonergan's path to intellectual conversion through self-appropriation of one's own coming to know is in itself a shift to a higher perspective of what it means to be human, a universal perspective that reveals the inauthenticities and counter-positional aspects of other philosophies, epistemologies and theologies. The difference with Lonergan, as opposed to Müntzer, is that Lonergan believed that even counter-positions held elements of the true and the real. Müntzer' black-and-white world, combined with the motivational political needs to highlight differences, made such a disinterested and dispassionate position impossible. If this is true, then this encounter with Müntzer has brought me face-to-face with the possibility that my foundational stance is a radical, revolutionary one and that I, in my objectification of myself, may not be a conservative seeking incremental change but a creative revolutionary seeking to promote a radical different social and political order.

There is one final point. "Transcendence" is such a powerful word in religious circles, hinting at a mystical transformation bringing one closer to God. Yet transcendence is an everyday phenomena rarely attended to by horizons and intentions focused on getting things done rather than on the realm of interiority. First of all, insights themselves are a form of transcendence, for through insights we create new ways of understanding, a new ways of operating, when I suddenly understand I have transcended my lack of understanding. Secondly, as these insights gather to

form a whole system of insights there are questions that can arise—if we allow them—that can't be answered within that system. A shift to a higher viewpoint within which these questions can be answered is to transcend the limitations of the original system. Thirdly, this process of insight and successive higher viewpoints is built into the dynamism of human consciousness as part of the disinterested, detached and unrestricted desire to know that is part of all of us when other appetites are stilled. Through this process one eventually arrives at the notion of transcendental being and transcendental knowledge, where faith is knowledge born from religious love. And the whole process depends on being willing to live in the tension of genuineness, that uncomfortable place in our psyche between the self we know and affirm and the self we are becoming through the dialectics of encounter with someone greater than ourselves.

### *In Praise of Prudence*

Müntzer's life suggests a great need for prudence, a virtue that seems to have gone out of fashion in our fast-paced lives. Now the work that he did on devising a new liturgy, on developing the notions of ministry and spiritual direction in the early years of the reform movement, were the result of a creative mind facing the issues of the day full on. There was no other way of doing what he did without pushing the boundaries. But there's a difference between a dispassionate activist whose heart is untroubled even in the midst of the battle and a passionate minister of the elect who considered himself a prophet directly appointed by God to spread His word. In the end, what brought him down at the approximate age of thirty-seven was his involvement with the Peasants' War of 1524-1525. Whether his beheading was justified or not, it was clear that Müntzer had no patron to shield him while Luther had the protection of Frederick the Wise, the prince of 'electoral' or 'Ernestine' Saxony, which contained Wittenberg, Weimar, and Erfurt. Yet it is hard to see how Müntzer could have stayed out of the fray while still being Müntzer: his lack of prudence resulted in what was for him martyrdom. Suicide might have been a better term, for people and situations change but death is forever—at least in earthly terms.

Prudence is not a term often found in liberal humanistic language-centered thought or scientific number-crunching concern with things as they relate to each other, but it is inherent in an ecological worldview where the first law is that everything is related to everything else. When we can never merely do one thing, it becomes necessary to exercise caution and explore at least the major ramifications of any course of action, while acknowledging that there may be any number of interactions that we know little or nothing about. “Guilty until proven innocent” is where Garrett Hardin would have us put the burden of proof when it comes to introducing a new technology or a new social convention.<sup>51</sup>

Prudence requires answers to the question, “And then what?” Because there are major schemes of recurrence in any ecological system, there are consequences beyond any immediate act or event. One such little considered consequence is the effect any plan or policy has on subsequent plans or policies: if such changes lead to a fragmentation of the good of order, then the policy or planning range for subsequent generations may be sharply reduced. Conversely, if a set of actions supports fiscal accountability or subsidiarity, then subsequent generations will have the benefit of a sensible good of order well grounded in practical common sense tempered with an explanatory understanding of the underlying phenomena. Or take the example of nuclear power: a new reactor is built, and then what? In terms of creating and passing down problems, two immediately come to mind: meeting the need to reduce human error to virtually nil, for the consequence of any mistake can be catastrophic; and once the reactor is mothballed, what is to be done with radioactive wastes and container shell whose lethal energy will last for centuries if not millennia.

Neither is prudence a word often found in planning and policy-making circles. Yet there is a collective need:

Suppose, ten thousand years from now, people of the future who contemplate our own times—which they might aptly call the midpoint crisis between their times and the origin of agriculture—ask

---

<sup>51</sup> Garrett Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 58-59.



themselves what, by hindsight, could have forestalled fatal deterioration of the wonderful North American culture. I suspect the advice might be much like that about the goats [that destroyed the land in the Fertile Crescent two and a half millennia ago]: ‘Let things grow. Don’t let currently powerful government or commercial enterprises strangle new departures, or alternatively gobble them as soon as they show indications of being economic successes. Stop trying to cram too many eggs into too few baskets under the keeping of too few supermen (who don’t actually exist except in our *mythos*).’<sup>52</sup>

Letting things grow worked in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the lack of central control meant there were at least a few places where innovations could occur. It may be good advice for a society whose major institutions are intent on “expanding their market share” by any means possible. Whether true or not, Jane Jacobs arrived at this policy by thinking things through—and I share this commitment to think things through.<sup>53</sup> All other counter-positions—from evangelical Christians to impatient social activists, from charitable people of good will to power-craving egoists, from those consumed by group bias to those equally consumed by resentment—are suspect.

Did Müntzer think things through? Not really, if one considers the chaotic conditions of his own life, and certainly not if compared to someone like Aquinas.

Like anything taken to excess, prudence can lead to its own forms of decline. Robert Kaplan, a contemporary journalist and commentator on the world scene, notes that:

The U.N. bureaucracy, along with those who seek a peaceful world, worship consensus. But consensus can be the hand-maiden of evil, since the ability to confront evil means the willingness to act boldly and ruthlessly and without consensus, attributes that executive, national leadership has in far more abundance than any international organization. As Aron writes, ‘prudence does not always require either moderation or peace by compromise, or negotiations, or indifference to the internal regimes of enemy states,’ and that is why ‘war has not always been meaningless or criminal; it has had meaning and function.’ Thus, there is an inherent philosophical danger in a strong secretary-general who can prevent or postpone war even when war is necessary to fight evil.<sup>54</sup>

Prudence yes, but not at the expense of truth and justice.

---

<sup>52</sup> Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), 170. Jacobs’ italics.

<sup>53</sup> This is why Lonergan has such an appeal over me: he, of any modern thinker, has “thought things through.”

<sup>54</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 178. Reference is to Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (1966); no page reference is given.

### *Wordsmiths*

Müntzer was many things: a mystic, biblical exegete, social activist, apocalyptic visionary, spiritual director, teacher, pastor and counsellor. He had a real eloquence, persuasive charm and an originality of images and ideas that grabbed people's attention—a primary source of power for those who did not inherit either wealth or social position. He was a wordsmith, skilled at turning a phrase or exercising a rhetorical skill to make his point.

From the very first reading of his works, I found I had an intense dislike of the word-magic he used to weave a religious world of apocalyptic dimensions, using language to exhort and control meaning along lines of human intersubjectivity rather than explanatory theory. It is one of my foundational prejudices that a significant part of reflective intelligence in philosophy and theology is understood as word-magic, not reason. The disinterested and dispassionate desire to know, which takes precedent in any appropriation of value, has little to do with the “counter-position” (in my mind) of grand speeches. “Never have so many owed so much to so few” of Winston Churchill or the “Ten score years ago” of Abraham Lincoln or the rousing speech of Shakespeare's Henry “Once more into the breach, dear friends” may make for memorial history, but they are all persuasive tools meant to convince others. It is this rhetorical convincing of others, whether in a good cause or not, sends shivers up my spine—for it is then that reason and considered judgment fly out the door in the face of the power of a crowd.<sup>55</sup>

Such things scare the hell out of me.

My foundational stance dislikes all conflict, is appalled at instances of irrationality and considers such social power-plays as pathological rather than the enjoyment of human intersubjectivity. The “dance” of social positioning, political power plays and hierarchical movements are, within my own horizon and intentions, examples of a dysfunctional species where the neocortex lacks sufficient control over the evolutionary earlier reptilian and primate

---

<sup>55</sup> That such exhortations may be necessary still does not change my instant disquieting reaction; much harm has been done through rhetoric, through ideology—as the 20<sup>th</sup> century experience of Marxism demonstrates. A group mind trampling through reality can be a dangerous thing.

brains.<sup>56</sup> Such a lack of control leaves us prone to rhetoric that preys upon our “excess capacity for fanatical devotion.”<sup>57</sup>

It was this misuse of language that brought Müntzer to his death.

The military character of the Eternal League and its composition of activists leave no doubt that, for Müntzer, the battle against the godless was at hand. Throughout March and April 1525 the peasant unrest which had been smouldering in South-West Germany at last burst into open rebellion, spreading rapidly north-eastwards through Franconia and Hessen to the fringes of Thuringia. Convinced that the day of judgement was night, Müntzer threw his energies into rousing the common people to take up arms in the name of the Lord.<sup>58</sup>

Only a few months later, 27 May 1525, Müntzer was executed for his involvement with the Peasants’ War. He literally lost his head over inflammatory words:

Even if there are only three of you whose trust in God is unperturbable and who seek his name and honour alone, you need have no fear of a hundred thousand. So go to it, go to it, go to it! The time has come, the evil-doers are running like scared dogs! Alert the brothers, so that they may be at peace, and testify to their conversion. It is absolutely crucial—absolutely necessary! Go to it, go to it, go to it! Show no pity, even though Esau suggest kind words to you, Genesis 33. Pay no attention to the cries of the godless. They will entreat you ever so warmly, they will whimper and wheedle like children. Show no pity, as God has commanded in the words of Moses, Deuteronomy 7; and he has revealed the same thing to us too. Alert the villages and towns and especially the mineworkers and other good fellows who will be of use. We cannot slumber any longer.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Arthur Koestler offers as one possible explanation for our apparent inability to follow the good: the Papez-MacLean theory of emotions based on thirty years of experimental neurophysiological research. Their hypothesis is that the evolutionary development of the human brain did not involve the transformation of the old brain into the new, but the superimposition of a new brain—the neocortex—on the structure of the older brains. The result is a composite brain with partly overlapping functions, where the new brain has no clear-cut executive control over the older ones. See Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (London: Pan, 1978), 8-13.

<sup>57</sup> Koestler, *Janus* (1978), 14. The Papez-MacLean theory of emotions is one explanation for the human condition; another is our susceptibility to the word-magic of word-smiths.

Man’s deadliest weapon is *language*. He is as susceptible to being hypnotized by slogans as he is to infectious diseases. And when there is an epidemic, the group-mind takes over. It obeys its own rules, which are different from the rules of conduct of individuals. When a person identifies himself with a group, his reasoning faculties are diminished and his passions enhanced by a kind of emotive resonance or positive feedback. The individual is not a killer, but the group is, and by identifying with it the individual is transformed into a killer. This is the infernal dialectic reflected in man’s history of wars, persecution and genocide. And the main catalyst of that transformation is the hypnotic power of the word. The words of Adolf Hitler were the most powerful agents of destruction in his time. Long before the printing press was invented, the words of Allah’s chosen Prophet unleashed an emotive chain-reaction which shook the world from Central Asia to the Atlantic coast. Without words there would be no poetry—and no war. Language is the main factor in our superiority over brother animal—and, in view of its explosive emotive potentials, a constant threat to survival.

*Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>58</sup> Scott, *Müntzer* (1989), 148.

<sup>59</sup> “Müntzer to the people of Allstedt”, 1525 (c. 26, 27 April) in *Collected Works*, 141.

It is clear that in reaction to such excess my emotions have shifted toward a dispassionate and disinterested desire to know. This emotional response seems to break down into the practice one of the fundamental spiritual disciplines—solitude—and one intellectual pursuit—filters against folly. But first, solitude.

The discipline of solitude is one of the twelve paths to spiritual growth described by Richard J. Foster:

Our fear of being alone drives us to noise and crowds. We keep up a constant stream of words even if they are inane. We buy radios that strap to our wrists or fit over our ears so that, if no one else is around, at least we are not condemned to silence. . . .

But loneliness or clutter are not our only alternatives. We can cultivate an inner solitude and silence that sets us free from loneliness and fear. Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment.

Solitude is more a state of mind and heart than it is a place. There is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. Crowds, or the lack of them, have little to do with this inward attentiveness. It is quite possible to be a desert hermit and never experience solitude. But if we possess inward solitude we do not fear being alone, for we know that we are not alone. Neither do we fear being with others, for they do not control us. In the midst of noise and confusion we are settled into a deep inner silence.<sup>60</sup>

The way in which I come to understand seems to be grounded more in this search for solitude than in engaging in social or political affairs, perhaps a surprising twist given this interest in Professional Practice. Yet perhaps that is the key: success in the business world depends on keeping a clear head and making sound decisions; egotism, group bias and common sense expediency all combine to distract and disable this disinterested and dispassionate need to know that so defines the good parts of human understanding. Intelligence matters. Unfortunately, credentialing, Cassandraic mechanisms and wilful flights from understanding all contribute to decline as higher level intellectual coherency breaks down into ever smaller units of worlds-mediated-by-meaning to the point where the only action that can be taken is made through force. The good of order is lost through cumulative fragmentation and divisiveness.

Solitude allows for a person to experience, understand, judge and decide about one's experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. It involves a heightening of awareness, a

---

<sup>60</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition (New York, N.Y.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 96-97.

bringing to consciousness consciousness itself, a shift to a higher perspective that allows for the understanding of how we understand and how we flee from understanding. This entire study can be understood as nothing more than an attempt to personalize this shift to a higher viewpoint, to move beyond a conceptual understanding of understanding and into the realm of interiority where one knows exactly what it is that one is doing when one seeks to understand or engages in a flight from understanding.

Bringing to awareness one's experiences of experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding is a matter of attending to oneself intending no matter what the circumstances. Then:

Life is a banquet. And the tragedy is that most people are starving to death. That's what I'm really talking about. There's a nice story about some people who were on a raft off the coast of Brazil perishing from thirst. They had no idea that the water they were floating on was fresh water. The river was coming out into the sea with such force that it went out for a couple of miles, so they had fresh water right there where they were. But they had no idea. In the same way, we're surrounded with joy, with happiness, with love. Most people have no idea of this whatsoever. The reason: They're brainwashed. The reason: They're hypnotized; they're asleep. Imagine a stage magician who hypnotizes someone so that the person sees what is not there and does not see what is there. That's what it's all about. Repent and accept the good news. Repent! Wake up! Don't weep for your sins. Why weep for sins that you committed when you were asleep? Why do you want to identify with a person like this? Wake up! Wake up! Repent! Put on a new mind. Take on a new way of looking at things! For "the kingdom is here!" It's the rare Christian who takes that seriously. I said to you that the first thing you need to do is wake up, to face the fact that you don't like being woken up. You'd much rather have all of the things which you were hypnotized into believing are so precious to you, so important to you, so important for your life and your survival. Second, understand. Understand that maybe you've got the wrong ideas and it is these ideas that are influencing your life and making it the mess that it is and keeping you asleep. Ideas about love, ideas about freedom, ideas about happiness, and so forth. And it isn't easy to listen to someone who would challenge those ideas of yours which have come to be so precious to you.

There have been some interesting studies in brainwashing. It was been shown that you're brainwashed when you take on or 'introject' an idea that isn't yours, that is someone else's. And the funny thing is that you'll be ready to die for this idea. Isn't that strange? The first test of whether you've been brainwashed and have introjected convictions and beliefs occurs the moment they're attacked. You feel stunned, you react emotionally. That's a pretty good sign—not infallible, but a pretty good sign—that we're dealing with brainwashing. You're ready to die for an idea that never was yours. Terrorists or saints (so called) take on an idea, swallow it whole, and are ready to die for it. It's not easy to listen, especially when you get emotional about an idea. And even when you don't get emotional about it, it's not easy to listen; you're always listening from your programming, from your conditioning, from your hypnotic state. You frequently interpret everything that's being said in terms of your hypnotic state or your condition or your programming. Like this girl who's listening to a lecture on agriculture and says, 'Excuse me, sir, you know I agree with you completely that the best manure is aged horse manure. Would you tell us how old the horse should optimally be?' See where she's coming from? We all have our positions, don't we? And we listen *from* those positions. 'Henry, how you've changed! You were so tall and you've grown so short. You were so well built and you've grown so thin. You were so fair and you've become so dark. What happened to you, Henry?' Henry says, 'I'm not Henry. I'm John.' 'Oh, you changed your name too!' How do you get people like that to listen?

The most difficult thing in the world is to listen, to see. We don't want to see. Do you think a capitalist wants to see what is good in the communist system? Do you think a communist wants to see what is good and healthy in the capitalist system? Do you think a rich man wants to look at poor people? We don't want to look, because if we do, we may change. We don't want to look. If you look, you lose control of the life that you are so precariously holding together. And so in order to wake up, the one thing you need the most is not energy, or strength, or youthfulness, or even great intelligence. The one thing you need most of all is the readiness to learn something new.<sup>61</sup>

This rather long passage by de Mello touches upon many things: most of our lives are spent living in worlds-mediated-by-meaning that are not verifiably real; we all come from the positions that we take, without waking up to the validity and reliability of these positions; one of the hardest things to do is to listen, for listening may cost you control of the life you have so laboriously constructed; and what is needed is the willingness to learn something new. All these things have great meaning and importance for me—unlike Müntzer's sermons and protestations.

Lonergan talks a lot about willingness as one of the conditions for effective freedom.

Now the function of willingness runs parallel to the function of the habitual accumulation of insights. What one does not understand yet, one can learn; but learning takes time, and until that time is devoted to learning, otherwise possible courses of action are excluded. Similarly, when antecedent willingness is lacking, persuasion can be invoked; but persuasion takes time, and until that time is devoted to persuading oneself or to being persuaded by others, one remains closed to otherwise possible courses of action.

There is a further aspect to the matter. For genetically one mounts from empirical to intellectual consciousness, from intellectual to rational consciousness, and from rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness. As long as one is moving towards full self-possession, the detached and disinterested desire to know tends to be in control. But once one is in the state of rational self-consciousness, then one's decisions are in control, for they set the objective of one's total activity and select the actions that are to lead to the goal. So it is that a person, caught as it were unawares, may be ready for any scheme or exploit but, on the second thoughts of rational self-consciousness, settles back into the narrow routine defined by his antecedent willingness. For unless one's antecedent willingness has the height and breadth and depth of the unrestricted desire to know, the emergence of rational self-consciousness involves the addition of a restriction upon one's effective freedom.

In brief, effective freedom itself has to be won. The key point is to reach a willingness to persuade oneself and to submit to the persuasion of others. For then one can be persuaded to a universal willingness; so one becomes antecedently willing to learn all there is to be learnt about willing and learning and about the enlargement of one's freedom from external constraints and psychoneural interferences. But to reach the universal willingness that matches the unrestricted desire to know is indeed a high achievement, for it consists not in the mere recognition of an ideal norm but in the adoption of an attitude towards the universe of being, not in the adoption of an affective attitude that would desire but not perform but in the adoption of an effective attitude in which performance matches aspiration.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Anthony de Mello, *Awareness: The Perils and Opportunities of Reality*, edited by J. Francis Stroud, S.J. (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 26-29.

<sup>62</sup> *Insight*, 623-24.

De Mello also talks about effective freedom, but in spiritual terms that imply a “waking up” to reality rather than to continue to live, hypnotized, in an unreal world; it is a readiness to learn, for as long as a person is asleep, freedom does not exist. Lonergan’s nuanced philosophical approach, well grounded in cognitive theory, separates a readiness to learn something new from a readiness to make changes in one’s life. For rich people can encounter the poor, but refuse to take any action in light of that encounter.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, the phrase “Filters Against Folly” is the title of a book by Garrett Hardin. He too, while acknowledging the power and subtlety of human speech, objects to the word-magic of the merely literate. First of all, there are two languages: the expressed words and the pragmatic communication that sets the context:

In discoursing on the seriousness of literary biases with a friend from the world of letters, I once offered in evidence a remark that Robert Lowell is recorded to have made. The occasion was one on which the significance of W. H. Auden’s work was under discussion. ‘After all,’ said Lowell, citing Auden’s moving poem ‘September 1, 1939,’ ‘if not for Auden we wouldn’t have known about the Second World War.’

Taking the words at their face value I deduced that Lowell’s bias was such that he felt that nothing in this world was real until it had been suitably treated in literature. Not at all, said my friend: ‘Don’t you sense the irony?’

I didn’t, and there’s the trouble. Language no doubt began as straight description of the world, but it soon grew to encompass the indirect approaches of irony, sarcasm, and contrafactual conditionals. To understand what is meant, one often has to be able to hear two languages: language in the ordinary sense, and the unspoken language that tells you how to ‘hear’ the spoken. The second ‘language’ is often called ‘meta-language.’ . . .

---

<sup>63</sup> The same holds for me: I can develop a habitual willingness for disinterested and detached learning, confirmed perhaps in this encounter with Müntzer, and still be unwilling to make any change in my life that emerge from this encounter. Yet:

There is a difference between knowledge and awareness, between information and awareness. I just said to you that one cannot do evil in awareness. But one can do evil in knowledge or information, when you *know* something is bad. ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ I would translate that as ‘They’re not *aware* of what they are doing.’ Paul says he is the greatest of sinners because he persecuted the Church of Christ. But, he adds, I did it unawares. Or if they had been *aware* that they were crucifying the Lord of Glory, they would never have done so. Or: ‘The time will come when they will persecute you and they *think* they are doing a service to God.’ They aren’t aware. They’re caught up in information and knowledge. Thomas Aquinas puts it nicely when he says, ‘Every time someone sins, they’re sinning under the guise of good.’ They’re blinding themselves; they’re seeing something as good even though they know it is bad; they’re rationalizing because they’re seeking something under the pretext of good.

Anthony de Mello, *Awareness: the Perils and Opportunities of Reality*, edited by J. Francis Stroud, S.J. (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 144. The one thing about entering into an encounter is that it operates at the level of awareness, not of knowledge or information. This constitutes the core of discernment in the functional specialty of Foundations.

Nothing like irony is to be found in the literature of science. The loss in piquancy is compensated by a gain in precision. . . .

No doubt most people would agree that the principal function of language is to promote communication between people, perhaps adding that it serves also to further that interior communication we call thinking. All well and good, but we do not truly understand the social significance of language until we explicitly express this greater truth: *Beyond communication, language has two functions: to promote thought, and to prevent it.*<sup>64</sup>

From all of this, it may seem that my foundational stance is built around the application of explanatory scientific understanding to common sense practice. But the very selection of someone like Müntzer also tells me that there is more to human living than those things that can be expressed in numeric or ecotate filters, as important as these filters are for keeping us on track.

---

<sup>64</sup> Garrett Hardin, *Filters Against Folly: How to Survive Despite Economists, Ecologists, and the Merely Eloquent* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1985), 27-28. Hardin's italics. Hardin is not against the literary world as such, but only against its use as the primary "filter" when it comes to planning and policy making. Logorrhea, that linguistic sin of keeping in touch, can get in the way of understanding. For example, bringing "infinity" into the discussion is an effective way of stopping further thought (the "infinite" value of every innocent life, expressed by an opponent to abortion who is really saying: 'I am not interested in assertions that abortion may sometimes be the lesser of two evils; in fact, *I refuse to talk about it.*' Hardin, 31; Hardin's italics. Then there are such discussion-stoppers words as: *non-negotiable, self-evident, must and imperative.* And poetry:

Is it hypocritical to enjoy poetry that is rich in thought-stoppers like 'infinity,' while at the same time we assert our commitment to a rational, scientific approach to life's problems?

Not at all. The poet Coleridge (who, incidentally, had a keen appreciation of the science of his day) has given a formula for justifying the poetic impulse as well as the poetic product. Whenever he put together a poem, he said, he endeavoured to 'procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.' In this passage there is no denial of rationality and no permanent commitment to the irrational. *Only for the moment* is there a willing suspension of disbelief—and it is a suspension, not a rejection of the critical impulse.

Ibid., 35.

Language, if properly understood, can be one filter against folly. Hardin argues that there are two others: the numerate and the ecotate. Briefly, the numerate filter involves an awareness of scale, rates of change and numerical relationships between phenomena—free-ranging frontier land management is qualitatively different from the regulations required to run a mega city like Tokyo. 'The resources of literacy include too much rhetoric that is beautifully suited to the hiding of numbers and the need for numbers; dichotomies are favored over quantities.' Ibid., 41. The ecotate filter is based on the first law of ecology: everything is connected to everything else, modified in the practical realm to the maxim that *we can never do merely one thing.* The key question is, *And then what?*

There are a number of works dealing with mistakes in thinking. Two of the more recent ones are John Allen Paulos, *Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and its Consequences* (New York, N. Y.: Hill and Wang, 2001) and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, *Inevitable Illusions: How Mistakes of Reason Rule our Minds* (New York, N. Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1994). But ultimately, it is Lonergan's *Insight* (1957) that really sets out the proper position against flights from understanding, inaccurate prejudgments and misunderstandings. The shift to a higher perspective via the realm of interiority and the self-appropriation of one's own rationality is in my mind the ultimate filter against folly.



My own position is that a proper balance must be found if “unfortunate” accidents often due to human error are to be avoided.

But the matter may run deeper than the application of reason. Why do I—why does my foundational stance, my horizon and intentions—require the application of reason in the first place? Müntzer life was religious, not scientific (numerate and ecolate filters did not exist at his time), and while human interests declare his life a failure (he was after all beheaded), human horizons are limited when compared to a divine understanding of reality. His was a dramatic life and humans are attracted to dramatic tales of heroism and tragedy, but that doesn’t explain why part of me finds him interesting. A fellow imaginative and creative soul, seeking the greater good, “fighting windmills”? Perhaps, but that still leaves the basic question unanswered. It may be that Müntzer offers a part of me that I have long suppressed if not rejected.

At some deep level, I expect a reasonable and intelligible world, not the kind of turbulent, uncertain and absurd reality revealed by postmodernists. This is a gut expectation, probably grounded in growing up in a small New Brunswick town during the fifties and sixties where order and intelligence seemed to prevail (the reality was probably different, but such things lie outside the routine order of a middle-class child’s life). But one learns, new experiences frame expectations, new insights enlarge and enhance one’s understanding, so early expectations in themselves are not sufficient to account for this need for order and predictability.

What maintains such a need is quite likely my own difficulties in reading the pragmatic signals that constitute the vast majority of human communications. Having to rely almost totally on the intellectual content of such communications and missing a great deal of the “meta-language” sub-context, my choices and decisions lack crucial bits of information related to common sense intelligence—hence the need for predictability and order in a world often experienced as random, uncertain and dangerous.

This experiential reality explains both the need for a strong intelligible good of order in society (What is going on?) and my focus on Professional Practice (What should I do?). The

search for underlying order, for explanatory theories of human behaviour, for the different ways meaning is controlled, for the general “flow” of history (progress, decline, reversal, redemption) and for understanding conversion as a means of understanding the tacit features of human interactions are all questions whose meaning and purpose derives from the uncertain and unpredictable aspects of my own life when it comes to common sense interactions with others. As a result, I live in the explanatory and interiority realms of meaning in ways that most people do not. For there is an advantage in not being aware of the pragmatic elements of human communication; I can go where most people cannot, guided more by the desire to know reality rather than having to fit in with the existing level of common sense worlds mediated by meaning constrained by the intersubjective human need to fit in and not make waves. The original need for order and predictability is being transmuted into the pure desire to know.

The result is an inbuilt bias against literature, or at least an unwillingness to suspend belief and accept great literature as it is. Focussed as I am on the issues outlined in Chapter Two and concerned with gaining a truer perspective on reality, the imaginative play seems more the result of human intersubjectivity in motion than a serious study of the human condition. But now that I’m aware of this bias, it does seem to be a bias—and one that I’ve been semi-conscious of for some time. Despite assembling a collection of translations, commentaries, and linguistic resources, I’ve put off any systematic reading of the Bible—suspecting in the back of my mind that I would only misinterpret what I was reading. And now I know how that misinterpretation would have come about. Not only that, I now have a clue to a way valid way of reading sacred scripture. Perhaps Ben F. Meyer’s critique of the historian’s search for the “real” Jesus puts it best:

Dogma, fraud, myth, naiveté, bias. The gospels are, in fact, dogmatic, richly and variously objectifying the faith that gave them being. ‘Bias’ may not be the term to describe them, but neither their authors nor their intended readerships were disinterested parties. The mythical (so named in a technical sense) lay at their heart and centre. But was the scandal of the [historical] critics a judgment on the gospels? Gospel literature was in many ways naïve, but naïve literature can be great and a

literature without subjectivity is dead. Fraud might justify scandal but the charge of fraud [against the Bible] was mistaken.<sup>65</sup>

### *The Path to True Faith*

As has already been mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, the problem Müntzer and other religiously inclined members of his generation faced was the “obvious” corruption of Christian life as expressed in the decidedly secular pursuits of both bishops and popes for luxury and power, and the lax morals of the clergy. Complaints like these had been going on for over a half-century, and while conditions may not have been as corrupt as the reformers made it out to be, it is also an historical fact that the popes who occupied the seat of Peter in Rome from 1470-1530 provoked the reformation by their conspicuous behaviour that was more Renaissance Prince than spiritual leader.

There was always a theological question of who had ultimate power in the Church: the Pope or a Council. But it wasn’t until the Great Schism of 1378 that lasted for almost forty years, where two duly elected Popes one in Rome and the other in Avignon, fought to be recognized as the legitimate Pope, that the question—Could the Pope ever be a heretic?—became a matter of practical public concern. One effect of this schism, combined with the later behaviour of the Popes in Rome, is that the question of what was the truth Christian path began to preoccupy people’s minds. If the Church had been strong and intact, this question would have been answered early on. But the Church had dropped sharply in the esteem of many people, so people

---

<sup>65</sup> Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* with a new introduction by N. T. Wright (San Jose, California: Pickwick Publications, 2002), 25. Recognizing the significance of great literature, including the Bible, does not imply any fundamental foundational change. Rather, this is an extension of existing horizons to include articles of faith that may require a temporary suspension of belief in order to grasp the underlying reality of religious conversion in operation. The recognition of conversion is already recognized as essential.

(It is the difference between Orientation and Diagnosis & Evaluation. Although working out the orientation of another involves a technical analysis, the basic data belongs to the realm of common sense—the world as it relates to us—and especially to oral presentations and written documents. Literature and historical studies certainly provide primary data on the objects and emotional attachments both of the individual and the world-mediated-by-meaning existing at the time. D&E belongs to the realm of explanatory theory—even if the theory should be historical, e.g., a general theory of progress, decline, reversal and redemption in history—and is very much operational in the “How does this work?” or “What steps are necessary to . . .” sense.)

Literature, on the other hand, speaks the language of the heart.

where thrown back on their own devices. This started the ball rolling as alternatives were sought and positions established. Müntzer was part of this historical process.

As was already mentioned, Müntzer's position on the proper path to true faith was not through ecclesial, scriptural, formal theological or princely power, but through the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In 1519,

Müntzer immersed himself in a study of Johann Tauler, the most practical of the medieval German mystics, whose doctrine of the reception of the Holy Spirit in the 'abyss'—the innermost depths—of the soul as the precondition of true faith was to become the cornerstone of [Müntzer's] mature theology.<sup>66</sup>

This foundational stance held as counter-positions the propositions that:

1. The traditions handed down through the church, an important justification for relying on more than scripture alone, could not be the source—although the elect should give witness to this evangelical acceptance of the Holy Spirit. True faith came from the innermost depths, not mere words or deeds.
2. The study of theology as the road to true faith was also doomed to failure, for according to Müntzer it was not through the mind that one reached God but through suffering.
3. Scripture, like tradition, could not redeem a person through suffering, but it could give witness to the need to do so through the example of the lives of such people as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—all of who dreaded this call to God and yet through acceptance and suffering were inspired by God.

When an apocalyptic worldview dominates the emotional landscape, suffering is indeed—like the calls for repentance after the Jewish exile in Babylon—a necessary stage in bring a people back to God. But even this apocalyptic attitude is flawed, based on one or more misconceptions about reality. From Anthony de Mello's perspective, suffering is self-inflicted, the result of undue and unseemly attachments. Drop these beliefs, these attachments, and one will be pervaded by a deep joy that relishes every moment for what it is. What are some of these false beliefs?

You cannot be happy without the things that you are attached to and that you consider so precious.  
False. There is not a single moment in your life when you do not have everything that you need to be happy.

Happiness is in the future. Not true. Right here and now you are happy and you do not know it because your false beliefs and your distorted perceptions have got you caught up in fears, anxieties, attachments, conflicts guilt and a host of games that you are programme to play.

Happiness will come if you manage to change the situation you are in and the people around you.  
Not true. You stupidly squander so much energy trying to rearrange the world. If changing the

---

<sup>66</sup> Tom Scott, *Thomas Müntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 11-12.

world is your vocation in life, go right ahead and change it, but to not harbour the illusion that this is going to make you happy.

If all your desires are fulfilled you will be happy. Not true. In fact it is these very desires and attachments that make you tense, frustrated, nervous, insecure and fearful.

What then is happiness? Very few people know and no one can tell you, because happiness cannot be described. Can you describe light to people who have been sitting in darkness all their lives? Understand your darkness and it will vanish; then you will know what light is. Understand your nightmare for what it is and it will stop; then you will wake up to reality.<sup>67</sup>

It is safe to say that unhappiness is equivalent to suffering, and happiness to “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding . . .” (NIV, Philippians 4:7).

The key difference between Müntzer’s and de Mello’s conception of suffering does not lie in the realm of the phenomena but in the root causes: Müntzer’s reasons lie in a falling away from God; de Mello’s in our own capacity to inflict pain upon ourselves when God has nothing but joy and happiness for us. Both ascribe to a mystic experience that opens our eyes to the false reality of suffering, yet on de Mello’s part the key lies in becoming *aware*, of *waking up* from a bad dream.<sup>68</sup>

In proposing his eight functional specialities for theology, Lonergan stresses the need for theologians to attend to their own conversion experiences, their own authenticity, at least as far as the last four specialities that have to do with making an impact on the world (the first four are devoted to understanding Christian life as it has and is being lived). In *Method*, Lonergan never actually describes the personal transformations that lead Christians to the kind of knowledge born of religious faith; that was never his purpose. What he did was lay out the conditions within

---

<sup>67</sup> Anthony de Mello, S.J., *The Way to Love: The Last Meditations of Anthony de Mello* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 5-7. Originally published as *Call to Love* in India in 1991 by Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.

<sup>68</sup> By de Mello’s standards, the Müntzer that has come down to us is still caught up in attachments that include a prophetic call to change the world. This lack of balance may be due to the conditions of the time, which included the many frustrations of living during unsettled times, power plays between principalities and fiefdoms, and a general tendency toward legation and taking the law into one’s own hands. The Peasants’ War of 1524-25 suggests a pet-up rebellion against the group bias of those few who held most of the reigns of power. At any rate, Müntzer’s confrontational approach may be due in part to the fact that he cared deeply about the common people and considered himself as a champion who would not let things slide by. But did he engage in this work with a calm heart, doing all that he can but letting God do the work, or was his heart as unsettled as any. If the latter, than a spiritual conversion through suffering seems inconsistent with his approach—unless the suffering was ongoing throughout life and the mystical shift to the believe that the world is exactly the way it needs to be at this point in time.

which rational thought on religious beliefs in general could be understood and communicated, i.e. a general methodology that lays out the proper stages in their proper arrangement, with a given starting point and a desired end. The beginning point is Christian life as it is lived; the end point is transposing Christianity to other cultural matrixes.

It is interesting, in light of this discussion on the source of true faith, that the last four specialities start with Foundations before moving on to Doctrines, Systematics and Communications. That was missing from the theological work of Müntzer's time, the "precondition" of working on one's authenticity, on the dynamism of the human spirit toward transcendence, on understanding the grounds for discerning between the positions and counter-positions worked out in Dialectics, and above all on the never assured path that brings into an uneasy relationship ourselves as transcended and ourselves as transcending. Yet this is precisely the work Müntzer set out to do (Müntzer, like Lonergan, stressed the Subject). It is this tension in our authentic genuine self that is the key indicator of a being engaged in living up to the transcendental injunctions. And the sometimes abrupt sometimes glacial movement of the soul that starts with falling in love with God (religious conversion), moves on to desire to follow the truly good (moral conversion), realizes the need to understand the world as it is (intellectual conversion) and transforms self through a symbolic/emotional preconscious shift (psychic conversion) that finally changes who we are as an individual and a theologian. Müntzer could not have expressed his spiritual mysticism in those words, but the emphasis on discernment and authenticity has its counterpart with Müntzer's unexpected and uncontrollable gift of the Spirit in the face of adversity.

#### *A League of Our Own*

Part of Müntzer's intentions—in the face of an obstinate Church, intractable nobles and misleading reformers—was to develop a community, a league, of the elect. His German evangelical service, pastoral services, and even his involvement with the Peasants' War suggest

someone deeply disenchanted with the existing structure, someone who finally turned to mobilizing at the ground roots.<sup>69</sup> Not that he had too much choice in the matter, for as likely as not his own foundational stance caught him up in the affairs of the day.

Curiously, Müntzer's situation mirrors my own—not as a pastor and church reformer, but as someone who like him is discontent with many of the features of our own institutional structure. We differ, however, to the extent that he like most of his contemporaries perceived the world in generalized black-and-white terms, complete with priestly devils and counterfeit Christians, whereas my own foundation includes the careful analytical tools since acquired through the sciences. Furthermore, in contrast to Müntzer I just don't have the social and political common sense intelligence to know how things get done. His vivid social interactions and political exhortations are alien to my own experience and intellectual position.

Yet, in working through Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method*, I too drew up a "League of our Own," a community based on Lonergan's cosmopolis. Although Müntzer's age is long over and humanity has moved on to other problems, other issues, there is still a need for a prophetic call. There's little role for prophets in government or church, perhaps because they are unsettling—or perhaps like God they are not part of the secular state. While I know that I do not represent such a messenger, I can still be challenged by what Müntzer set out to do in his own time: to reform an institution whose elite—both church and state—we no longer Christian in any compassionate, loving, and caring sense of the term.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> If I were to adopt Müntzer's style, I would have to say that Churches were places for people to retreat from the real world, governments and business were dominated by Cassandra mechanisms while engaged in the Private Profit/Common Costs game, and educational institutions were more concerned with credentialism than creative learning and living. But this is, of course, an overgeneralization.

<sup>70</sup> I'm aware that part of me finds this reformist attitude very appealing. Yet continued set-backs have led me to rethink this position, to the point where I now prefer to become aware of my own self as I am without criticism or comment and let whatever changes that need to take place flow through this awareness rather than motivated by dissatisfaction, self-intolerance and violence against who I am. I do what I do to "clear the lens of my own soul" (waxing poetically for a moment) and let God assign whatever tasks for change He feels necessary.

This of course is the ideal; the reality is something different.

Müntzer developed a new liturgy to embody his understanding of Christianity based on the direct laying on of the Holy Spirit. If I had to declare the equivalent for my own time, I'd have to cite the "Declaration of Intent" from the *Association for Critical Realists*, heavily dependent on Lonergan's notion of cosmopolis.<sup>71</sup> Cosmopolis, that "world capital", is Lonergan's long term solution to the problem of long term decline due to common sense short-sightedness focused on immediate results. People of common sense do not specialize in philosophy, history, literary criticism or theology:

[Common sense] prefers to raid these territories every once in a while and rustle a few insights to meet concrete situations. It distorts these insights without realizing it because it tears them away from a fabric of related insights and tries to patch them onto a quilt without design. It thinks that its greatest wisdom can be condensed into mottoes and displayed on posters.

So common sense suffers two permanent limitations. First, it regularly fails to think in terms of history—to learn lessons from the past, and to look further than tomorrow when planning for the future. We see evidence of this in the nuclear power industry's persistent failure to deal with problems of safety and disposal of toxic wastes. We see it in the failure of automobile companies to produce efficient automobiles. We see it in the refusal of industrial cities to diversify their works and so avoid the usual fate of a one-industry town.

Behind this first limitation of common sense lies the second. Common sense does not have the sense to recognize this first limitation. In other words, by not recognizing its own problems, it thinks itself omniscient. Only when people also possess the uncommon sense that is willing to take the longer view do they willingly subordinate their common sense to an in-depth study of the human species.<sup>72</sup>

This is a cultural problem and its solution can only be a cultural solution: cosmopolis.

What is both unnecessary and disastrous is the exaltation of the practical, the supremacy of the state, the cult of the class. What is necessary is a cosmopolis that is neither class nor state, that stands above all their claims, that cuts them down to size, that is founded on the native detachment and disinterestedness of every intelligence, that commands man's first allegiance, that implements itself

---

<sup>71</sup> The idea of an *Association for Critical Realists* developed a few years ago out of a growing awareness of the extent to which Lonergan's material was still largely confined to theological and philosophical circles without directly taking up the challenge he laid out for reforming our current situation. Although *Insight* was written in highly scholastic terms, it is clear from Lonergan's comments in the introduction and preface that it is meant (among other things) to counter the general relativism consistent with an epistemology of naïve realism that permeates contemporary society so that people can not only understand what it means to understand but recognize the ways we flee from understanding. As Lonergan states:

*Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.*

*Insight*, xxviii; Lonergan's italics.

<sup>72</sup> Tad Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 98.



primarily through that allegiance, that is too universal to be bribed, too impalpable to be forced, too effective to be ignored.<sup>73</sup>

Lonergan then proceeds to work out a number of fundamental properties of this cosmopolis. But even though this is a fundamental concept for me, there is neither time nor space to include any discussion other than offer a tentative speculative proposal that incorporates many of features of cosmopolis. In what follows, “Church” replaces “Association” and “Christians” substitutes for “Critical Realists”; it makes interesting reading, for it represents the Church both transcending and limiting itself as an organization, to reach a culture capable of countering common sense expediency. It is of course totally impractical.

#### *Declaration of Intent*

The Christian Church exists in order to counter the long-term cycle of decline brought about by a chronic short-sightedness on the part of common sense intelligence; we withdraw from practicality in order to save practicality.

1. The Church does not denounce any individual or group, culture or civilization.
2. The Church does not endorse or promote the opinions of others.
3. The Church remains above all political issues and debates.
4. The Church does not administer any legal or ethical codes; nor do we engage in any practical way with contemporary legal or ethical issues.
5. The Church is open to all who are committed to and practice the principles and guidelines set out in this declaration of intent.
6. The Church does not enrol members or levy membership fees; membership is constrained by the nature of the tasks contained in this declaration of intent.
7. The Church actively promotes historical consciousness, that is, a heightened grasp of historical origins and a discovery of historical responsibilities.
8. The Church actively promotes an awareness of the socio-geographic realities that constitute the space dimension of any understanding of unique time-and-space-specific situations.
9. The Church is dedicated to a general critique of history, for without any such critique there can be no intelligent direction of history.
10. The Church is dedicated to exploring the movements, changes, and epochs of a civilization’s genesis, development, and vicissitudes.
11. The Church is dedicated to the tracing back to their origins the opinions and attitudes of the present and criticizing these origins in the light of dialectic.
12. The primary business of the Church is to prevent practicality from being so short-sightedly practical that it destroys itself.

---

<sup>73</sup> *Insight*, 238.

13. The Church is committed to making operative the timely and fruitful ideas that otherwise are held by common sense intelligence to be inoperative; we give witness to the possibility of ideas being effective and efficient regulators of human behaviour without the backing of power, pressure, or force.
14. The Church is dedicated to breaking a vicious and illusionary circle, namely that men and women will not venture on ideas known to be correct because they hold that such ideas will not work unless sustained by desires or fears; men and women hold that such ideas will not work because they will not venture on them and so have no empirical evidence that such ideas can and would work.
15. The Church is committed to the idea that it is extremely practical to ignore what is thought to be really practicable; therefore, we do not condemn individual egoism already condemned by society or get excited by group egotisms that create the conditions that invariable lead to their downfall.
16. The Church is very determined to prevent dominant groups from deluding mankind by the rationalization of their sins; if the sins of dominant groups are bad enough, still the erection of their sinning into universal principles is indefinitely worse, for it is the universalization of sin by rationalization that contributes to the longer cycle of decline.
17. It is the task of the Church to ridicule, explode, and destroy such universalized rationalizations.
18. The Church is indifferent to changes in power and thus is quite free from the nonsense that the rising star of another class or nation is going to put a different human nature in the saddle; we do, however, counter the myths created by any new dominant group, myths, for example, that are embodied in the catchwords that brought the new group to power, the demonizing of the previous power elite, the embodiment of ideal that the new regime is supposed to represent, and the new fashion that all ideas—if they are to be considered by the new powerful group—have to dress themselves.
19. It is the business of the Church to prevent the formation of the screening memories by which an ascent to power hides its nastiness; it is our business to prevent the falsification of history with which the new group overstates its case; it is our business to satirize the catchwords and the claptrap and thereby to prevent the notions they express from coalescing with passions and resentments to engender obsessive nonsense for future generations; it is our business to encourage and support those that would speak the simple truth through simple truth has gone out of fashion.
20. Above all, the Church goes to extraordinary lengths to ensure that those who engage in working on its behalf are themselves purged from rationalizations and myths—the general bias of common sense, group or individual egotism—that has become part of our common human heritage; religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion are an essential component of our work.

Think of this proposal as an injunction laid upon us by Christ, to save people from their own misdeeds and folly—keeping in mind the dangers in a pattern that places redemption in the hands of one person.

Such work is far from easy. Ours is not the spreading of sweetness and light, for sweetness and light usually means what is sweet and light for us. We are far from being free of bias. The problem we face is that every scotosis puts forth a plausible, ingenious, adaptive, untiring

resistance—and the general bias of common sense is no exception. Rather than taking a principled stand against common sense bias, we move with it through slight differences rather than outright opposition. This provides the best prospect of selling books, monographs, and newsletters that provide entertainment and education.

This is only superficial. Beneath this problem lies the almost insoluble difficulty of exposing in a clear and exact manner the nature of this general common sense bias to common sense intelligence. We know that it is not a cultural bias, but only a compromise that results from taking the highest common factor of an aggregate of cultures all of who have compromised in one way or another in order to get things done. We know it is not compromises that will check and reverse the longer cycle of decline. We know it is not unbiased intelligence at fault, for unbiased intelligence does not produce such a welter of conflicting opinions and valuations.

However, there are two positive features that work in our favour. The first is that common sense tends to be profoundly sane in both common sense and judgments; unintelligent common sense soon finds it has brought upon itself its own destruction. The second is that there is a method of dialectical analysis where both the refusal of insight and the flight from understanding betray themselves. The confusion and discord that characterizes our civilization lies in the cumulative product of a series of refusals to understand; dialectical analysis can discover and expose both the series of past refusals and the tactics of contemporary resistance to enlightenment.<sup>74</sup> In such a way, basic, moral and physical sin can be brought to awareness for what they are—and are not. For basic sin has no reason, no intelligibility, no rational: it lies in a failure to do what is intelligent and necessary.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> “There is a convergence of evidence for the assertion that the longer cycle is to be met, not by any idea or set of ideas on the level of technology, economics, or politics, but only by the attainment of a higher viewpoint in man’s understanding and making of man.” *Insight*, 233. “The basic service of the higher viewpoint will be a liberation from confusion through clear distinctions; progress is not to be confused with decline.” *Insight*, 235.

<sup>75</sup> Moral sin is the result of a number of basic sins that affect moral capacity; hence basic sins are incorporated in a general unwillingness or unreasonableness in both individual and culture. Physical sin is

### *Personal Challenge*

It retrospect, it is surprising the extent to which both Friedman and Lonergan are now part of my very self. Having encountered Friedman in the mid-70s and been immediately attracted to his notion of Professional Practice expressed in his own transdisciplinary framework for organizing social science knowledge for use by planners and policy-makers. What I lacked was Friedman's extensive knowledge of the social sciences, picking up what I could from his courses and from a variety of outside reading. It is a deficiency that needs filling if this work is to continue, but as this study shows the framework is now firmly in place to extend his work.

Part of such outside reading involved philosophy, such people as Hans-George Gadamer and Martin Heidegger who promised insights into our very being. Such readings were never systematic or even very deep; if anything there were inspectional readings to find out if they contributed to filling a void in Friedman's work, namely the lack of a transdisciplinary methodology other than that of common sense practicality and specialized expertise. About two years after meeting Friedman a friend introduced me to Lonergan's *Insight*, and the moment I read the introduction and preface I knew he had solved the problem of grounding transdisciplinary work. But Lonergan was hard work, especially for someone with little formal theological and philosophical background, and resources for training were at that time virtually non-existent. It wasn't until the late 80s that I took my first graduate course in *Method*.

Married, with two children and out in the work force, I had little time or interest in following up on their work in anything more than a desultory fashion. But in the 90s, divorced and following my introduction to the question of God in Sean McEvenue's course on *Method*, this changed. Then, soon after the turn of the century, I was admitted into the qualifying stage for Theological Studies. When I took *Method* for the second time, I found these old ideas had resurfaced and found a place in a thesis proposal designed to test my foundational stance not only

---

the results of both basic and moral sins, and has to do with the breakdown of the good of order—a general diminishment of intelligibility that leads to confusion and conflict. See *Insight*, 666-67.

for doing theology but to continue with this line of work. The results, outlined in this chapter, were most revealing; they have given me a far deeper appreciation of the implications of my foundational stance, both pros and cons, and clarified not only where I stand but what is required if I were to continue. This study demonstrates that I have the basic intellectual framework and skills to structure any future program of research and study, that my foundational stance has—as far as any person can say—sufficient “authenticity” to at least take up the work with some assurance that I will not distort the data’s potentiality, and that there’s a good ten years of further development—specifically in the social sciences, theology and Lonergan studies—before any truly solid work can be done. And that is my personal challenge: do I continue along this line? And if I do, how?<sup>76</sup>

Müntzer rose up to the challenges of his time. Not only did he take up the challenge to find the grounds for true Christian faith, but he worked to extend that faith through practical ministry. As for myself, for a long time I thought it had to do with promoting authenticity through planning and policy-making, but I’m beginning to understand Doris Lessing’s comment on how future societies will look back on our own age and be amazed at how much we knew about human behaviour and how little of what we knew ever made in into practice. The notion of Professional Practice, with its careful identification of key terms and relationships, methods and stages, is an excellent tool to do just that: to find the key bits of knowledge and put these insights into a form that can be used by different practitioners. That’s what needs to be done; the drive for authenticity will emerge on its own, as part of a communal facing up to the complexities and

---

<sup>76</sup> This is a major decision for me. If it was just the work itself, there would be no question. But to decide to continue involves more than the work. It means changing my own life, taking on a more disciplined approach to living than comes naturally. Then there’s a question of reception: transdisciplinary work rarely finds resources within academic or non-academic circles, and work that bridges theology, the social sciences and practical planning and policy-making even less so. But this is not the area of discernment (assuming that God doesn’t have another option in mind). True, there is the question of my own willingness to proceed in the face of what to Müntzer would have been minor difficulties, but there is also the question of what is required irrespective of my own interests by a universe caught up in the dynamics of emergent probability and by a call to transcendence (the realms of explanatory and transcendental meaning, things as they relate to each other, and the deeper intelligibility given to the universe by this Transcendental Being).

interdependencies of contemporary life where wisdom has not kept up with technical know-how. There are people of good-will out there, people who could use the knowledge that specialists already know. What is needed is a way to get this knowledge to them in a way that they can use.<sup>77</sup>

To do this would be to work for an open society that allows the Divine Mystery to operate in each person's soul to enhance the human good in what-ever situation people find themselves. And, like the Protestants of the Reformation, it is a commitment to being responsible and to promote this religious belief in everyone being responsible for the well-being not only of ourselves but of the society in which we live out our lives. Müntzer's own taking of responsibility calls for an equal awareness of being personally responsible for these socio/political conditions that are now operative.

The real value in this exercise (encountering the incarnate meaning of another) is that I now have brought to consciousness a number of beliefs and commitments that, embedded in my foundational stance, I never knew I had. This revolutionary drive of mine, or at least the drive toward reform, was never so clear to me as when I encounter the same drive in Müntzer; ditto the Cassandra effect of being discounted, a natural consequence for any reformer looking up from the well of time into the possibilities of future states of being. Knowing that I have committed to the idea of an open society and the free exercise of human responsibility by *all* people in society and that this position was a common position of the church reformers during the Reformation allows me to better orientate myself among contrary positions that up to then I had not taken seriously. My ability to discern different positions in this area has improved greatly, since I now have objectified the dialectic and foundational choices of value at the cognitive level of deciding.

---

<sup>77</sup> Over the course of writing this study, a third approach began to emerge. The whole notion of Professional Practice involves coming to know social and political life in a complex multi-dimensional way that transcends any one discipline or realm of meaning. In itself, it might be a useful tool for not only heightening awareness of one's own foundational stance but coming to understanding human behaviour in general. Might not Professional Practice serve as a new paradigm for social science research, combining as it does social interaction, critical realism and a transdisciplinary framework?

But this is not Müntzer's type of radical evangelical reform, which challenged the entire world-mediated-by-meaning of his time. In reviewing the material on Müntzer's life and times, I realized that it's not reform but a careful pruning of those factors leading to decline while enhancing the good that is to be found in any time-and-space-specific situation. The section "In Praise of Prudence" sets out a basic attitude toward change, namely those innovations—especially technical ones—are guilty until proven innocent. Müntzer's approach is, for me, one of the counter-positions that can be taken in opposition to the "progressive conservative" position, as it used to be known, where gradual improvements replace sudden shifts. From my foundational stance, the emergence of higher order intelligibility is not a matter of fiat, of control from above, but from the countless local innovations that stem from actively engaged people. Like Jane Jacobs' position, "Let things grow."<sup>78</sup>

And when it comes to our fundamental options, the basic choices are few:

[T]he meaning constitutive of the worlds in which we live, is today confronted with a postmodern option, an option whose only serious alternatives are (1) deconstructive normlessness, (2) an educated and sincere but misguided return to classicism and dogmatism, and (3) the discovery of norms of human genuineness that fully respect modern insights into historicity.<sup>79</sup>

To anyone committed to the basic intelligibility of a universe created by God, the first option—deconstructive normlessness—is an abomination, an insult against both God and humans. And in an age where people experience the existence of many different cultures, it is difficult to insist one's own culture has the right and obligation to set norms for all—thus making

---

<sup>78</sup> Jacobs, *Dark Ages* (2004), 170 (extended quote cited "In Praise of Prudence). Her position is compatible with the notion of open societies, taking personal responsibility and distrusting those who claim to speak for the greater good as a means of making real their own ideological positions. The idea of a "superman" who takes responsibility for all is inherent in Christianity, a religion founded on just such a "superman" holding ultimate power as Son of God. The Roman Catholic Church's centralization of power in the papacy, even though councils held their own sway, is a natural extension of this "super-Christ redeemer" into the human realm—at least from a secular perspective. So too is the belief that the Church mediates between man and God, a foundational belief that again creates a special class of "super-people." After one experiences the egotistical, group power seeking and the short-sightedness of "practical" people—in short, the inauthenticities of much of political and social life—it becomes very difficult to trust any authority. After all, people are all too human; we make mistakes, and the perks of power, unless offset by the twin principles of subsidiarity and fiscal accountability, soon lead astray even those with the best of intention.

<sup>79</sup> Robert M. Doran, S.J., *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 5.

a return to a classical normative culture a travesty and an appeal to dogma as final arbitrator a matter of exercising power over others. This leaves only the third option as the only viable one for anyone seeking to work their way through the tangle of positions and counter-positions clarified in the functional speciality of Dialectics. For all cultures are not of equal value; some are better than others, and the only way to tell is through “the discovery of norms of human genuineness” that set standards such as the transcendental injunctions that apply to all cultural plans and policies.

This is not an easy task. And reversing decline not an easy process. As Lonergan warns:

Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good. Imperceptibly the corruption spreads from the harsh sphere of material advantage and power to the mass media, the stylish journals, the literary movements, the educational process, the reigning philosophies. *A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency. It cannot be argued out of its self-destructive ways*, for argument has a theoretical major premises, theoretical premises are asked to conform to matters of fact, and the facts in the situation produced by decline more and more are the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility.<sup>80</sup>

And if these absurdities, these mistaken preunderstandings and prejudgments, are deeply buried in our psychic?

One of the most surprising things that one discovers who is trying to discipline his drives in the light of his own analysis is the tenacity with which convictions or impulses acquired in childhood cling to one. Feelings that one can see with perfect clarity are entirely unreasonable and without justification of any valid kind resist in the most disgusting way the best considered attack by intelligence. I should hate to confess how long it was before I could get rid of the sneaking conviction that there really is a life after death, and that I should be rewarded by and by for any sacrifices that I might make now in being good. Inhibitions of various sorts acquired for no valid reason are equally hard to live down. These things are often acquired, not by deliberate instruction, but by imitation. They are in the air, and have to be sensed before one can really understand the action of the adults that one is trying so hard to imitate. The presuppositions back of our verbalizing and reasoning are subtle things. They were acquired at a time when it was particularly necessary to get results, whether with or without understanding, and are therefore deeply imbedded in our whole intellectual fabric and accordingly difficult to analyze out. Certainly one of the most important of human intellectual traits, necessary for an understanding of our whole intellectual structure, is the difficulty of exorcising by intelligence practises and convictions acquired in childhood. It is only this which gives youth its chance, and justifies the sentiment, often expressed, that there is no hope for progress in the present generation, but that ‘we’ can only wait until it dies off, and begin anew.<sup>81</sup>

And societal conditions also stamp experiences into a collective consciousness. The Great Depression of the ‘30 s deeply etched itself into people’s minds, to the point that American

---

<sup>80</sup> *Method*, 55. Author’s italics.

<sup>81</sup> Bridgman, *The Intelligent individual and Society* (1938), 209-10.



domestic economic policy, international trade talks and commercial agreements are still set according to job creation, economic development and the drive for full employment. So too are the distortions due to numerical illiteracy and scientific ineptitude embedded in a collective common sense consciousness.

And so too is a personal challenge laid out in this study. To objectify subjectivity is to be conscious one's own experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and loving, a task that opens up in a very personal way the realm of interiority so that one is fully aware of experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and loving. This task requires a disinterested and detached intelligence aware and in contact with the reality that one is. And this is no easy task, as de Mello points out:

To watch everything inside of you and outside, and when there is something happening to you, to see it as if it were happening to someone else, with no comment, no judgment, no attitude, no interference, no attempt to change, only to understand. As you do this, you'll begin to realize that increasingly you are disidentifying from 'me.' St. Teresa of Avila says that toward the end of her life God gave her an extraordinary grace. She doesn't use this modern expression, of course, but what it really boils down to is disidentifying from herself. If someone else has cancer and I don't know the person, I'm not all that affected. If I had love and sensitivity, maybe I'd help, but I'm not emotionally affected. If *you* have an examination to take, I'm not all that affected. I can be quite philosophical about it and say, 'Well, the more you worry about it, the worse it'll get. Why not just take a good break instead of studying?' But when it's my turn to have an examination, well, that's something else, isn't it? The reason is that I've identified with 'me'—with my family, my country, my possessions, my body, me. How would it be if God gave me grace not to call these things mine? I'd be detached; I'd be disidentified. That's what it means to lose the self, to deny the self, to die to self.<sup>82</sup>

So it is that by being aware of my own experiencing, understanding and judging as I create an historical Müntzer—of trying to understand what his life means for me, of the criteria brought into play for judging the validity of these insights into the incarnate meaning of Müntzer's life and of my own decisions, my own values, as contrasted with what can be affirmed about Müntzer's—the realm of interiority becomes habitual.

---

<sup>82</sup> Anthony de Mello, *Awareness: The Perils and Opportunities of Reality*, edited by J. Francis Stroud, S.J. (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 63-64. De Mello's italics.

Doing all this takes patience, love and charity. In the Epilogue of *The Enneagram*, the authors make a point well worth recounting in full, for entering into rational self-reflection can be a dangerous process if not done with love and respect:

The story is told of a Zulu girl who lived in a village where all the marriageable young women wore necklaces. Hers, however, was different and more beautiful than that worn by any of the others. As a result the other girls became jealous of her. One day, as she was walking alone along the river, she met a group of the other girls, who told her they had all thrown their necklaces into the river as an offering to the river god. They urged her to make the same sacrifice. So the girl took off her beautiful necklace and cast it into the river. Then all the girls laughed as they pulled out their necklaces from their pockets and ran off gleefully. In great sadness the girl continued to walk slowly along the river; but then she heard a voice within her say, 'Jump in!' So she jumped into the river at that very spot. At the bottom of the river she swam into a cave where she met an old woman who had been much hurt by life. The woman said to her, 'Kiss my scars and sores.' The girl said, 'I will do so gladly.' When the girl had done so, suddenly the woman was completely healed and she looked young and beautiful again. The woman said to the girl, 'Since you have done this for me, I will make you invisible to the demons so that they cannot harm you.' At that very moment the girl heard the voice of a demon saying, 'I smell flesh; I smell flesh.' The demon, however, could not see her and went away. Then the woman gave her a new necklace, even more beautiful than the one she had lost.

The girl went back to the village. When the other girls saw her, they were very surprised and asked her where she had obtained the beautiful necklace. She said that after they had left her, she had walked alone along the river until she heard a voice within her say, "Jump in!" She said she jumped into the river at that very spot and entered a cave where she met an old woman who gave her the necklace. The other girls asked where that exact spot was that she had jumped into the river and she told them. So all the girls ran down to the river and jumped into the river just at that place. They entered a cave and met an old woman who had been much hurt by life. She asked the girls to kiss her sores and scars that they might be healed. The girls, however, were filled with repulsion at the sight of the lady and refused to do as she said. Just at that moment they heard the voice of a demon saying, 'I smell flesh; I smell flesh.' Since they could readily be seen by the demon, he at once devoured them all.

To undertake the study of the Enneagram for one's own enlightenment is to risk becoming like the Zulu girl who threw her cherished necklace into the river. There is a casting aside of something up to now deemed very important to one's pride and dignity. A journey alone into the self begins, which leads to memories of past hurts, especially from the vulnerable years of one's childhood. It was then that one's personality type was formed as a reaction to disappointments and felt neglect from others. These hurts are still there. They need to be befriended along with their consequences in later life. One has the power to heal past hurts by going back to them in memory with forgiveness and compassion, to kiss them as it were. Such a 'disarmament of the heart' can remove the hurts so that the self can come forth with a new sense of pride and confidence based on self-enlightenment freeing one from the dark side of the self. As a consequence, one is no longer in danger of being devoured by that dark side. The compulsion's presence is still felt, but now one knows always how to escape its clutches.<sup>83</sup>

The same goes for any attempt to objectify one's horizons and intentions: it is difficult to cast away a self that one has valued, for the task of making one's horizon and intentions explicit exposes both the good and the bad. Unless care and patience is taken, the results can lead to more harm than good; disliking who one is, is an act of violence.

---

<sup>83</sup> Beesing, *The Enneagram* (1984), 219-21.

One final point has to do with expressions. Muntzer had a problem, How to express new ideas of ministry and priesthood in the old forms of liturgy? (Liturgy is especially important, for it is a communal ritual that brings people together in a shared world-mediated-by-meaning.) The same holds for the Creative Self prequel to OR, D&E and S&C—and for Lonergan’s own specialized terminology that uses terms from scholastic, mathematics and other disciplines in untraditional ways. Muntzer’s problem brought home my own problem, that gap between meaning and expression:

For expression is an instrumental act of meaning; it results from principal acts of conception and judgment; the principal acts follow from the immanent sources of meaning; and so, once sources have been tapped, it is only a matter of normal ingenuity to develop appropriate modes of expression. It follows that once any stage in the development of meaning has become propagated and established in a cultural milieu, there will result an appropriate mode of expression to bear witness to its existence. But it also follows that new meanings can be expressed only by transforming old modes of expression, that the greater the novelty, the less prepared the audience, the less malleable the previous mode of expression, then the greater will be the initial gap between meaning and expression and the more prolonged will be the period of experimentation in which the new ideas are forging the tools for their own exteriorization.<sup>84</sup>

Muntzer found a new liturgical form for an emerging evangelical Christianity; do I need to find an equivalent form for the emerging notion of Professional Practice?

#### *Modified Professional Practice*

After this encounter with Muntzer, it is clear that the three-stage process of Professional Practice—Orientation, Diagnosis & Evaluation, Scope & Constraints—folds two different stages into one. Orientation actually consists of two separate processes: working on one’s own orientation, the subject of this study, and understanding the orientations of others. The first has priority, for it is only through understanding oneself that one understands others—otherwise our preconceptions and preunderstandings cloud our ability to discern the ways in which others create and maintain their own worlds-mediated-by-meaning.

After all, the real source of meaning is not “out there”; it is within:

---

<sup>84</sup> *Insight*, 589.

Proximate sources of meaning are immanent in the interpreter, and from them he has to reach the meaning of some other writer. The first condition of such an extrapolation is an adequate self-knowledge. Is he sufficiently aware of the diverse elements of human experience, of the different manners in which insights accumulate, of the nature of reflection and judgment, of the various patterns of human experience and the consequent varieties of philosophic views and pre-philosophic orientations? The second condition of the extrapolation is that it is to the meaning of a man at a different stage of human development.<sup>85</sup>

Eventually this leads to the notion of universal viewpoint, a “potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints.”<sup>86</sup> It is potential because it can never exist other than in God; it is universal because it has a structure that contains all possible developmental and position/counter-position forms; and it is required by Professional Practitioners for the simple reason that without this potential any researcher/interpreter is bound to truncate the results either through inadequate self knowledge or failure to attend to the different stages of human progress.

The counter-position to universal viewpoints is the notion of an empty head. This principle of interpretation:

... bids the interpreter forget his own views, look at what is out there, let the author interpret himself. In fact, what is out there? There is just a series of signs. Anything over and above a re-issue of the same signs in the same order will be mediated by the experience, intelligence, and judgment of the interpreter. The less that experience, the less cultivated that intelligence, the less formed that judgment, the greater the likelihood that the interpreter will impute to the author an opinion that the author never entertained. On the other hand, the wider the interpreter's experience, the deeper and fuller the development of his understanding, the better balanced his judgment, the greater the likelihood that he will discover just what the author meant.<sup>87</sup>

This means that while objectifying one's own foundational stance is the first step, it is only the first step. What is also required is the upgrading of that set of positions and counter-positions, of horizon and intentions, of whom or what one stands for—or against. This involves conversion at all levels—from religious to moral, from intellectual to psychic—so the potential for a universal viewpoint is well established at all levels. This of course is impossible, but what is achievable—at least for limited periods—is the courage, integrity, resilience and devotion necessary for living in this tension of genuineness between self as transcended and self as transcending.

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Insight*, 564.

<sup>87</sup> *Method*, 157.

At its roots, a universal viewpoint represents a shift to a higher perspective attained through the self-appropriation of one's own rational self as the source of the disinterested, detached and unrestricted desire to know. While it is impossible to achieve total understanding, it is possible to raise those questions that enable us to transcend our current horizon and intentions and to exercise vertical liberty to move to a more appropriate foundational stance. Living in possibilities, uncertainties, unanswerable questions, confusion and noise defines that state of transcending self, which is why the tension of genuineness is so difficult to sustain over time. Human subjectivity and intersubjectivity—to know where and who we are in relation to other people—runs counter to uncertainties that stem from the explanatory realm of meaning.

There is also Lonergan's notion of cosmopolis, a commitment to a strategy of intervention based on the kinds of biases prevalent in society (being effective, in *Scope & Constraint*).<sup>88</sup>

Finally, there is the idea of the creative self, the person who seeks a fuller existence through self-understanding and the shift to a higher perspective that encountering others can bring about. This idea has its roots in the model of human beings creating themselves—not through fiat but by following a few basic principles: live in the tension of genuineness, take the time to think things through, and seek through self-appropriation of one's rational consciousness to a higher perspective grounded in the realm of interiority.

### *A Curious Detachment*

Over the course of this encounter, while trying to assume a disinterested and detached attitude toward my own positions and counter-positions while paying attention to the various processes of experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and loving, I found that more and more I no longer identified with this “self”, that is with these positions and counter-positions—indeed even with my foundational stance—but with awareness of developing these positions and

---

<sup>88</sup> See “A League of our Own” in this chapter for an example of how cosmopolis might apply as one facet of church life.

counter-positions. There were times when who I was, was this dynamically inquiring human intelligence making sense of and working within a unique time-and-space-specific socio/political context. I could have been born else-where, else-when, with a very different genetic temperament developing a character according to the judgements and decisions I would have made, and yet this dynamism would still be who I was.

In Lonergan's terms, the unity of self that I affirm is the self-appropriation of my own coming to understand. It is a unity based on an experience of self over varying conditions, the postulate that I am a unity and that act which affirms that I am a knower independent from other knowers. That unity is this dynamism of the human spirit given expression in my own physical form at this time and this place.

The world-mediated-by-meaning that we live within is a product of this inner dynamism; the dysfunctions in this universe of meaning are symptoms of an underlying pathology that blocks or distorts our inbuilt drive to fuller understanding and fuller being, a drive that can ultimately find fulfilment only in God. When I identify with the products of this inquiring intelligence, I identify with common sense reality and with explanatory theory—they are “mine” and when someone threatens them, I react with fear, foreboding and often defensive retaliation. Müntzer certainly did, when he lambasted his enemies and fought against those of counterfeit faith and I know I do too when my own cherished beliefs are challenged. It is then that one's intellectual attachments are exposed in all their strength, something made evident when contrasting Müntzer's stance with my own. Yet Müntzer was willing to put his ideas to the test before a tribunal and ultimately I do to writing this exploratory study into my own subjectivity.

Knowing how one brings into being one's world, i.e. that the world I “see” is in itself not real but the result of intelligence facing potential, discerning form and acting to affirm the real (at least at the level of intelligent understanding), gives power to method: the results of intelligence

are only as good as the method that gave rise to them.<sup>89</sup> Like any scientist, the ideal is to follow data wherever it leads; to admit that one may be wrong is one of the greatest benefits of relying on method rather than cultural norms. But this is possible only when one cultivates a detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know.

### *In the End*

The only thing to be encountered in another is the tension of genuineness, with the associated norms of being open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, responsible in deciding and loving. Circumstances change, problems change, but this tension between who one is and who one might be remains as the one sure indication that the dynamism of the human spirit is being followed. Furthermore, the tension between the unrestrained desire to know and the limiting features of human intersubjectivity, made worse by general common sense bias, underlies long term cycles of decline. Institutions unable to face unexpected internal or external shocks slip into dark ages.

In the end, heightening one's awareness of coming to know and do set the grounds for understanding the horizon and intentions of others. When I encountered the dynamic operations of Müntzer's minds facing his own unique time-and-space-specific circumstance I also encounter me facing my own unique time-and-space-specific situation. One of the things I have learned is that it is the willingness to follow the transcendental injunctions, to work toward understanding and living a higher perspective of what it means to be human, that truly releases human creativity and generates a fundamental joy in living that transcends pain and suffering.

---

<sup>89</sup> This is not to say that the results of intelligence are not important. Our process of going from a sensate past into a transcendent future is a collective enterprise given expression in such things as the roles, institutions, good of order, and terminal values of our civilization. Each individual draws upon the rich (or meagre) resources have been passed down, and in turn passes on those changes for better or worse to those who come after. Like a snail, we build our own house. But our house is our institutions, organizations deemed irreplaceable for they express the common good of order. As basic sin leads to moral turpitude that in turn results in physical evil, so too does the tension of genuineness leads to moral fortitude that in turn results in an improved good of order from which many people can draw strength.

Whether I can consider myself to be a theologian has turned out to be a mute question whose answer depends on one's understanding of what it means to be a theologian. If theology is what is taught in universities, then the answer would be no: I simply do not resonate with the norms and values of anyone studying the humanities. If theology follows Lonergan's functional specialities, then the answer is mixed: there is sufficient evidence I think for believing that I could work in the area of Foundations, yet the lack of an emotional commitment and a general inability to understanding the pragmatics of human communication—so important in the humanities—is largely lacking in the world-mediated-by-meaning that I have created from myself. If theology is faith seeking reason, then the answer would be yes—for once one admits to the existence of God, one admits to living in a world far vaster than the world revealed through proportionate being. Yet there are many approaches to understanding our encounter with a Transcendent Being and the notion of Professional Practice may reveal one such facet of that encounter.

Many of the issues that dominated Müntzer's thought—true faith, a league of the elect, living a Christian life—lie outside my own horizon and interests. About the best I can do is encourage those faint urges to move toward God, knowing that the more I engage in understanding myself as movement, drawn to transcendence (to becoming more)—and knowing that the existence of a universal viewpoint requires a willingness to follow the data wherever it might lead—is the most important thing. This encounter with Müntzer has affirmed that movement more than ever. And it has confirmed the value of Lonergan's methodology as the primary tool to understanding. Entering into the realm of interiority, not as an end in itself but as a means for deepening my understanding, has been strengthened through this encounter; it is this realm that gave reality to the upper blade of theory. While this attempt to understand Müntzer is far from conclusive, the general notion of an encounter has been worked out with a certain degree of success.

In objectifying my own subjectivity I have reached a better sensitivity to the horizons and intentions of others not as growing awareness of a variety of positions that others may take, but as



people exercising their own “muscle” of discernment, developing that habitual foundational stance that “instinctively” distinguishes between the authentic and inauthentic. In this way it has been a deeply personal journey, a reflexive exploration into what it means for me to be human that has opened my understanding of others, for there’s a certain truth to the idea that our images of what it means to be human set the conditions for the human we become and the humans we meet. Through this study, Lonergan’s image of what it means to be human has become my image, my position.

Nearly thirty years ago I first encountered the primary features of Lonergan’s understanding of what it means to be a Subject in the following passage in the preface to *Insight*. With this passage I became willing to try to reach up to his mind, for his words touched something deep within me that even after this study remains a mystery.

Insight into insight . . . will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about. It follows that insight into both insight and oversight is the very key to practicality.

Thus, insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that as insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.

Similarly, insight into oversight reveals the cumulative process of decline. For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The situation deteriorates to demand still further insights and, as they are blocked, policies become more unintelligent and action more inept. What is worse, the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified. So in ever increasing measure intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living. Human activity settles down to a decadent routine, and initiative becomes the privilege of violence.

Unfortunately, as insight and oversight commonly are mated, so also are progress and decline. We reinforce our love of truth with a practicality that is equivalent to an obscurantism. We correct old evils with a passion that mars the new good. We are not pure. We compromise. We hope to muddle through. But the very advance of knowledge brings a power over nature and over men too vast and terrifying to be entrusted to the good intentions of unconsciously biased minds. We have to learn to distinguish sharply between progress and decline, learn to encourage progress without putting a premium upon decline, learn to remove the tumour of the flight from understanding without destroying the organs of intelligence.

No problem is at once more delicate and more profound, more practical and perhaps more pressing. How, indeed, is a mind to become conscious of its own bias when that bias springs from a communal flight from understanding and is supported by the whole texture of a civilization? How can new strength and vigour be imparted to the detached and disinterested desire to understand without the reinforcement acting as an added bias? How can human intelligence hope to deal with the unintelligibly yet objective situations which the flight from understanding creates and expands and sustains? At least, we can make a beginning by asking what precisely it is to understand, what are the

dynamics of the flow of consciousness that favours insight, what are the interferences that favour oversight, what, finally, do the answers to such questions imply for the guidance of human thought and action.<sup>90</sup>

Lonergan then goes on to answer these and other related questions in *Insight*, which is refined and developed into a way of doing theology in *Method*. It's highly indicative of my foundational stance that I prefer *Insight* over *Method* (although the latter certainly improves one's understanding of the transcendental approach of the former). For when it comes down to it, action that is not based on clear discernment between position and counter-position will fail. Unintelligibility in human affairs has consequences: the irrational is basic sin and basic sin has physical consequences. And if the only way to understand the intelligibility that human beings create in the good of order is to move to a higher viewpoint that explains how and why such intelligibility comes to be, then that is the way to go. As long as this shift does not occur, sustained development is not possible. Unconscious biases will play havoc with the plans and policies they generate. The way that I chose to give reality to Thomas Müntzer only reaffirmed this desire to continue of this path of transcendence.

Perhaps working out the research method and actually applying it in a test case has changed me more than this encounter with Müntzer. After all, objectifying subjectivity through encountering another may set the direction, but how is this to be done? How is it to be operationalized in any sound grounded way? This is why this study moved forward on two fronts: the encounter with Müntzer and the notion of an encounter that provided a heuristic structure for engaging in such an encounter. In the end, it may be that what counted most was the experience of coming to understand myself through an encounter rather than the actual encounter with Müntzer. The latter helped me to understand some of the particulars of my horizons, intentions

---

<sup>90</sup> *Insight*, xiii-xv. This "mystery" may be as simple as the desire to do the practical thing, to belong rather than be the outsider. There is no mistaking that twist of mind and obsessive focused interest so similar to Müntzer's that makes doing the practical thing so difficult. But even if this should be the case, it does not mean that it defines my interests. A better way to think about it is as a psychic seed that as I progressed through a series of higher viewpoints became something quite different: a way to God.

and positions; the former provided a consisted method for a series of such encounters. Method presupposes willingness; willingness can become habitual; and so it begins.

### *Conclusions*

As for the encounter with Müntzer, it is remarkable the extent to which he and I are similar in ways I never would have conceived, in ways that show my own strong Christian roots.

- He was an ordained priest while I spent a year in a Jesuit novitiate after high school, suggesting some common interest with that role.
- He was a reformer, perhaps a revolutionary—something that I now recognize is part of my own being through the work on Professional Practice.
- He sought a league of the elect of God to live the true faith and sit in judgment over corrupt rulers, while Lonergan's notion of cosmopolis has the same reality for me in my time.
- He was inner directed, expressing in his own foundations of an understanding of true faith through the unexpected and unprovoked gift of the Spirit; I too am inner directed, with my own chosen path through discernment, authenticity and living in the tension of genuineness typical of work in the functional speciality of Foundations.
- He found his foundations in a mixture of spirituality and mysticism, while I find mine in Lonergan's Transcendental Method and authentic discernment acquired through conversion.
- His focus was on redemption and salvation, returning to God through true faith, while my own focus is on reversing decline, which also implies a return to God but now through the historical processes of redemption.
- He too was remarkable inept when it came to practical matters. Our respective lives seem to be a "tragedy of errors."

All in all, these similarities are quite striking—and unexpected. There are differences, notably in the extent of his social life and in my own awareness of many of the developments that have taken place since his time, but in the main he and I are alike. It seems plausible that if I would have inherited his rhetorical skills I too might have followed his evangelical path. However, this was not to be. Instead I am left with the uncomfortable realization that I have a lot of Müntzer within me that has been repressed for some time. Perhaps I dislike him because I dislike similar features in me. Whatever is going on in my psychic, it is clear that further reflection is required to fit these new revelations about whom and what I stand for, and whom and

what I am against. Integrating such objectified subjectivity in my understanding of who I am will take time.

I wonder if my own work on Professional Practice is exactly what Müntzer needed in his own time, but could not do because his culture did not have the proper tools.

## EPILOGUE

### DOMESTICATED REBELS

He was a difficult man. He thought differently and acted differently from the rest of us. He questioned everything. Was he a rebel or a prophet or a psychopath or a hero? "Who can tell the difference?" we said. "And who cares, anyway?"

So we *socialized* him. We caught him to be *sensitive* to public opinion and to the feelings of others. We got him to conform. He was a comfortable person to live with now. Well *adjusted*. We had made him manageable and docile.

We congratulated him on having achieved self-conquest. He began to congratulate himself too. He did not see that it was *we* who had conquered him.

*A big guy walked into the crowded room  
and yelled, "Is there a fellow by the name  
of Murphy here?" A little fellow stood up  
and said, 'I'm Murphy.'*

*The big guy nearly killed him. He cracked  
five of his ribs, he broke his nose, he  
gave him two black eyes, he flung him in  
a heap on the floor. Then he stomped out.*

*After he had gone we were amazed to see  
the little fellow chuckling to himself.  
"I certainly made a fool of that guy,"  
He was saying softly to himself. "I'm  
Not Murphy! Ha, Ha!"*

A society that domesticates its rebels has gained its peace. But it has lost its future.

Anthony de Mello, *The Song of the Bird*

I wonder if you have to spend your whole life suddenly  
understanding facts that were perfectly obvious all the time.

Doris Lessing, *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*

Yet Turing would not forget the bridge. It was as if, sitting in Wittgenstein's rooms, he could see it collapsing, hear the cries of the pedestrians as they fell into the river. His point was simple, and he would not let it go: Turing, in his own words, objected "to the bridge falling down."

David Leavitt

*Alan Turing and the Invention of the Computer*

## APPENDIX I

### OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIFIED SUBJECTIVITY

In the same way that Muntzer shared in the group mind of his time, so do I share in the group mind of my own. The primary features that I know of are:

- One of the first of the North American baby-boomers
- Raised in a small town, a traditional Loyalist area of the Canadian Maritimes
- Close family relations in the USA with an open border only ten or fifteen miles away
- Raised in a stable middle class family with strong educational values
- All reinforced with a year in the Jesuit Noviate, Guelph Ontario
- Part of the emergence of a global historical perspective
- Facing the reality of polymorphic consciousness and multiple civilizations

As Muntzer chose among the options available at his time, so too did I choose to follow Otto Friedman's and Bernard Lonergan's work within the context of my own need to know. Like Muntzer, and within these constraints, I took it upon myself to decide what needed to be done. The result is my own Triune-centered embryonic "theology" of Professional Practice within a "cos-mopolis" church.

The curious paradox is that I need a very stable conservative life strongly orientated to a well functioning good of order to work out these ideas. My thinking may be considered radical and revolutionary but my life certainly is not. Like Lonergan, I find myself in the unwelcome position of concluding that to save the society which I love a radical shift in perspective is required that amounts to a social and political revolution.

POSITIONS		COUNTER-POSITIONS
	Contextual	
All action is contextual according to a succession of higher order systems		Immediate time-and-space-specific circumstances only.
	Range	
Long term and theoretical		Short term and common sense
	Center	
God centered, as the source of all meaning and goodness		Human centered, might makes right
	Responsibility	
Individual responsibility for the good of order		Prefers an authoritarian system



POSITIONS		COUNTER-POSITIONS
	Creativity	
Respects imagination and creativity		Respects routine and tradition
	Sphere	
Social		Political
	Economics	
Ecological-based Post-Agricultural		Macro and micro economics Agricultural solar-based economies
	Self	
Transcending self		Transcended self
	Desire to Know	
Disinterested, detached and unrestricted desire to know		Know, in order to control and/or regulate
	Development	
Committed to understanding and promoting progress, and reverse decline		Restricted development: egotism, group bias & common sense bias
	Change	
Conservative, in the sense of preserving the good while gradually making improvements		Liberal, radical, utopian or ideological
	Action	
Seeking to improve the good of order		Expediency, situational ethics
	Strategy	
Cosmopolis: saving practicality from itself to reverse the long cycle of decline		Relativism and/or post modernism

POSITIONS		COUNTER-POSITIONS
	Discipline	
Transdisciplinary		Interdisciplinary or disciplinary
	Depth	
Likes to think things through		Content with superficial arm-chair diagnosis and/or evaluations
	Intelligibility	
Devoted to an intelligible universe		Social surds or other forms of limited intelligibility
	Source of Meaning	
Internal Autodidactic Transcendent		External Non-discipline specific
	Sensitivity	
Highly sensitive to the pain and suffering of others		Careless of the conditions of others
	Discernment	
Intensely aware of the need for both individual and group discernment		Willing to accept purely human standards
	Practicality	
Impractical, to save practicality		Very practical, in the immediate sense
	Success	
Driven to success, as defined by societies standards		Willing to be one of the crowd
	Skills	
Highly non-verbal, relying on a highly developed spacial sense; thinks graphically		A person who thinks in words
	Person Type	
Head person, enters a situation and asks, How does this all fit together?		Gut person (Here I am; deal with me) or heart person (Are you going to like me or not?)

POSITIONS		COUNTER-POSITIONS
A person who finds most adult concerns very “unreal”, almost childish, as if everyone was playing a game that had little to do with reality.	Sense of Reality	At ease in society, accepting societal values and norms.
Care for machines, technology and knowing how things work.	Technology	Anti-technology
Tends to be highly methodological	Systematic	Not instinctual or spontaneous
Emergent Probability	Worldview	Aristotelian, Newtonian, Evolutionary or Indeterminate
Essentially Judeo-Christian	Religion	Zen Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic or any other religious tradition.
Lonergan’s Genetic Method	Philosophy	Universal Doubt, Empiricism, Common-sense Eclecticism, Hegelian Dialectic, Deductive

## APPENDIX II

### THE UNDERLYING FORM OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The following three pages provide a graphic overview of the key terms and relationships in this emerging notion of Professional Practice. Like any technical schematic, a graphic layout is used to present the entire formal hierarchical explanatory structure in one complex, compound insight. Again, like any technical plan, it uses a highly symbolic language to describe how things relate to each other: terms do not belong to the realm of common sense but to the realm of explanatory theory.

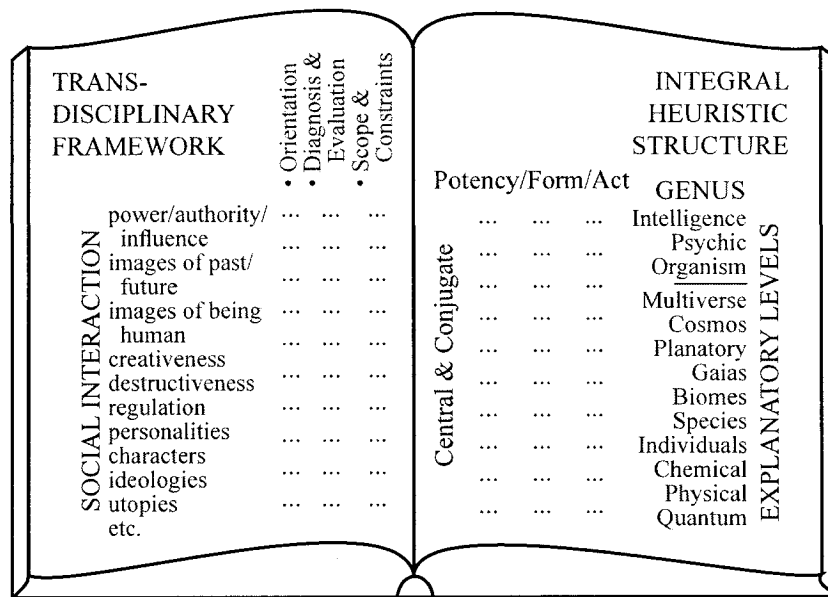
Even though the schematic is divided into four sections, it is to be read as a whole. The primary path starts part way down the left side of the first page, where the initial stance is laid out, runs along the bottom then jumps to the following pages where the path is laid out by arrows. This describes the necessary stages to “think things through” when it comes to making a decision and creating something new in the world. Although only three specific stages are highlighted—Orientation, Diagnosis and Evaluation, and estimating Scope and Constraints on rational action during times of fundamental institutional change—there are in fact four. Prior to these stages is the Critical and Creative Self (CCS), the professional whose commitment to living in the tension of genuineness, to the personal self-appropriation of her own rationality, to taking the time to think things through and to the notion of cosmopolis, sets the conditions for all that is to follow.

Two essential tools—a transdisciplinary framework for the social sciences and an integral heuristic structure that anticipates all that there is to be known—provide the key operational concepts and direction for working through the four stages of Professional Practice. Together they provide a structure for organizing relevant knowledge from the various disciplines to meet the specific demands in OR, D&E and S&C for setting plans and policies in unique time-and-space-specific socio-political circumstances.

Over both process and tools are two fundamental contexts within which this work is carried out. The first is an understanding of historical processes such as progress, decline, reversal and redemption, while the second highlights the ways control over meaning is exercised or should be exercised. In both cases, a normative function is as much a part of these explanatory terms: any healthy society has a higher perspective of what it means to be human, a strong sense of history as movement toward an ultimate (if at the moment unspecified) goal of fuller human being and a deep awareness of the need to control meaning in public and private discourse related to making plans and setting policies.

All this belongs to the explanatory realm of meaning, using knowledge of the realm of interiority to bring all these pieces together in a coherent and intelligible fashion. This is not the world of common sense understanding, where an aesthetic sense of the intersubjective drama of human living relates everything to us personally. Here, things are related to each other using a formal language of unities and conjugates. As such, it is not highly motivational or even friendly, in the sense of having a place where one can be at home. But I do think it is necessary if we are to counter the biases of those whose power magnifies their potential for harm or good.

After all, thinking may be hazardous to one’s health—but not thinking things through can kill.



*Professional Practice*  
is *not* an extension of what  
already exists, but a vertical shift  
to another way of being in the  
world.

- It is a giving birth.
- It is a reaching up to the mind  
of God.
- It is natural leadership based on  
competence
- It is an enriching of the practice  
of others

All these steps would not be necessary if action had not become  
problematic. Like a tennis player who has lost her edge, it becomes  
necessary to evaluate performance, diagnose specific problems  
and carry out remedial courses of action. Then, once problems are  
corrected, tennis can once again become automatic.

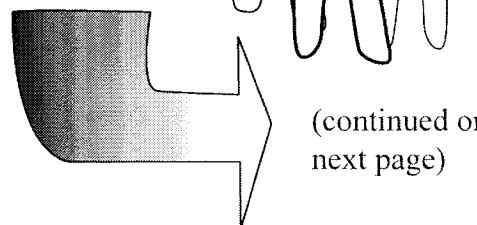
This delving into Professional Practice is exactly the same  
thing, the exception being that one's orientation is toward the  
transcendent, toward true value, rather than sport.

Professional Practice is geared toward the roughly 5% of the  
population that may be considered natural leaders.

The focus is on *effectiveness*, not mere efficiency. Identifying  
what needs to be done takes priority over common sense  
expediency.

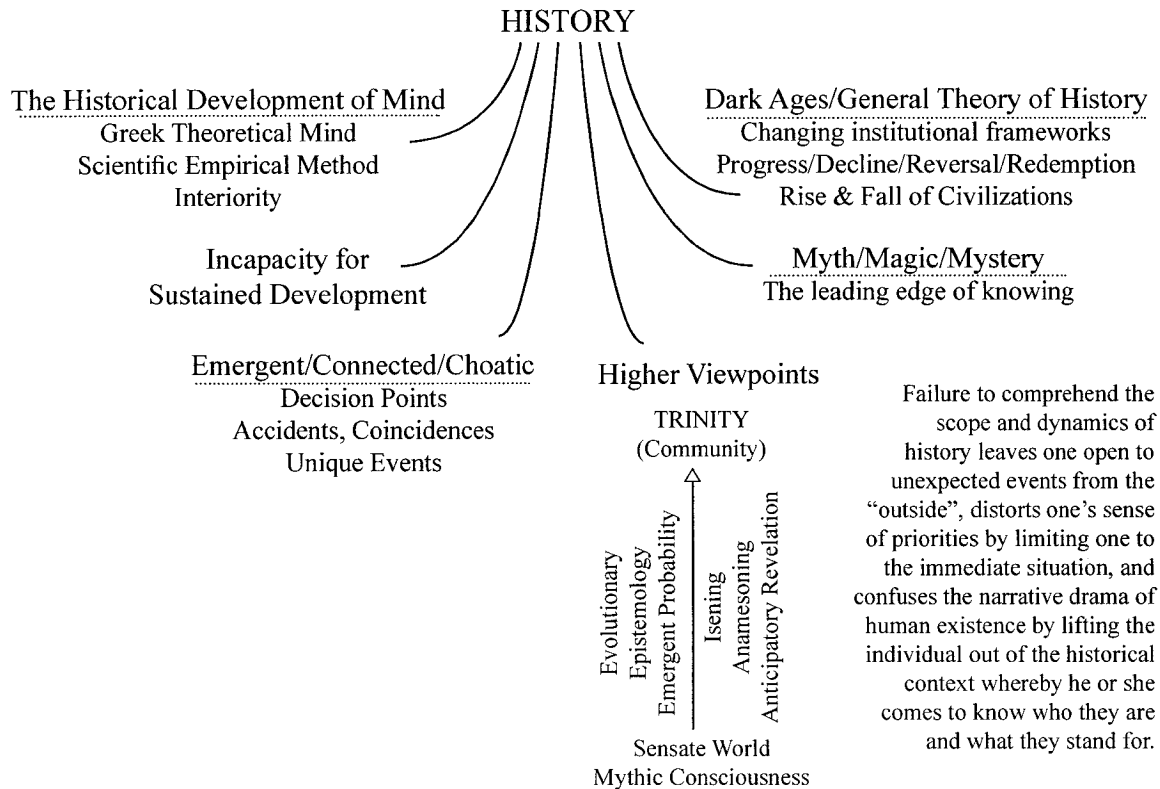
## INDIVIDUAL COACHING THROUGH UNIQUE TIME-AND-SPACE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

COSMOPOLIS



Professional Practice supplies a transdisciplinary  
framework, a normative method and a  
heuristic structure for professionals engaged in  
practical affairs; there is too much power for  
unconsciously biased minds to wield.

(continued on  
next page)

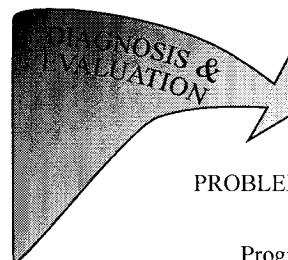


GOAL: To ease people into the realm of interiority; deepening their awareness of what they are doing when they are doing.

ALWAYS TIME-&-SPACE SPECIFIC

Who are you?  
 Where are you? (in time, in space)  
 What are your foundations? Horizons? Intentions?  
 Genuine Willingness? Collaborative Wonder?  
 Dreaded Holiness?  
 One's Appreciative System (Vickers)  
 Group affiliations and allegiances  
 What kind of civilization is likely to follow this one?  
 "What do you see?" (Lessing's exercise)  
 Levels of psychic, intellectual, moral & religious conversion  
 Who is your peer group?  
 What drives you? Where do you place your emotional life?  
 THE WORLD AS IT RELATES TO YOU, PERSONALLY

PROBLEM: Good intentions are not enough; there is too much power for biased minds to play with.



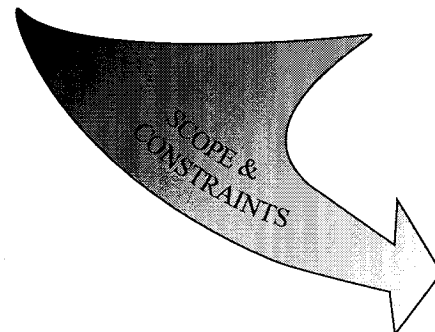
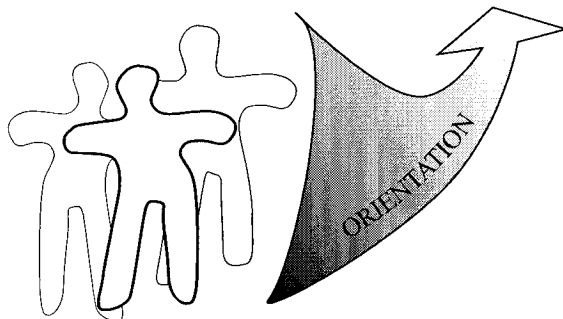
PROBLEMS: Arm-chair diagnosis and premature closure.

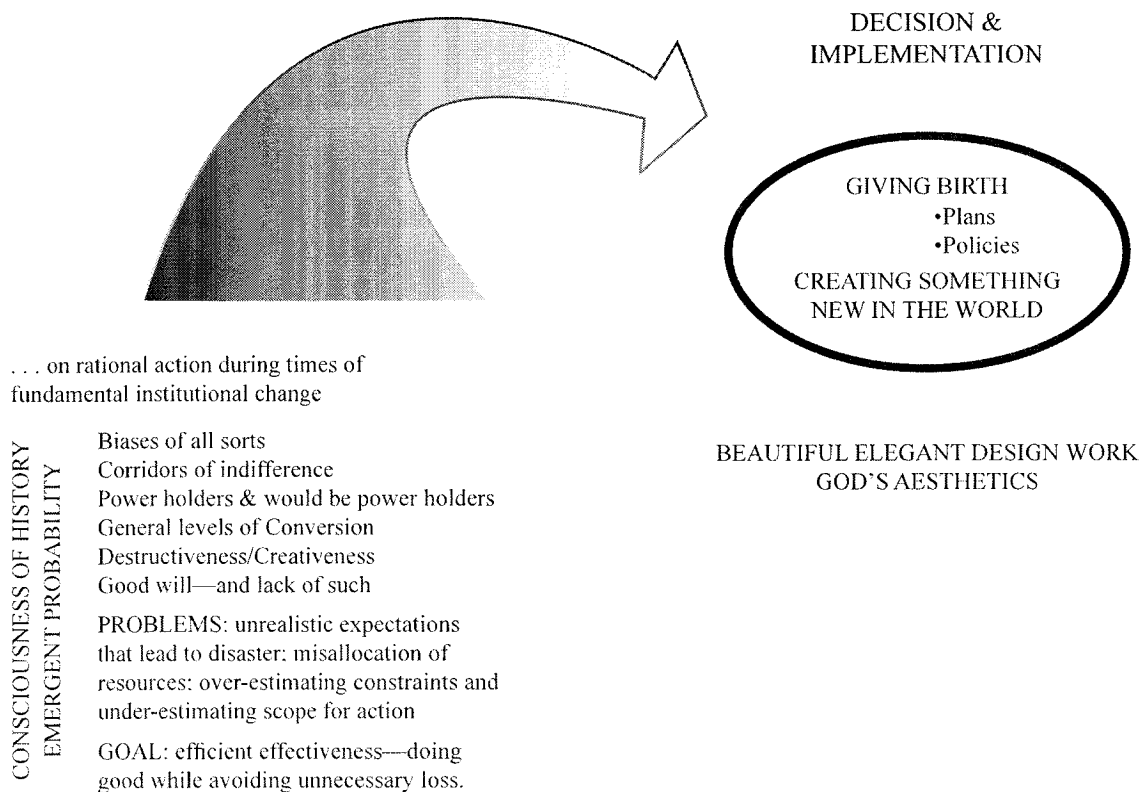
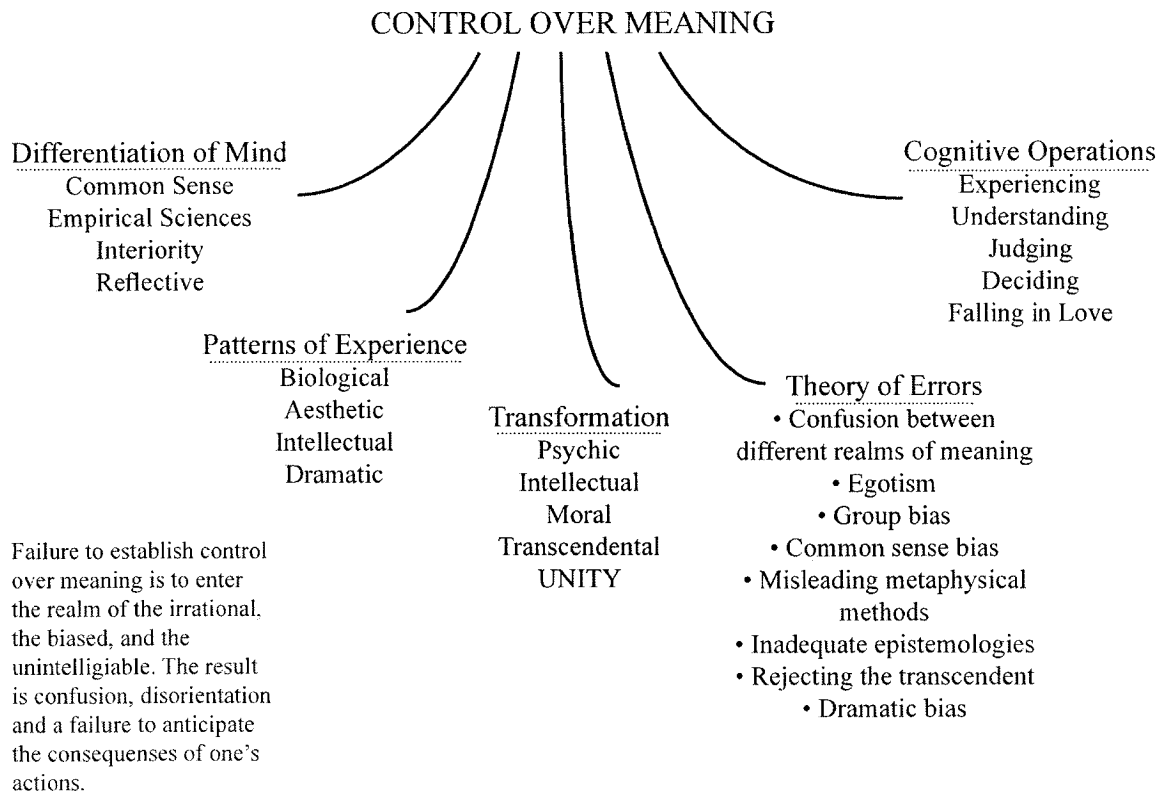
Progress/Decline/Redemption  
 General Theory of History (see "Dark Ages")  
 Theory of Errors

THINGS AS THEY RELATE TO EACH OTHER

GOAL: An accurate and reliable appraisal of the existing social/political situation, plus dependable diagnosis of specific problems or problem areas.

Conversion through Dialectics





### APPENDIX III

#### A TRANSDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: Key Variables In Or, D&C, S&C

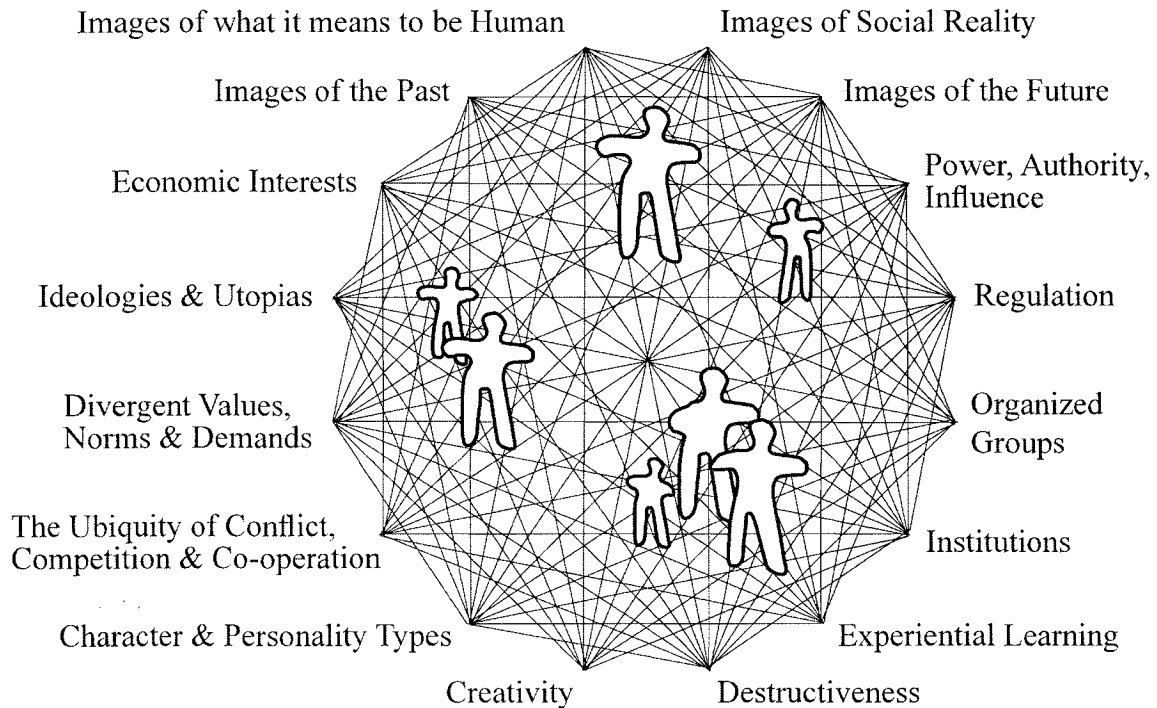


FIGURE 1

*The Full Transdisciplinary Framework*

There is always the problem of separating the inconsequential from the truly important or essential, and this problem is particularly crucial when it comes to working in the areas of Orientation (OR), Diagnosis & Evaluation (D&E), and estimating Scope & Constraints (S&C). What follows is a brief sketch of the fundamental features of any social or political situation that directly impact on these three activities. They are not absolute, by any means; nor are they meant to be used in any complete and systematic manner. Rather, these features refer to aspects of social reality that one may want to keep in mind, aspects that will vary from place to place and over time, aspects that will stress one set of features as critical in this or that situation, and aspects of human living that come into play whenever we interact with others to get things done—like “A stitch in time saves nine”, or “A penny saved, a pound foolish” or “Look before you leap.” This framework provides a general set of variables best kept in mind when it comes to working out a course of action or setting new policy.

As in any social discipline, there arises the matter of perspective. There are many ways to understand sociopolitical realities, with their respective advantages and flaws. This framework is built around the social science paradigm of social or symbolic interaction, an approach that focuses



on the way people interact with each other from their different perspectives or orientations, with different intentions, with different values, etc. The core of such interactions have to do with the forging, enhancing, maintaining and disengaging of friendships and alliances where the aim is to work with others in community to enhance the values to which one is committed.

The dynamics are quite varied and nuanced; human living is a work of dramatic art more than anything else. The love between mother and child, the gut feeling that others are as important if not more than our own lives, saving face, persuading and being persuaded, CYA (cover your ass), the pragmatic non-verbal “real” messages that lie behind the explicit words, status games, role playing, rationalization, deceit and deception, the tension in living with one’s limitation while called to transcendence, confrontation, propaganda, brainwashing, the expression of a religious calling—all these and more are features of social interaction.

So too are the vast range of human emotions that give depth and meaning to what otherwise would be a dull and drab “intellectual” existence: love of God, love of community, love of family, spite, resentment, jealousy, griping, anger, fear, compassion—all these and more, with their symbolic representations around which people gather and live out their lives.

For Christians, nothing is more powerful—at least in our own time—than the symbol of the cross. But there are other symbols as well: the image of the shepherd, the tale of Mary and Martha, the last supper, etc. Each of these are specific Christian symbols whose meaning has evolved and been distilled over centuries of use and misuse. Other groups have their own symbols, their own distillers of meaning, their own realm of understanding that sets their interests, their intentions, their own time-and-space-specific world mediated by meaning. The result is a sociopolitical situation that is multivariate, pluralistic, highly complex and ever-changing yet regulated through the existence and support of fundamental institutions that in effect define a culture or a civilization. It is when such fundamental institutional frameworks change that the conditions arise that require the type of analysis and synthesis put forward.

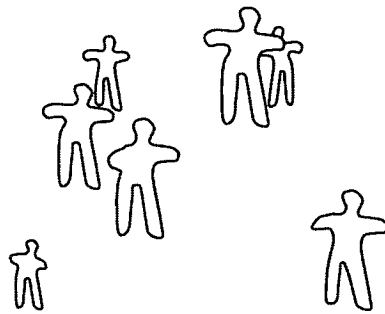


FIGURE 2  
*Coming Together*

#### *Social Interaction*

Social life starts with individuals who then cluster together in organized or unorganized groups, communities, tribes, or families. (After all, to be human is to live in and be part of a group—or these days, a number of groups.) Conflict, cooperation, collaboration, sacrifice, power, status seeking, egotism, group interests, etc. are all part of this broad dynamic of multiple social interactions. So too is the constant socio-political dance of persuading and being persuaded.

You yourself as well as the group to which you belong are part and parcel of this complex social reality. A primary part of OR is to locate oneself within this constellation of powers and would-be powers, for each person, each group, has their own individual stance, their own set of intentions, unique to themselves but defined in terms of others. But we also share a common framework, a common world mediated by meaning to which each contributes and from which each draws.

There are people who play disproportionate roles. "Link" people, for example, are those whose large numbers of acquaintances link them with a wide variety of groups; hence they are the channels for much of the word-of-mouth communication that spreads beyond one's own group. Then there are recognized experts, authorities in some aspect of human living, whose expertise puts them in positions of influence: if you have a problem or you want to find out about this thing or that, these are the people to go to. Then there are the enthusiasts, the salespeople, whose specialized social skills can change people's minds and pull them together around a common idea.

Each group has its own intentional horizon, which is to say that no one is ever neutral. (Intentionality is very much a part of human existence, the only question being: what is it that one has chosen to value, to do?) Groups themselves cluster together, as parishes do within a metropolitan area. There are nation states, some dictatorial, some democratic, that hold within themselves a multitude of different and diverse groups. There are different levels of action, ranging from the small unorganized group to large multinational corporations, from special interest groups to municipal governments to provincial and national institutions. When taken all-together, one has the recognizable features of a culture or a civilization. Figure 1 shows all sixteen fundamental social science variables and their interrelationships that apply to our understanding of the social and symbolic interaction between the different participants and stakeholders. These variables apply at all levels, from the nuclear family up to and including the world collection of all existent human beings. Each variable is linked to each other in ways defined by the historical and geographical conditions of the actual sociopolitical system within which one operates.

Take two such variables, say personality types and organizations. There are a number of different types of personalities (there are different personality schemes that one can draw upon) and there are different ways in which organizations can be organized. Let's suppose, for example, that your parish is the basic unit of analysis. Now, Roman Catholic parishes are not really democratic institutions, given the church's Roman style institutional structure with its head the Bishop of Rome. Yet, it is not an authoritarian structure of the type that exists in business corporations, where each role is set and control structures are in place to enforce compliance. In other words, the parish priest as the primary representative of the institution of Church cannot dictate the specific tasks of his parishioners. In that, the church is far more democratic; negotiation is required.

But what happens when an ego-ridden, authoritarian and dominating personality, as opposed to a let's-work-together-in-harmony personality, moves into the parish and starts throwing her weight around? This careful balance may be upset, with no easy organizational way to handle the situation. The resulting conflict may be the key factor not only in understanding what is going on but in working out a course of action. The relationship between these two variables of personality and organization structure may be the primary feature of this particular group and that particular time and place.

This is the way this framework is to be used, as a set of broad indicators that enable a person or group to better understand key issues and fundamental features of those with whom they will have to work.

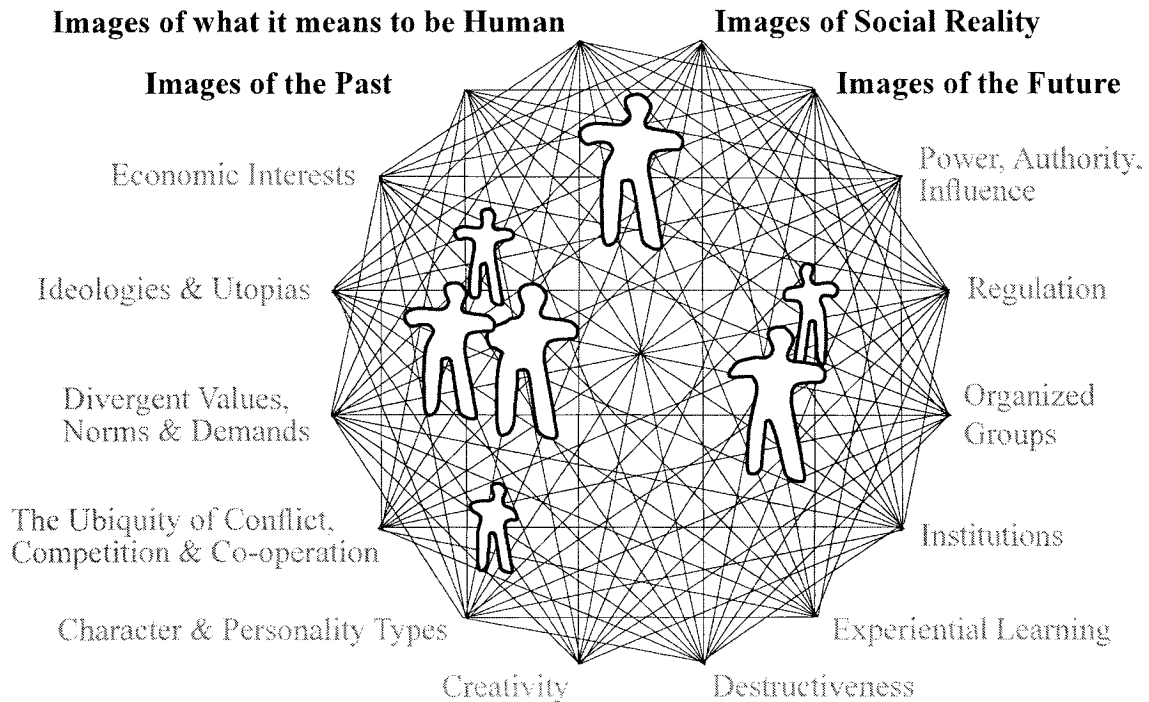


FIGURE 3  
*Primary Images*

*Four Primary Images*

Figure 3 highlights four primary images that people consciously or more often unconsciously have in their minds when they interact with each other: a concept of what it means to be human, an image of the fundamental nature of social reality, and prevailing images of future and past.

*Images of what it means to be Human.* Such images have varied quite a bit during our brief span of written history. We have, for example, Aristotle's comment that "all men by nature desire to know" (*Metaphysics*), a quest for understanding always associated with wonder and the delight of contemplation—unfortunately marred by moral conflicts involving doing and making: hubris, man's overreaching pride. Then there is the voluntarist view of human kind, where in its ultimate form human beings make themselves out of their own freedom and autonomy; we are masters of our own fate. At the other extreme, determinist views reject this belief that people are free to choose. Freud, for example, held human beings to be driven by forces hidden in the unconscious. Or Skinner, whose concept of an indefinitely malleable human being denied any form of human spontaneity, creativity or purpose.

On a less determinist note, Marx's humans were creatures defined by their ability to make and use tools; production was the be-all and end-all of human existence, both for the individual and for society. This led to the concept of economic man, where material abundance is seen to be the ultimate good, expansion the prime duty and consumption the highest purpose—exaggerated of course, and now a little out of date. A number of other images have emerged in recent times: human beings as inventors, where the imagination is conceived as the power to envision different possibilities, or humans as symbol-makers, i.e. as the creator and user of language. Finally, we have man in search of meaning, the species that distinguishes itself by our continual search for something to believe in.

*Images of Social Reality.* The same diversity holds true for different images of social reality, including the 20th century creation of totalitarian societies where all individual needs, wants and desires are subordinate to the state—a state that is usually represented by one person, e.g. a Hitler or a Stalin. There is the “survival of the fittest” image of the Victorian era that still lingers to our day. Christians have their own image, that of community given its full expression in the Trinity. Romantic society had its “noble savage”, whose essential goodness was crushed by society’s institutions. Despotism conceptions of the natural order of social life has their place in understanding the politics of the Middle East, as does the liberal democratic society of Great Britain or the now nearly extinct “divine right” of kings and queens. There are warrior societies such as Sparta in ancient Greece or fundamentalist Islamic terrorists of today, where military might and warfare are the great social ideals. In contrast, we have the Hopi, where conflict is minimized and social life governed by the need for consensus.

*Images of Past and Future.* Both images of the past and future are crucial in orientating ourselves in history. When societies collapse, they lose their past—as did the feudal period in European history, which lost its collective memory of the Roman Empire after that Empire collapsed, or the sharp break in history that took place in Amerindian history, the past only now being reclaimed. Images of the past can cripple, as was the case with thousands of years of great Egyptian pharaohs; they were a hard act to follow. Americans have their own history of the Revolution against the British, given real and symbolic form in their flag and Declaration of Independence. The British have the monarchy as well as Magna Carta—not to mention the British Empire and a tradition of liberal democracy—that together sets the form of British culture.

It’s important to keep in mind that there are two kinds of history: history based on a careful establishing of historical fact, and history constructed around current political and social needs and desires used to regulate and coordinate large groups of people. (The latter will be covered in the two fundamental variables of ideologies and utopias.) However, even if real history is lost, which happens when a society collapses or new rulers erase all records and impose their own self-serving vision of historical reality, the real still exists as part of the evolved pattern of interaction between people. This can be seen in the observation that different areas of the world have their own character, their own “personality”, even when society itself has been fragmented and nearly destroyed. Despite the Russian Revolution, which overthrew the Tzars and in doing so remolded history around Marxist ideals, the Russian character remained much the same: Russia was still Russia, even with a regime change.

Images of the future stem from our ability to image different ways of being. Whereas images of the past have some basis in verifiable historical facts, e.g. records of the Holocaust or the great pyramids of Egypt or South America, images of the future are projections of what might, could or should be. One such shift came with the early Israelites where, for the first time, history was conceived not as an eternal cycle of the same-old, same-old, but as a line with its start in the past and its ultimate final development yet to come. This is an image that we Christians have taken over in different ways, from the medieval belief that our earthly lives were but a veil of tears while we wait for a gorgeous future in the beyond, to a creative joy in the here and now based on the notion that the world and all that is in it, because it was created by God, is good. Hence the notion of pilgrimage, of Christians embarking together on a holy journey. Hence the importance of both salvation and redemption, for both derive their meaning from this concept of linear time that has its origin in an imperfect past and its end in a perfect future.

There are groups that have no future, as the last remaining member of a tribal society will tell you or a culture so shocked with changes that it can no longer cope in any meaningful way. Extinction at our own hands is one such future faced by contemporary Western society, as the threats of global warming, mass species extinction, environmental collapse and nuclear winter grow in the public mind. On the other hand, one can rejoice in a world given to us by God and work with

the Spirit to redeem ourselves in light of the mess we have made of our divine gift of a moral conscience—a future based in part on an image of humankind as basically flawed, a past record of sinfulness through wars and other man-made disasters, and the corresponding strong image of community.

Each of these four basic images have their role to play in any time-and-space-specific social and political setting, although the precise ways they are given expression will vary to a considerable extent in ways that are quite unique. The important point is that any OR, D&E, S&C will involve our awareness and understanding of these factors. The assumption of a prophetic voice on our own part, for example, takes its meaning not only from the prophetic voice itself but from the constellation of groups and communities, cultures and civilizations, with which we interact.

Furthermore, these variables are all interrelated. One's image of who people are influences our conception of social life, which in turn affects our understanding of the past and projections of our hopes and fears into alternative possible futures. Needless to say, such complexities place demands on our ability to sort through the alternative positions in any reasonable way. But this does not mean that we cannot heighten our awareness of these facets of human life that we encounter but may not recognize in our daily discourse.

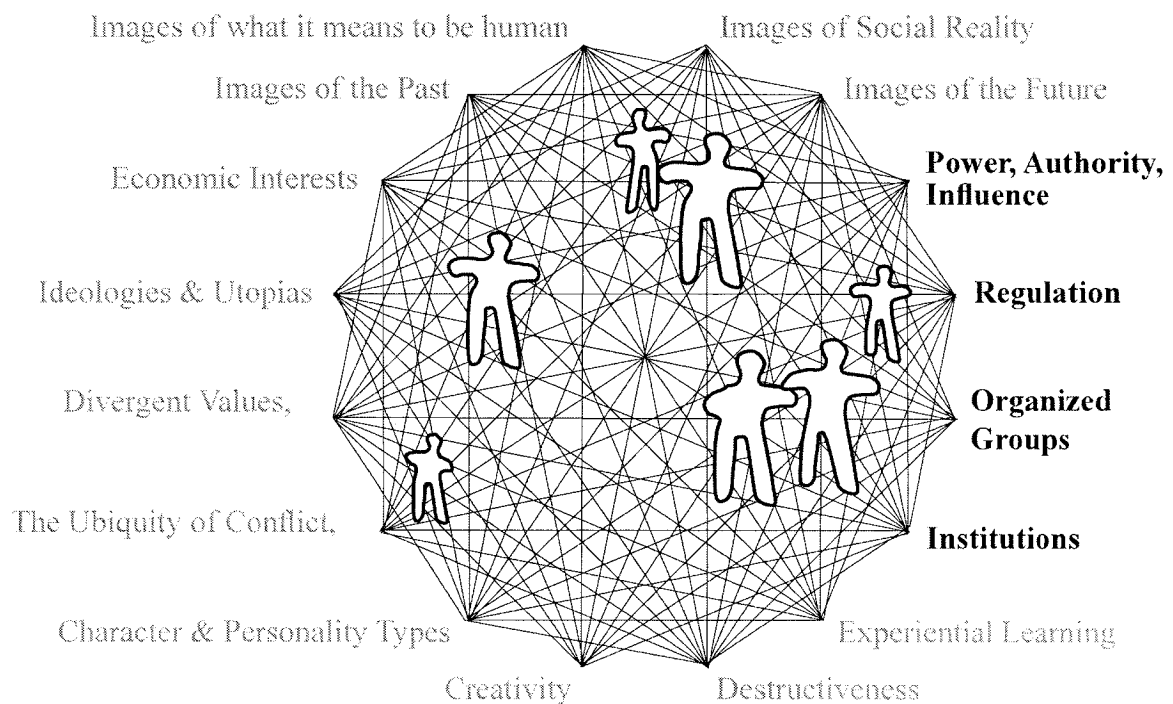


FIGURE 4  
*Structures of Power*

### *Structures of Power*

Figure 4 shows a second grouping of four fundamental variables, all of which involve the ways power, authority and influence are structured in a given community or society. The first is that of power, authority and influence—all factors present in any social grouping. The second is regulation, for the application of power, authority and influence is not to achieve any one specific goal, e.g. to create a new institutional role for the elderly, but to regulate a new system once created. Creating such an institutional role that makes the gifts of the aged available to all is far less important, even though necessary, than the task of maintaining that role over time—and that is a problem of regulation. The results of all these efforts are organized groups devoted to at least one primary value such as education or financial regulation and themselves regulated through the combined exercise of power, authority and influence on the part of its members. Institutions are the highest form a group can take. Groups come and go, usually with none other than their members paying attention. But institutions are groups that are so vital to the workings of society or civilization that their existence must be protected. Institutions are not allowed to fail. Thus, the key area within which fundamental change takes place is at the institutional level.

*Power, Authority and Influence.* These are three terms that refer to different language-based modes of interacting with others to affect their behavior, attitude or values. Each mode has its own language, its own style: in terms of power one can speak of threats, bribes and extortions; in terms of authority, one speaks of commands, orders or instructions; influencing others takes the form of suggestions or advice. Individual instances are significant only to the extent that they provide data for assessing the overall strategies of other participants. Furthermore, there is a structural element to such patterns, for social roles are defined in part by the kinds of interactions considered legitimate.

Listening to the feel of such interactions is crucial. The comfortable illusions and hypocrisies that are part of any middle-class discussion of race, sex or war are supported by the kinds of non-verbal interactions that hide the naked use of power or coercion by not allowing the other to be heard. Silence may be confused with agreement or even acquiescence, when such silences only mask oppression or the dismissing of the concerns and values of others. We are all political beings constantly interacting with each other on a moment-to-moment basis. When we interact with other members of our family to get them to do us a favor, we are being political. When we communicate with students, we “teach” them—another form of political interaction. When we engage with other people at work or in the church to get them to adopt a new policy or a new plan of action, we are engaging in politics.

Many of the strategies that we use in this dance of persuading and being persuaded, in building alliances and friendships, in disengaging ourselves from those that no longer work, are devoted to the regulation of complex systems. Regulation is a control function that involves power. However, the possession of power in itself does not guarantee control. A person may have the power to make changes but be unable to bring all the other players to heel. Although the values and intentions of groups may well differ, their respective strategies involve creating, maintaining or enhancing value while avoiding value loss. For example, the goal in getting married is not to get married but to live in a marriage, a process that requires not power or control but the careful correcting and enhancing regulation of human behavior.

*Regulation.* There are two fundamental forms of feedback that regulate any system. The first, negative feedback, serves to correct any deviation from the existing norm. For example, earthquakes or tsunamis activate preexisting national and international response schemes to restore order in the stricken area. The second form, positive feedback, acts to reinforce a deviation. And groups respond in different ways to each type of feedback. For example, governmental organizations respond to negative feedback, so that deviations from the norm are soon stamped out; it is more important for them to avoid criticism than seek rewards. Businesses are exactly the opposite:

businesses respond to the kinds of positive feedback that provides profit or gain—hence the lure of growth restructures a business as, at least in theory, non-productive departments are dropped and resources allocated to more promising endeavors.

*Organized Groups.* Groups are at the center. Now, there are many different kinds of groups, some formal some informal, some organized some unorganized, and the kind of group that one is a part of and the kinds of groups that one will deal with makes a great deal of difference: each kind provides its own opportunities as well as constraints on what can and can't be done. In a way, each represents a particular instance of the good of order as a value in itself, for order provides a common known structure of roles and relationships, values, norms, images—all of which come together not only to provide order and direction to our social and political lives but to enhance the planning and policy making of individuals and smaller groups in society.

At its most fundamental, intersubjective level there exists the family. Now, there are many types of families, ranging at their most extremes from the nuclear family of two parents and two point three children (now often a single parent with one or two children) to the extended family where generations live together under the same roof. How one uses one's power, authority or influence varies considerably: in a single parent family there is only one person to whom one can appeal; in an extended family, one knows that an aunt may be sympathetic to one's desires and building alliances against those who would object becomes the standard way of getting things done.

Then there are informal perhaps even temporary groups that disappear when their purpose has been achieved or whose sun-set clauses prevent them from extending their life. These vary from those that form around a water cooler in an office to share gossip to football crowds that go on a rampage, from chance conversations around a card game on a cruise ship to a quick alliance to put on a benefit concert. There are formal groups, often with their own constitution, rules of order and financial arrangements that exist to fulfill a particular function, groups like the War Amps, PTAs, fraternities, glee clubs, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and little league teams. Groups can be local, regional, national or even international. They can be closed, restricting membership only to those who fit, as in the case of the Knights of Columbus or Wahabi sect mosques, or open, where anyone who shows an interest in being a part of things can join without having to be vetted. Groups can rely on a top-down authority to regulate their affairs, as is often the case in large corporations, or depend upon good will and a sense of equality, as in more democratic organizations where membership is voluntary and everyone is roughly of equal value.

Groups, especially formal organized groups, tend to focus on actualizing certain values. There are groups that specialize in politics (fund raisers), education (universities), government (cities), wealth (multi-national corporations, banks), religious values (Churches, Monasteries), health (hospitals, clinics), social well-being (Amnesty International), and so forth. What this means in practice is that the aspiring practitioner can join in the activities of an already existing group, in which case he or she takes on the values and norms of that group, work to form alliances between groups whose value orientations are similar, or to form alliances between groups whose values differ yet can be brought together in a common cause or issue.

The law has its own set of recognized groups with associated rights and obligations, from that of partnerships to associations, from non-profit enterprises to corporations. Of these, limited incorporated companies hold the strongest and strangest position: a social innovation created during the Victorian era in order to limit the risk of investors, limited corporations are based on the legal fiction that a business company has the same legal existence and status as a person. It is important to keep in mind the legal status, purposes and obligations of each legal entity, for its position within the law defines in broad terms what such a group can or cannot do.

*Institutions.* These are formal organized groups that derive their support from a privileged place in society. They are defined by what happens when they are under threat. Most groups come and go without public notice or fanfare. Each day, hundreds of businesses are set up; each day hun-

dreds fail, and no one outside of an economist much cares. But let an institution threaten to fold, and quickly public money is spent, resources brought to bear. In other words, institutions are groups that have become so built into the fabric of social, economic and political life that their disappearance would necessitate massive changes.

In the United States, General Electric is so important to the military, the government, and the economy that it cannot be allowed to fail; failure would mean the loss of production expertise upon which the military depends as well as the loss of a major component of what Eisenhower called the military/industrial complex. Stock exchanges cannot be allowed to fail, for if they do the economy would grind to a halt for the lack of a mechanism to distribute capital. The same holds true for nation states that threaten to default on loans: the World Bank and the International Monetary fund—among others—quickly step in.

As these examples suggest, one of the key values in Western society is that of economic development; the motivation for this may lie in the devastating experience of the great depression of the 1930s, when much of North America's economy ground to a halt. Many of our key institutions are institutions because of the role they play in regulating economic development. But values change over time as civilizations come and go or are transformed to meet new conditions or new possibilities. The fall of the Western Roman Empire involved a shift from Roman institutions to the manorial institutions of the feudal system. The subsequent rise of the great mercantile empires gradually closed down these feudal institutions, replacing them with the great banks and other commercial interests, English and Dutch merchant fleets, and urban rather than solar based rural economic centers. Orientation becomes an issue when traditional institutional structures are in decline and new ones emerging, as does the evaluation of society's well-being. Feudal and mercantile institutions have very different moral systems: under feudal mores, it is perfectly reasonable to lie and cheat other nations or princes for the sake of one's own, while under a mercantile ethical system, legally binding and mutually respected contracts are required. In the former, cheating one's rivals is a virtue; in the latter, a sin.

It is necessary to understand contemporary fundamental institutional shifts, for these broad social changes will make nonsense of local initiatives unless they are taken into account during the planning stage. Say an architect designed a house using only one summer's experience of the weather. Such a design may prove impracticable when seasonal weather changes are taken into account, or even the long term possibilities of earthquakes or major flood storms. One fundamental shift is the de-institutionalization of the church: no longer are formal church groups considered essential to the well-being of society; churches are now only one voice among many. When threatened, the political and economic powers that be will not come to their support. While this is no doubt traumatic to many, this institutional shift also offers opportunities—opportunities that take advantage of this “prophetic voice” siting churches “outside the city walls.”

Another key institutional shift is the requirement in Western societies that our plans and policies, our institutions and organizations, must be based on some rational explanation or purpose. Authority, tradition or even the naked exercise of power on the part of dictators-for-life are no longer considered sufficient to justify any course of action. This shift can be seen in the rising standards we now apply to all nations: governments are expected to work for the betterment of their people and not strip the people for their own aggrandizement. In some societies, this is a radical and counter-intuitive notion.



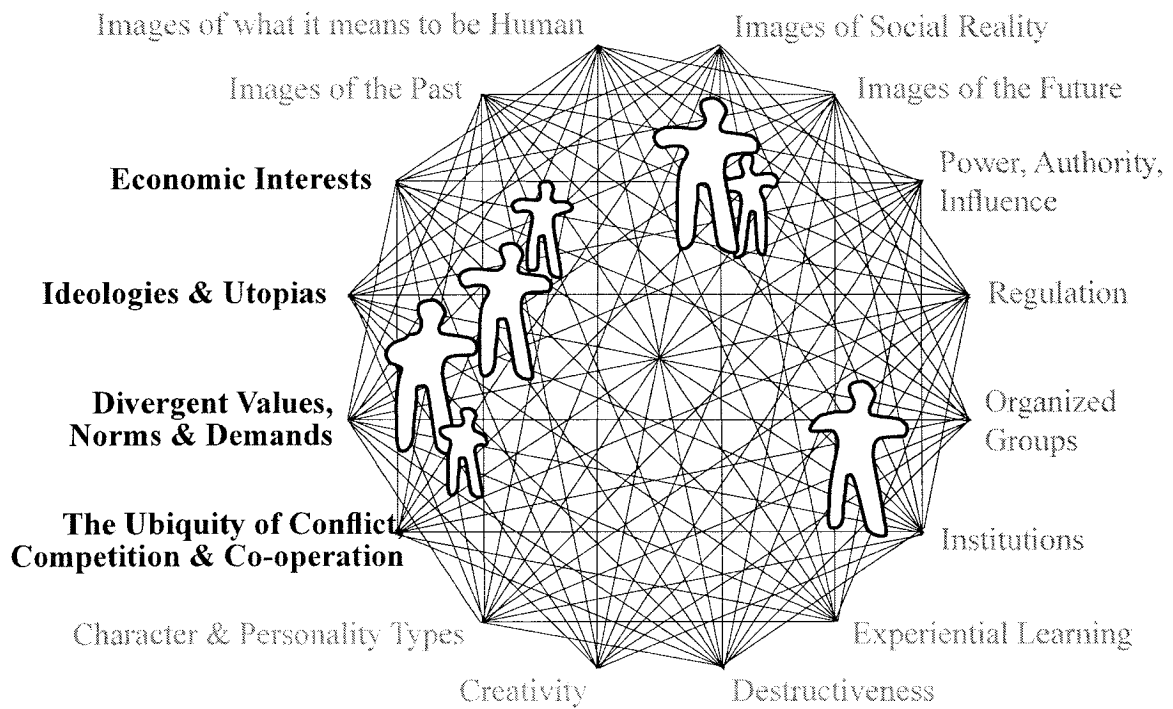


FIGURE 5  
*Social Drivers*

#### *Social Drivers*

Figure 5 highlights a third set of four fundamental variables: economic interests; ideologies and utopias; divergent values, norms and demands; and the ubiquity of conflict, competition and co-operation. In their own way, each acts as a social driver or motivator. Each taps into its own source of socio-political energy.

*Economic interests.* Economies involve more than just money; they involve the many ways people have worked out to sustain and support the life to which they have become accustomed—or for which they seek. To the government official whose economic well-being depends on political patronage, any threat to this patronage will evoke at best passive resistance (if that person has little in the way of power, authority or influence) or active counter-attacks (if they do). To a large extent, these myriad interlocking economic interests require anyone seeking change to find corridors of indifference, i.e. avenues for new plans or policies that do not threaten existing holders of power, authority or influence. Of course, if one is a power-holder, then the situation is a little different: one can to some extent make things happen against the wishes or desires of those who lack power.

Economic interests also provide opportunities on the part of those seeking power (power understood in its prior political sense of persuading others): anyone who can add to the well-being of another person or group acquires not only a certain degree of power, authority and influence but promotes their own terminal values as well. But there are complications. For example, churches have their own economic interests and thus compete with other groups for resources. Unfortunately, the norms of church life often hide the exercise of power, authority and influence while at the same time exerting power, authority and influence—with the result that what is actually being

done never reaches consciousness and destructive practices continue unnoticed.

Economic interests also blind, and usually with good reason. If global warming means the loss of one's livelihood, then the pressure is on to deny global warming. Or if building a dam is your way of making a living, then one's horizon restricts itself to that—and so we have the economic distinction between what is intended and what are “side effects” when any unbiased intelligence conceives both benefits and unexpected drawbacks as the natural consequences of the same plan or policy.

*Ideologies & Utopias.* When the number of people is such that coordination becomes a major social and political problem, then economic interests—understood in this broad fashion—lead to the formulation of ideologies and utopias as communal motivators and regulators. Propaganda emerges along with the exhausting, sloganeering and repetitiveness associated with brainwashing. Marxism, which started with an explanatory theory of human history, became the ideology of Communism when its central features were used by would-be power holders to persuade or coerce others. Darwin's scientific theory of evolution became an ideology when transformed into the Social Darwinism of the Victorian era. In both cases, theory came second to economic interests and in so doing lost its grounding in science. In general, ideological and utopian thinking are grounded in human interest, specifically the need or desire to co-ordinate the work of large numbers of people.

Ideological thinking serves to co-ordinate people by providing a common meaning to all they think and do; utopian thinking sets aside the existing state of affairs for an ideal desirable state that has yet to be brought into being. Terminal values such as Truth, Justice and Equality, which arise out of the dilemmas and paradoxes of our daily lives, can be used by power-holders or would-be power holders to give emotional weight and depth to what otherwise would be a simple or simplistic theory. The image of a lion lying down beside a lamb, or the Marxist ideal of a simple equality among all people, are both utopian in nature.

It is not that ideological and utopian thinking are bad as such, for there is a need to manage human behavior beyond what is possible in small groups or communities. Indeed, such thinking may be found in all groups, including our own. What is important to realize is that we often do think in these terms without checking our beliefs against what is actually known; we may get carried away by an unverified theory that is more illusion than reality, with the result that what we do will have unexpected often undesirable consequences.

*Divergent Values, Norms & Demands.* Ideologies and utopias give expression to divergent values, norms and demands. Values emerge through the process of trying to decide upon the right course of action, given existing conditions. In deciding what to do, we shift our attention to the criteria used to separate the valuable or desirable from the less valuable, less desirable. Ultimately, we determine what is valuable for us. In a rather simplistic way, when we choose to walk up the stairs rather than take an escalator, we value health over convenience—if health is what we value. What value do the aged have in our society? Not much, according to the mores of the day; but they should, according to this prophetic voice. So we have a particular instance of differing values. As for church goers, there may be many personal reasons for getting active in parish affairs, from the social life to the pleasure of being able to help others. But behind them all lies a value choice that places God as the ultimate good, our final terminal value.

At more complex levels, we talk about conversion—not the kind of conversion that involves joining an established religion or being born-again, but the kind of conversion that shifts our basic orientation away from our own self-interests and toward transcendence. Should we fall in love with this Divine Mystery, our values shift. Like any married couple who know each other's tastes very well, we take on as our own the values of this transcendent being. We decide to live as God would have us live, which means a fundamental shift in what is important for us. Then we value acts of generosity, charity, love and reconciliation over enjoying a good meal or even a warm bed. Truth and justice can guide our lives, as can the values found in being open to experience, intelligent in

understanding, reasonable in judging what is true or real, and responsible when it comes to deciding what to do.

Each social group has its own norms for behavior, norms that also vary as the situation changes. Acceptable behavior in a biker gang differs from what is expected in church. Being initiated into a gang has its own norms, as does initiation into the life of a formal religion through baptism. There are norms for public speaking, if one is to be listened to, and norms for proper behavior at the dinner table. Norms are used to distinguish one group from another, as any would-be snob knows. They are also used to determine who is part of our group, for to fall outside the norms is to be viewed as being touched, eccentric or even down-right mad—certainly not to be trusted. Then there are the fundamental clashes in norms, when for example warrior meets merchant: the norms for proper combat readiness and actual warmongering—even if defensive—differ from what is normal practice in negotiating contracts and making business deals. Like the values we choose, norms change over time.

Norms may refer to low moral standards or an elite refinement. But no matter what the situation, it is important to know what the general expectations are concerning “normal” behavior, otherwise no one will give you the time of day. No matter where or when people live, there are always behavioral norms that guide social and political interactions in legitimate ways.

Then there are the diverse demands people make, demands that can easily contradict each other. There are demands terrorists make. There are the demands that large multinational banks make. There are the demands of government, or businesses, of special interest groups, of colleagues and friends—and of enemies. We demand our rights. We demand that we be at the center of things. We demand this and that, and all the while politics comes into play as power, authority and influence are brought to bear. There are demands for liberty, for social justice, for good food and clean water. There are demands for wage increases or corporative down-sizing, for a clean shirt or a moment’s attention. There are demands for economic growth and the reduction of urban sprawl, for the prevention of species extinctions and the use of nuclear power. Managing such divergent demands becomes a real problem in regulating human behavior.

*The Ubiquity of Conflict, Competition & Co-operation.* Not all demands can be met or contained despite one’s best efforts. This leads to another fundamental feature of social and political life: the ubiquity of conflict, competition and cooperation. No matter the size of the group, be it a nuclear family or a mega corporation, there will always be areas of conflict that may range from mild disagreements to outright war. Competition will always exist, be it for social status, resources or political power. And there will always be a certain degree of cooperation, if only for the fact that no cooperation means no predictability and hence no good of order. Lack of order defines anarchy—and in areas of the world no longer governable, the level of order is indeed low.

Even in religious communities, conflict, competition and cooperation exist. Social norms may set very high standards of behavior, but behind these standards lie the realities of different values and norms with their associated different demands. Group fragmentation seems to be the norm, for any group finds after time that there are divergent views that necessitate the breakdown into a different political party or a separate communal meeting place. Recognizing such behavior is essential when it comes to understanding what is going on behind the scenes. It is also essential when it comes to regulating common behavior, for any regulatory system needs to take into account the fact that individuals and groups are constantly engaged in some form of conflict, or competing with groups dedicated to the same values or resources, or building alliances to combine resources and thus build up one’s power base.

There is even cooperation in conflict. The Geneva Convention, for example, sets the basic norms for engaging in modern warfare (or at least warfare up to the current empowerment of terrorist groups, a shift that demands a change in our institutional framework)—participants cooperate in maintaining this good of order that allows them to get on with the business of fighting each

other. The reverse is also true, as any family member knows: family members cooperate with each other—otherwise there wouldn't be a “family. But they also fight with each other, sometimes to the point where no one will talk to each other for decades. And there certainly is competition among siblings.

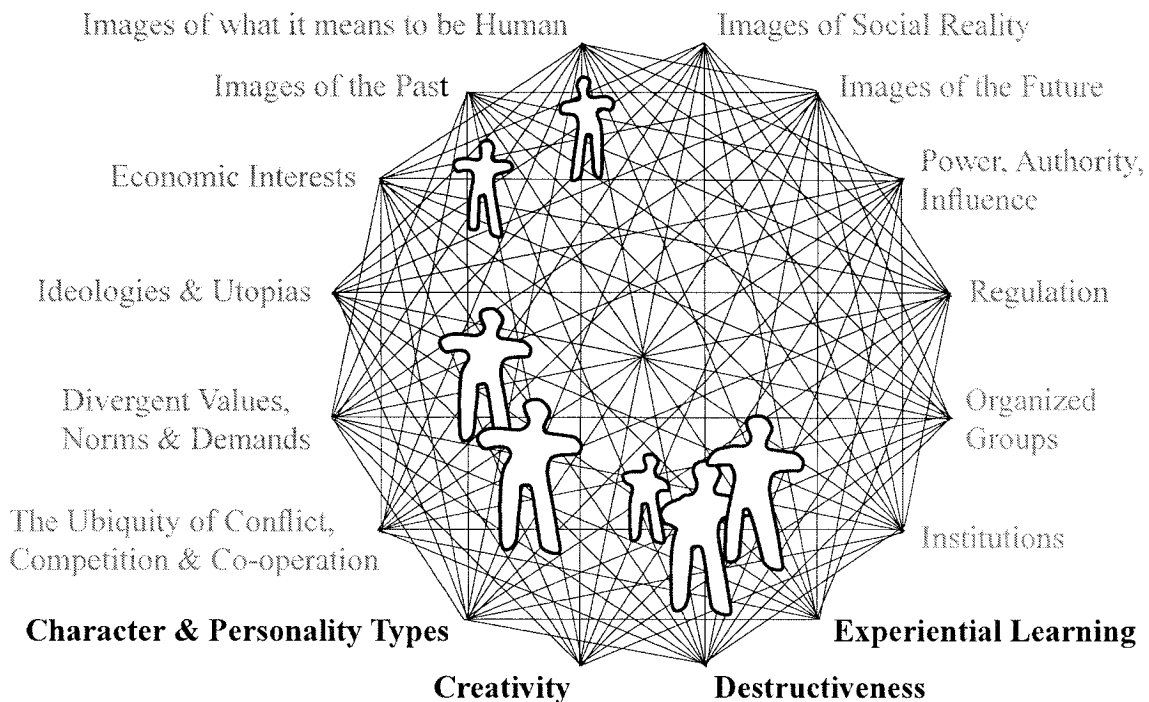


FIGURE 6  
*The Individual*

#### *The Individual*

Figure 6 shows the final set of four variables, now operative at the individual rather than group level.

*Character & Personality Types.* Astrology, which has its roots in the classical Greek notion that one looked to the heavens for eternal truths, is a system of classifying personality types from the dominating Ares to the philosophical Pisces. So too is the Sufi inspired Enneagram with its nine fundamental ways of categorizing human compulsive ways of living in the world, from the success-driven three to the “I am powerful” of the eight. One of the most popular measuring tools is the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator, an instrument that describes a person's preferences along four dimensions: extraverted vs. introverted, sensing vs. intuitive, thinking vs. feeling and judging vs. perceiving. All these recognize the fact that all social life involves interactions between different personalities—some compatible, some so different that extreme types will not be able to talk to each other in any meaningful way. Personality clashes can have significant impacts on planning and policy-making, especially when the clash is over who is to head a large company or even the government of a nation. No matter what, differentiating between different personalities in your so-

ciopolitical milieu, when accompanied by an increasingly diverse set of strategies for dealing with them, is a useful skill to have when it comes to making a difference.

Personalities we are born with; character we develop. Character emerges over time, through the ethical choices we make. Such choices, such commitments, provide a long-term anchor for our emotional experiences. Often, character is expressed through loyalty, consistency, resiliency, mutual commitment and the pursuit of higher values such as truth or justice. These and others like them are the personal traits that over time we come to value in ourselves and for which we seek to be valued. Toward the end of our life, they define the meaning of our life.

While extroverts are not likely to change into introverts or the compulsive helper into an equally compulsive thinker, character does change—and does so in ways strongly linked with religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion. What greater mutual commitment than that relationship between a human being and God? What greater desire than the desire to follow in the moral footsteps of this Divine Mystery? What greater need than to know the world as it is and not as we would wish it to be, spending the time and effort in a dispassionate search for truth? Reaching up to such challenges builds character. Avoiding such challenges retards the individual's natural development, keeping him or her in the more infantile state of egotism, group bias or even the desire to avoid hard choices and demands by sticking to what can be done rather than what needs to be done.

*Experiential Learning.* There are lessons learned through listening to others, and then there are those lessons that can only come through reflecting on personal experience. The latter is very much a part of character development, for experiential learning involves the testing and verification of our own orientation, our own diagnosis and evaluation, both of ourselves and the world. It is through experience we learn to evaluate the practical side of a scientific theory, noting when they apply and when they should be laid aside. It is through experience that one learns to distinguish between over-optimistic claims and realistic appraisals, between wishful thinking and the practical realities of human life, between true and only illusory value. Educated people may frown upon a mere floor mopper, yet that cleaner may have accumulated a body of personally verified skills and operations that is a valuable source of insight, understanding and wisdom. The same goes for each and every person. At the very least, each person is an expert in their own particular place, in the things and events that occupy their lives. Furthermore, to the extent that person is open to experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging and responsible when it comes to acting, we may suspect that what they know is truly valid—especially for people who have lived long and rather difficult lives. Such people have survived and prospered amid many ups and downs, periods of stability and periods of unpredictable chaos or catastrophic change. There are personal lessons learned through all this, lessons encapsulated in the phrase “experiential learning.”

*Destructiveness.* Finally, we end with two of the greater (but not greatest) mysteries of human existence: creativity and destructiveness. When we create, we bring something new into the world. When we destroy, we take something out of the world.

Human destructiveness is as much a part of human living as the creative impulse. To ignore those who wish to tear down the good, who work to destroy what others have created, that enjoy destructiveness perhaps even for its own sake or out of rebellion against a good that can never be achieved and hence resented, is to ignore an important part of what it means to be human. This has important implications for regulating human behavior, for the presence of such destructive personalities or inhumane character types requires some way to limit their destructiveness. People who, when they can't get their own way prevent anyone else from getting theirs, are acting in a destructive manner. When an extreme egotist gains power and does not prepare for a future without him or her at the helm, this is destructive behavior. A particularly subtle form, equally destructive yet not obviously so, are those who go with the mere practical, the easily do-able. These are the sins of those who take the expedient path without considering deeper theoretical implications. Such

willfulness is as destructive as a rebel with a torch.

*Creativity.* Creativity is also fundamental to the human experience. Indeed, a survey of basic history shows how much we are indebted to the creative work of those who have come before. Everything that you see around you at this very instant is there because of someone's creative effort: food preservation in tin cans, electric lights, buildings, temples, the notion of limited companies, insurance, parks, universities, health care, musical instruments, the music itself . . . well, the list is practically endless, and the process of creation, of giving birth to something new in the world, still goes on.

Creativity cannot be produced upon demand; new insights cannot be manufactured like cars on an assembly line or PhD's in a university. New insights are by their very nature unpredictable, for if they were not they would no longer bring something new into the world but merely be the logical extension of what exists. Furthermore, insights tend to be cumulative and progressive, bringing different realms of knowledge together in a coherent manner that shows clear signs of progression. Development depends upon creativity; decline rests on its non-existence, for decline is the symptom of intelligence no longer meeting the demands of the time. For whatever reason, groups in decline block those creative insights that would reverse decline and restore some degree of progress.

Images of what it means to be Human	
Images of Social Reality	
Images of the Past	
Images of the Future	
Economic Interests	
Ideologies & Utopias	
Divergent Values, Norms & Demands	
The Ubiquity of Conflict, Competition & Cooperation	
Power, Authority, Influence	
Regulation	
Organized Groups	
Institutions	
	Character & Personality Types
	Creativity
	Destructiveness
	Experiential Learning

These then are sixteen fundamental transdisciplinary variables, loosely grouped into four sets of four. They cross all disciplines and cover most if not all the important aspects of human behavior that relate to the three primary tasks of orientation, diagnosis & evaluation, and estimating scope and constraints on rational behavior during times of fundamental institutional change. These are the critical variables when it comes to operating in time-and-space-specific sociopolitical situations, where socio/symbolic interaction plays a dominant role in creating new responses that promote progress while avoiding decline. They point to the things we need to keep in mind when it comes to expressing a prophetic voice and a call to conversion, for we are in the world, part of the emerging reality, and not some imaginary outside observer. This framework helps to heighten our awareness and broaden our understanding of what it means to be a human being, an actor, a creator—or even a destroyer. It guides us through the social sciences, helping to organize the significant features of each so that what is known can make its way into practice. It represents one way of organizing key insights into human behavior that we have acquired through centuries of dispassionate observing and recording human behavior.

## APPENDIX IV

### THE LONGER CYCLE OF DECLINE

The following passage from Lonergan's *Insight* (1957) describes the implications of a longer cycle of decline that arises from general common sense bias. Such a bias on the part of common sense intelligence reflects a combination of hard-headed practicality and naïve realism that leads *all* groups to neglect ideas (as opposed to a group bias where the ideas neglected by one group are often picked up by their successor). Within the world view of emergent probability, development occurs through the emergence of higher order intelligibilities; general bias reverses this process and through sins of refusal and omission groups ceases to support any idea that falls outside the practical sphere of living. This truncation of human thought, of human questioning, fragments the good of order to the point that there is only one option to keep everything together: a closed totalitarian society that subjects all to a single viewpoint. The problem, though, is that such a society does not triumph over common sense intelligence. Practical men and women will go about their business with the same neglect of totalitarian ideals as any other idea for ordering society.

#### *Implications of the Longer Cycle*

Already we have explained the nature of the succession of higher viewpoints that characterize the development of mathematics and of empirical science. Now we must attend to the inverse phenomenon in which each successive viewpoint is less comprehensive than its predecessor. In each stage of the historical process, the facts are the social situation produced by the practical intelligence of the previous situation. Again, in each stage, practical intelligence is engaged in grasping the concrete intelligibility and the immediate potentialities immanent in the facts. Finally, at each stage of the process, the general bias of common sense involves the disregard of timely and fruitful ideas; and this disregard not only excludes their implementation but also deprives subsequent stages both of the further ideas, to which they would give rise, and of the correction that they and their retinue would bring to the ideas that are implemented. Such is the basic scheme, and it has three consequences.

In the first place, the social situation deteriorates cumulatively. For just as progress consists in a realization of some ideas that leads to the realization of others until a whole coherent set is concretely operative, so the repeated exclusion of timely and fruitful ideas involves a cumulative departure from coherence. The objective social situation possesses the intelligibility put into it by those that brought it about. But what is put in, less and less is some part of a coherent whole that will ask for its completion, and more and more it is some arbitrary fragment that can be rounded off only by giving up the attempt to complete the other arbitrary fragments that have preceded or will follow it. In this fashion social functions and enterprises begin to conflict; some atrophy and others grow like tumours; the objective situation becomes penetrated with anomalies; it loses its power to suggest new ideas and, once they are implemented, to respond with still further and better suggestions. The dynamic of progress is replaced by sluggishness and then by stagnation. In the limit, the only discernible intelligibility in the objective facts is an equilibrium of economic pressures and a balance of national powers.

The second consequence is the mounting irrelevance of detached and disinterested intelligence. Culture retreats into an ivory tower. Religion becomes an inward affair of the heart. Philosophy glitters like a gem with endless facets and no practical purpose. For man cannot serve two masters. If one is to be true to intellectual detachment and disinterestedness, to what can be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, then one seems constrained to acknowledge that the busy world of practical affairs offers little scope to one's vocation. Intelligence can easily link culture, religion, philosophy to the realm of concrete living only if the latter is intelligible. But concrete living has become the function of a complex variable; like the real component of such a function, its intelligibility is only

part of the whole. Already we have spoken of an empirical residue from which understanding always abstracts; but the general bias of common sense generates an increasingly significant residue that

- (1) is immanent in the social facts,
- (2) is not intelligible, yet
- (3) cannot be abstracted from if one is to consider the facts as in fact they are.

Let us name this residue the social surd.

The third consequence is the surrender of detached and disinterested intelligence. There is the minor surrender on the level of common sense. It is an incomplete surrender, for common sense always finds a profoundly satisfying escape from the grim realities of daily living by turning to men of culture, to representatives of religion, to spokesmen for philosophy. Still the business of common sense is daily life. Its reality has to be faced. The insights that accumulate have to be exactly in tune with the reality to be confronted and in some measure controlled. The fragmentary and incoherent intelligibility of the objective situation sets the standard to which common-sense intelligence must conform. Nor is this conformity merely passive. Intelligence is dynamic. Just as the biased intelligence of the psychoneurotic sets up an ingenious, plausible, self-adapting resistance to the efforts of the analyst, so men of practical common sense became warped by the situation in which they live and regard as starry-eyed idealism and silly impracticality any proposal that would lay the axe to the root of the social surd.

Besides this minor surrender on the level of common sense, there is the major surrender on the speculative level. The function of human intelligence, it is claimed, is not to set up independent norms that make thought irrelevant to fact but to study the data as they are, to grasp the intelligibility that is immanent in them, to acknowledge as principle or norm only what can be reached by generalization from the data. There follow the need and the development of a new culture, a new religion, a new philosophy; and the new differs radically from the old. The new is not apriorist, wishful thinking. It is empirical, scientific, realistic. It takes its stand on things as they are. In brief, its many excellences cover its single defect. For its rejection of the normative significance of detached and disinterested intelligence makes it radically uncritical. It possesses no standpoint from which it can distinguish between social achievement and the social surd. It fails to grasp that an excellent method for the study of electrons is bound to prove naïve and inept in the study of man. For the data on man are largely the product of man's own thinking; and the subordination of human science to the data on man is the subordination of human science to the biased intelligence of those that produce the data. From this critical incapacity, there follow the insecurity and the instability of the new culture, religion, philosophy. Each new arrival has to keep bolstering its convictions by attacking and denouncing its predecessors. Nor is there any lack of new arrivals, for in the cumulative deterioration of the social situation there is a continuous expansion of the surd and so there is an increasing demand for further contractions of the claims of intelligence, for further dropping of old principles and norms, for closer conformity to an ever growing man-made incoherence immanent in man-made facts.

It is in this major surrender of intellectual detachment that the succession of ever less comprehensive viewpoints comes to light. The development of our western civilization, from the schools founded by Charlemagne to the universities of today, has witnessed an extraordinary flowering of human intelligence in every department of its activity. But this course of human progress has not been along a smooth and mounting curve. It has taken place through the oscillations of the shorter cycle in which social groups become factions, in which nations go to war, in which the hegemony passes from one centre to another to leave its former holders with proud memories and impotent dreams. No less does it exhibit the successive lower viewpoints of the longer cycle. The medieval synthesis through the conflict of Church and State shattered into the several religions of the reformation. The wars of religion provided the evidence that man has to live not by revelation but by reason. The disagreement of reason's representatives made it clear that, while each must follow the dictates of reason as he sees them, he also must practise the virtue of tolerance to the equally reasonable views and actions of others. The helplessness of tolerance to provide coherent solutions to social problems called forth the totalitarian who takes the narrow and complacent practicality of common sense and elevates it to the role of a complete and exclusive viewpoint. On the totalitarian view, every type of intellectual independence whether personal, cultural, scientific, philosophic, or



religious, has no better basis than non-conscious myth. The time has come for the conscious myth that will secure man's total subordination to the requirements of reality. Reality is the economic development, the military equipment, and the political dominance of the all-inclusive State. Its ends justify all means. Its means include not merely every technique of indoctrination and propaganda, every tactic of economic and diplomatic pressure, every device for breaking down the moral conscience and exploiting the secret affects of civilized man, but also the terrorism of a political police, of prisons and torture, of concentration camps, of transported or extirpated minorities, and of total war. The succession of less comprehensive viewpoints has been a succession of adaptations of theory to practice. In the limit, practice becomes a theoretically unified whole, and theory is reduced to the status of a myth that lingers on to represent the frustrated aspirations of detached and disinterested intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

Loneragan then goes on to discuss the alternative to a war of extinction or the total domination of a single world order, the two most likely ends to this long cycle of decline, namely

. . . the difficulty of the lesson that the longer cycle has to teach. Nor are we quite without hints or clues on the nature of that lesson. On the contrary, there is a convergence of evidence for the assertion that the longer cycle is to be met, not by any idea or set of ideas on the level of technology, economics, or politics, but only by the attainment of a higher viewpoint in man's understanding and making of man.<sup>2</sup>

This is followed by the ways in which this longer cycle may be reversed. But that in effect constitutes the entire volume of *Insight*.

Müntzer's time was a time of fragmentation, especially within the Roman Church, a drop to a lower level of intelligibility that eventually stabilized around the confessional system of churches (the split into Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Churches was a prior loss of a higher viewpoint that might have kept Christians together in communion). On the other hand, the Roman model of civil society, which had fragmented several centuries early into the manorial system, was now starting to re-emerge first as the ethnic nation state and then the democratic civil societies of the Swiss and British. But the true need for an open civil society was not to emerge until the advent of the industrial revolution and the shift to a post-agricultural economy that depends on innovation and individual creativity for its very survival.

The key test lies in the question, What is (this church, society, etc.) for? Higher level integrations such as the Triune Model of Moral Development laid out in Chapter Two provide a ready answer (in this case, to prepare people for life as part of this divine community). Fragmented societies either at a lower level of development or on their way down to lower levels of intelligibility have no ready answer. If anything there are multiple answers, some contradictory and incompatible, some even mutually incomprehensible to each other. And the answers are also limited in scope, often constrained to the demands of the ego or of group advancement. Such decline is evident in our own society, where even the question itself may have little meaning in a scientific and secular industrialized age.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Insight*, 228-232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 233.

## APPENDIX V

### THE PROBLEM OF LIBERATION

The question behind reform is not that reform is not possible or improvement cannot be made, but that human beings exhibit a profound lack for sustained development of any kind. Both written and archaeological history are full of records of societies and cultures that have thrived and then failed. Catastrophic failures of the kind that destroyed Minoan society (volcanic) do occur, as well as the man-made kind the lay waste to the Fertile Crescent over two thousand years ago (salinization and goats), but in many cases the failure occurs in the institutional realm where internal or external shocks overload the various schemes of recurrence that regulate the day to day business.<sup>1</sup>

But there is this deeper question, particularly pertinent today because post-agricultural economies depend on innovation and progressive change to survive and thrive. But what is our capacity for long-term cumulative and progressive change? On our own, rather limited; but with God . . . and that is the question. For the problem is radical, permanent, independent of underlying manifolds, not primarily social, not a discovery of a correct philosophy or ethics, cannot be met by setting up a benevolent despotism, and is real. The solution lies in achieving a still higher viewpoint of human living.

What follows is Lonergan's subsection "The Problem of Liberation", Chapter XVIII "The Possibility of Ethics" in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), 630-633.

The elements in the problem are basically simple. Man's intelligence, reasonableness, and willingness

- (1) proceed from a detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know,
- (2) are potentialities in process of development towards a full, effective freedom,
- (3) supply the higher integration for otherwise coincidental manifolds on successively underlying psychic, organic, chemical, and physical levels,
- (4) stand in opposition and tension with sensitive and intersubjective attachment, interest, and exclusiveness, and
- (5) suffer from that tension a cumulative bias that increasingly distorts immanent development, its outward products, and the outer conditions under which the immanent development occurs.

Essentially the problem lies in an incapacity for sustained development. The tension divides and disorients cognitive activity by the conflict of positions and counter-positions. This conflict issues into contrary views of the good which in turn make good will appear misdirected and misdirected will appear good. There follows the confounding of the social situation with the social surd to provide misleading inspiration for further insights, deceptive evidence for further judgments, and illusory causes to fascinate unwary wills.

The problem is radical, for it is a problem in the very dynamic structure of cognitive, volitional, and social activity. It is not a question of error on this or that general or particular issue. It is a question of orientation, approach, procedure, method. It affects concretely every issue, both general and particular, for it recurs with every use of the dynamic structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> For interesting examples of the decline and fall of civilizations, see Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2005). For a summary of Arnold Toynbee's approach to the rise and fall of civilizations, see his *A Study of History* (Abridgment of Volumes VII-I by D. C. Somervell. New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957). For modern examples of how our own civilization is becoming susceptible to institutional collapse due to overwhelming internal or external shocks, see Jane Jacobs' *Dark Age Ahead* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004).

The problem is permanent. It vanishes if one supposes man's intelligence, reasonableness, and willingness not to be potentialities in process of development but already in possession of the insights that make learning superfluous, of the reasonableness that makes judgments correct, of the willingness that makes persuasion unnecessary. Again, it vanishes if one supposes the elimination of the tension and opposition between the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know and, on the other hand, attached, interested, and narrow sensitivity and intersubjectivity. But, in fact, both development and tension pertain to the very nature of man, and as long as they exist, the problem remains in full force.

The problem is independent of the underlying manifolds. No doubt, if the underlying manifolds were different, the higher cognitional and volitional integration would differ in its content. But such a change of content would leave the dynamic structure of the higher integration unmodified; and it is in the structure that the problem resides. It follows that neither physics nor chemistry nor biology nor sensitive psychology can bring forth devices that go to the root of the trouble.

The problem is not primarily social. It results in the social surd. It receives from the social surd its continuity, its aggravation, its cumulative character. But its root is elsewhere. Hence it is that a revolution can sweep away old evils and initiate a fresh effort; but the fresh effort will occur through the same dynamic structure as the old effort and lead to essentially the same results.

The problem is not to discover a correct philosophy, ethics, or human science. For such discoveries are quite compatible with the continued existence of the problem. The correct philosophy can be but one of many philosophies, the correct ethics one of many ethical systems, the correct human science an old or new view among many views. But precisely because they are correct, they will not appear correct to minds disorientated by the conflict between positions and counter-positions. Precisely because they are correct, they will not appear workable to wills with restricted ranges of effective freedom. Precisely because they are correct, they will be weak competitors for serious attention in the realm of practical affairs.

The problem is not met by setting up a benevolent despotism to enforce a correct philosophy, ethics, or human science. No doubt, if there is to be the appeal to force, then it is better that the force be directed by wisdom than by folly, by benevolence than by malevolence. But the appeal to force is a counsel of despair. So far from solving the problem, it regards the problem as insoluble. For if men are intelligent, reasonable, and willing, they do not have to be forced. Only in the measure that men are unintelligent, unreasonable, unwilling, does force enter into human affairs. Finally, if force can be used by the group against the wayward individual and by the larger group against the smaller, it does not follow that it can be used to correct the general bias of common sense. For the general bias of common sense is the bias of all men and, to a notable extent, it consists in the notion that ideas are negligible unless they are reinforced by sensitive desires and fears. Is everyone to use force against everyone to convince everyone that force is beside the point?

The problem is real. In the present work it has been reached in the compendious fashion that operates through the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being and the consequent ethics. But the expeditiousness of the procedure must not be allowed to engender the mistake that the problem resides in some theoretical realm. On the contrary, its dimensions are the dimensions of human history, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History* illustrate abundantly and rather relevantly the failure of self-determination, the schism in the body social, and the schism in the soul that follow from an incapacity for sustained development.

The solution has to be a still higher integration of human living. For the problem is radical and permanent; it is independent of the underlying physical, chemical, organic, and psychic manifolds; it is not met by revolutionary change, nor by human discovery, nor by the enforced implementation of discovery; it is as large as human living and human history. Further, the solution has to take people just as they are. If it is to be a solution and not a mere suppression of the problem, it has to acknowledge and respect and work through man's intelligence, and reasonableness, and freedom. It may eliminate neither development nor tension yet it must be able to replace incapacity by capacity for sustained development. Only a still higher integration can meet such requirements. For only a higher integration leaves underlying manifolds with their autonomy yet succeeds in introducing a higher systematization into their non-systematic coincidences. And only a still higher integration than any that so far has been considered can deal with the dialectical manifold immanent in human subjects and the human situation.

There is needed, then, a further manifestation of finality, of the upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism of generalized emergent probability. Earlier, in the chapter on Common Sense as Object, it was concluded that a viewpoint higher than the viewpoint of common sense was needed; moreover, that *X* was given the name, cosmopolis, and some of its aspects and functions were indicated. But the subsequent argument has revealed that, besides higher viewpoints in the mind, there are higher integrations in the realm of being; and both the initial and subsequent argument have left it abundantly clear that the needed higher viewpoint is a concrete possibility only as a consequence of an actual higher integration.

Finally, whether the needed higher integration has emerged or is yet to emerge, is a question of fact. Similarly, its nature is not an object for speculation but for empirical inquiry. Still, what can that empirical inquiry be? Since our metaphysics and ethics have been developed under a restriction to proportionate being, we have to raise the question of transcendent knowledge before we can attempt an investigation of the ulterior finality of man.

Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.

## APPENDIX VI

### COMMON GUIDES FOR COMMON ACTION

For over a century now human beings have engaged in a dispassionate and disinterested desire to know how human beings behave. These observational and experimental studies, often carried out in such “soft” sciences as anthropology and social psychology, shed light not on how we would like to appear to ourselves but as we are in the realm where things are studied in relationship to other things rather than human concerns. Furthermore, other disciplines such as ecology and systems (operational) theory have been created to understand the kinds of regulatory problems associated with exponentially growing human populations.

Yet remarkably little of these insights into human behaviour and the human condition have made their way into common sense realms of planning and policy-making, be it at the national level or in small groups being formed for the first time. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that the kinds of insights social scientists and truly great novelists have are not comforting.<sup>1</sup> Another is that we refuse to know and often with good grounds—in other words, we are blind not through accident but through choice—for to acknowledge a verified insight into reality may well mean a radical shift in who we are and what we do.<sup>2</sup> A third is that these insights are part of the explanatory realm of meaning and few people are knowledgeable about scientific studies and even fewer of the way in which these studies relate to common sense intelligence.

What follows is a brief introduction to a few of the key scientific insights concerning human practice that we might well keep in mind when engaging in planning and/or policy-making. They are in effect questions about what we are doing that we need to ask ourselves if we are to go beyond self or group interests and seek to contribute to the human good. They are:

1. Do I have a good explanatory theory justifying the proposal or am I relying on good intentions alone?
2. Am I paying sufficient attention to myself, as the only true critical instrument for judging?
3. Am I stifling any internal unease, a nagging conscience that may be trying to tell me something important?
4. Have I accepted in an uncritical fashion the dictates of authority and/or fashion?
5. Am I too readily assuming that this situation is the same as some other on which these proposals are based?
6. Is (whatever I am concerned with) a state or symptoms of a process? If the latter, might the true solution be a counter-intuitive one?

---

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Milgram's experiments on authority show that we are not so independently minded as we would like to think we are; when faced with authority, we will carry out horrendous acts, even against our better judgment and personal pain. Other experiments on the ways in which perception is altered in social situations demonstrates that we are perfectly willing to bend the truth when everyone around us maintains an obvious untruth.

<sup>2</sup> Hardin, *Exploring New Ethics for Survival* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972), 18. The context for this statement is the consistent refusal, when it comes to contamination, to acknowledge that not only is the earth a closed system (a spaceship) but companies need to account for the flow of materials that they produce with the same rigor that they currently account for money. The other ecologically significant refusal to know relates to the tragedy of the commons, the dynamics of which explain the consistent over fishing and collapse of fisheries around the world even in the face of clear evidence that such a collapse is forthcoming. Yet this knowledge is never brought into the public sphere; nor does it seem to be part of the planning and policy-making structures that consistently result in wrong long term choices based on common sense expediency.

7. Has the fieldwork that I've done to support the plan or policy been based on a transdisciplinary and transcendental model or a more local specialization that may predetermine results?
8. Have I taken into account those factors that cannot be expressed in language yet may play a significant role?
9. Am I concentrating on providing ways so that the truth can emerge and be acted upon, rather than simply removing constraints?
10. In my drive to get something done, what else may I be doing that I'm not aware of or not taking into account?
11. Have I discarded a good idea simply because it was partially flawed?
12. Have I been so focused on getting this project going that I've forgotten the reasons for doing it?

These twelve questions can be summarized in a series of proverbs, of points that we would be advised to keep in mind when contemplating any course of action.

1. Good intentions are never sufficient
2. There is only one truly critical instrument
3. Listen to that still small voice within
4. Acknowledge vulnerability to authority
5. Each situation is time-and-space-specific
6. The real solution may be a counter-intuitive solution
7. Fieldwork is both transdisciplinary and transcendental
8. Language is infinite yet bounded
9. Freedom is more than a release from constraints
10. You can never do merely one thing
11. No idea is totally bad
12. And then what?

These proverbs are not a method of operating; Professional Practice works out a possible compressive methodology for assessing planning and policy-making practices. Rather they are things to keep in the back of one's mind to be pulled out should the situation warrant it. Sometimes we run into troubles and need that extra insight that will enable us to make sense of the situation. These proverbs provide a set of insights, one of which may make the situation intelligible for common sense purposes.

There are of course many such proverbs in western traditions. These have been selected not only because of their particular importance in planning and policy making but because they represent some of the fundamental insights into human behaviour that have emerged over the last hundred or so years of dispassionate and disinterested inquiry in a number of different fields.

### *1. Good Intentions are Never Sufficient*

Do I have a good explanatory theory justifying the proposal or am I relying on good intentions? This question highlights not the reasons for undertaking any given course of action but whether or not sufficient attention has been paid to developing an operational and explanatory theory that explains why such actions are necessary and why the proposed course of action is likely to work. The latter is hard work, while the former—particularly when combined with the expedience of common sense bias—allows for quick and immediate responses. The problem is that action based solely on common sense and “good feelings” more often leads to disasters. A good instance of this is the razing of many city slums during the sixties and seventies. While there were a number of economic factors behind the move, not the least of which was the money that could be made by private companies, it was the tyranny of the camera that portrayed the substandard slum living conditions that evoked cries of change. It was only after many of these “slums” were demolished

and replaced by development blocks that it became clear these slums were in fact living and vibrant communities that provided safety and security. When these communities were broken up, the projects became places of unregulated crime and vice where the police would only enter in force.

This highlights another aspect of this question, namely the distance between the person and/or group interested in making changes and the situation itself within which changes are being made. It is easy for anyone with good intentions or malicious forethought to suggest policies and plans without actually getting their hands dirty. Such armchair diagnosis may be well intended, but without verified insights into the unique socio-political situation at hand they are likely to be misleading at best or downright destructive at worse. This is particularly true when such diagnoses are built upon such epistemological counter positions as naïve realism or incomplete world views such as the Newtonian clockwork universe. Direct involvement with the situation demands corrections whenever discrepancies between what is considered true and what is actually true arise. Such corrective encounters with reality can be avoided when operating at a distance.

Good intentions in themselves are no longer sufficient to justify the interventionist activities of *any* person or organization; willful ignorance is no longer acceptable; blind faith no longer an assurance that one is doing the right thing. In the complex interdependencies and the sheer scale of operation, the burden of proof falls on those seeking change to show that what they propose will not make things worse. Even though the law may take the attitude that companies, like people, are innocent until proven guilty, any reasonable response suggests this attitude is limited to the wellbeing of individuals or corporations and not to the commonwealth.

Responsible action requires the interventionist to work to free herself of the variety of physical, mental, and spiritual chains that prevent him or her from doing what is required or really needed. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that his or her training is adequate to the situation, that diagnosis and evaluations are reasonable, and that his or hers actions and plans are responsible for enhancing the human good.

This does not mean that we have to be perfect or that what we do has to be perfect. Neither does it mean that we will not make mistakes. What it does mean is that we will make an effort to not only improve our understanding of the situation but to cultivate that sense of dispassionate judgment necessary to counter the emotions of the day.

Good intentions are fine; the devil lies in the details.

## *2. There is Only One Truly Critical Instrument*

Am I paying sufficient attention to myself, as the only true critical instrument for judging? Or am I relying on the evaluations and criticisms of others without in turn applying a critical eye to these evaluations and criticisms? Such questions only have meaning in an open society; in a closed one, all such decisions are taken by those at the top of the social and political heap.

One of the major problems we now have in the common wealth is that individual citizens do not have the time or material resources to truly understand a problem while there is always a professional or a profession to support the interests of one group or another. This, combined with a layperson's reluctance to confront experts, often leads to an uncritical acceptance of a professional's often restricted viewpoint. Placing a basic set of critical tools in the hands of the non-expert—tools such as these ten questions—allows for a better understanding of what is going forward. The need for educated and trained non-professionals to watch over the work of experts and the organizational powers they represent places the ultimate responsibility of plans and policies on those who accept or reject the advice of experts. Ultimately, unless one abdicates all personal responsibility for what is happening, there is only one truly critical instrument—and that is you, or rather more accurately the foundational stance and degree of authenticity that you currently employ in your daily affairs.

While there may be a variety of research tools to aid the diagnosis, there is only one truly critical instrument: you. You are the detective, the seeker for good, the critical analyst. You are the one who will have to make snap decisions or quickly shift through masses of material for the central and most important point, and both tasks involve personal education on the level of preunderstanding, of internalizing appropriate hermeneutic structures and world views. If you are to be a successful practitioner, you need to work on yourself more than anything else.

Granted, all this is done within the belief structure of one's group, one's own culture. In many ways, this collective accumulation of tested insights intertwined with oversights is the true repository of human development. Even so, it is the individual who exercises the greatest choice: to whom to give one's allegiance. Furthermore, groups don't have insights; only individuals do. It is the individual who judges which comments or opinions are reliable and those that are at best suspect, and it is the individual who in the end will make any necessary corrections.

There's a pattern in history. It starts with the odd-ball, the misfit, the "mad" person whose ideas are scorned as being non-sense if not outright crazy. Then a few people take up the madman's ideas—and before too long these "insane" ideas become the norm and the whole process starts up once again. Jesus' own story is one such example. His wisdom, his Divinity, is now part of human history, embodied in a Church that seeks to bring his life alive for different cultures and periods in history.

The community acts as a collective reservoir to all that has been gained; the individual is the one who gets things started.

### *3. Listening to that Still Small Voice Within*

Am I stifling any internal unease, a nagging conscience that may be trying to tell me something important? There are questions that we refuse to let into consciousness, yet still are active at some psychic level. And there is that tension of genuineness between who we are and who we are called to be, i.e. between transcended and transcending self. Unease is a sign that something is wrong, that things are not quite the way that we think—or would like to think—they are. It is a voice that is at least in the short run easy to drown out. Yet this still small voice within often marks an entry of the Divine Mystery into something greater than us.

While God can be very blunt at times, when the situation warrants it, still we do tend to get caught up in the rhetoric of the day and let the softer quieter moments slip away. These are the prisons that we make for ourselves, the word magic of wordsmiths who are just as concerned with preventing thought as with giving it form. Freedom is through the discipline of silence, and through silence we tune into this inner voice. We are the only true critical instrument, and the training of that instrument takes place in silence, in listening to the siren of that inner call.

Thus, there is a fundamental need for "silence, watchfulness, and the expectation of the Spirit's drastic appearance in judgment, recognition, conversion, for us and for the whole world."<sup>3</sup> This implies a certain need for patience, even in difficult times when fear and panic may lead to premature and often destructive action. Without such interior silence, one is often condemned to chase fantasies and phantoms either in a dream world of one's own making or in a collective retreat from reality into rhetoric.

---

<sup>3</sup> Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 43.



#### *4. Acknowledge vulnerability to authority*

The Stanley Milgram experiments show that we are vulnerable to obeying authority even when the demands made upon us are clearly disturbing. Part of our Western tradition is a reliance on individual authenticity, of being our own person responsible for our own actions. Yet the reality is that we are prone to listen and obey clear authority figures, i.e., we are subject to group emotions and group think and need to realize that under certain conditions we are capable of doing horrendous things, including torture and murder. Part of this relates to the fact that we are a social species, constantly engaged in status and positioning games that are hierarchical in nature, and part is due to the fact that individuals of our species, when left alone for months at a time, disconnect from reality and start to hallucinate. From these and other studies it is clear that it is the rare individual indeed that can step outside the established socio/political structures and take a stand at variance with commonly accepted wisdom. The chances are, if the studies are to be believed, that you and I are not such individuals.

#### *5. Each Situation is Time-and-space-specific*

Am I too readily assuming that this situation is the same as some other on which these proposals are based? Like any person of common sense intelligence, we go into a situation knowing what kind of situation it is and how we are to act within that situation to get things done. If there is a discrepancy, we search through our store of common sense proverbs and generalizations to find the one that brings intelligibility. In reorienting ourselves in this way we once again know where we are and what to do.

This works well at the local level, but is likely to cause problems when we are orienting ourselves to quite different circumstances. All too often we assume the reality of our own culture when assessing the behaviour of those from another. Despite historical and geographical differences, we assume that others are just like us—"just like us" being a common sense judgment rather than the recognition that all human beings share only basic cognitive operations. The world-mediated-by-meaning of others is not necessarily the same as our own.

There is a set of problems that arise from the fact that no two situations are ever the same; even a design session run by the same people and over the same problem but later in the day is different. The question is, Are these differences significant in terms of the plans and/or policies being proposed? To assume that these differences are of no importance without taking the steps to verify that they are actually of no importance is just that, an assumption. These assumptions may not be born out, as in the case of exporting liberal democracies to autocratic cultures or important industrial models into agricultural economies.

Each case study, each situation, is unique. Situations that at first resemble each other may turn out to be quite different, while situations that seem very different may have the same root problem. In both cases, the burden of proof lies with the outside expert to show that the situation at hand is in fact comparable with his or her diagnosis. For armchair diagnosis and generalized evaluations made by those who are not familiar or involved with the historical and geographical reality of such unique situations may ignore significant differences and express inadequate if not unproductive orientations, misleading diagnoses and evaluations, and increasingly inaccurate estimates of the scope and constraints on action.

Because of this, fieldwork is *always* necessary; the lack of such fieldwork leaves in question the accuracy and reliability of the authority claiming expertise.

## *6. The real solution may be counter-intuitive*

Systems' thinking shows that there is a considerable difference between a problem being a state or the symptom of a process. Common sense intelligence is prone to understanding the world in terms of states, e.g. a state of poverty, a state of ill health, a state of being married, etc. Yet operational or systems' thinking shows that reality is more a set of interlocking processes than a state of being. The best example of this is our understanding of ecological systems as not states of being, e.g. plains or rainforest ecologies, but as complex sets of interlocking processes that include hydrological cycles, nitrogen and carbon cycles, predatory/prey relationships, food chains, and key-pin species among other things. To think of a rain forest or desert ecology as static is simply wrong.<sup>4</sup>

A process understanding of a problematic situation may well lead to solutions that are counter-intuitive to the "state" minded person. Take a fever for example. If a person has a core body temperature significantly higher than the norm, than a "state" minded person's response is to lower the temperature as quickly as possible through the use of ice packs and cold water. But if the fever is considered the symptom of a healing process the body is going through to repel a foreign invader, than the appropriate course is to raise the core body temperature to aid the body in fighting off the cause of the fever. In this view, a higher temperature is the body's way of speeding up the process of healing.

Two other trivial examples come to mind, trivial in the sense of non-life threatening yet highly significant for what they show about the way we think.

The first was a packing problem, where large fragile glass globes about seven or eight feet in diameter had to be shipped across country. The initial solutions all involved encasing the fragile globes in strong cases, yet the globes were still being broken. In the end what worked was a counter-intuitive solution where most of the protective casing was removed. Once the crane operators could see how fragile the cargo actually was, they took special care not to break the glass globes. The solution lay in recognizing the processes involved in how things were broken, not in the easy-to-see state of a broken globe.

A second example also takes into account the processes going on. During periods of heavy rain or melting snow, there are always cars or trucks that end up soaking pedestrians to the skin. The intuitive solution is to move as far away from the street as possible, yet in many cases this doesn't improve the situation. A counter-intuitive solution is to move as close to the street as possible, so that the driver of any passing car or truck will have no choice but to deliberately splash the pedestrian if she hits that puddle at speed. For the most part, drivers are not willing to think of themselves as deliberate soakers of innocent people, so they will move away or slow down to avoid doing so. When getting soaked by a passing car is considered as a process rather than a state, the counter-intuitive solution makes sense.

The same goes for more complex "states." Poverty, for example, is often considered as a state rather than the symptom of a series of recurrent schemes of operation. Perhaps, if poverty was considered a symptom of a process rather than a state of being, people would not throw money to alleviate the state but seek to understand the processes at work that result in poverty—in which case a counter-intuitive plan or policy may actually solve or at least ameliorate the "problem" of poverty.

---

<sup>4</sup> This is why Lonergan's world view of emergent probability is so powerful: it anticipates the world as interlocking schemes of recurrence operative at different levels of intelligibility, each scheme having a probability of emergence and once existent a probability of continuing. Each level is also contingent on the level below it for its very existence.

### *7. Fieldwork is both Transdisciplinary and Transcendental*

Does the mode of fieldwork predetermine the plan or policy or is it sufficiently broad and comprehensive to avoid such distortions? The question here is a subtle one, involving the distortions that any research model or technique brings to understanding and verifying reality. It is all too easy to select a method that will justify the desired results or—in a more complex scheme—there's a prejudgment where the problem is "seen" to be economic; an economist is called in to make a study; and the results of the study show that the problem indeed has economic roots. The problem lies not with the economist who is simply using the tools available to her, but the prejudgment that names the problem "economic" without any verification other than looking. The reminder that fieldwork must be both transdisciplinary and transcendental is not only a reminder that our initial evaluation and diagnosis may be invalid but that the only true way to understand and validate a diagnosis is through a transdisciplinary approach based on Lonergan's transcendental method. Only then does a universal viewpoint become a possibility.

Fieldwork is transdisciplinary for the simple reason that any discipline selects from reality whereas the only truly comprehensive perspective comes from a methodology that transcends specialized knowing, drawing upon the strengths and avoiding the weaknesses of each. Ultimately, one's primary evaluation and diagnosis rests on a comprehensive approach; anything less is subject to the distortions and biases of a particular approach, a particular discipline. Only when the primary evaluation has been well grounded is it possible to move on to the more specialized disciplinary studies needed to fully understand what is going on and what is going wrong.

Because fieldwork is transdisciplinary it is also transcendental. When it comes to transdisciplinary work, the only firm unchangeable foundation on which to build lies in the operations of the human mind: how we as human beings come to understand is the only true commonality *all* humans share. It is only through an understanding of how we come to know—a unity of experiencing, understanding and judging plus the value creating exercises of deciding—that we can understand and judge the understanding and judging of others.

What this means in practice is the Professional Practitioner must not only be an expert in the realm of interiority, first having appropriated her own rationality and verified the adequacy of her foundational stance, but well versed in the ways different disciplines come to understand and verify their own things and conjugates appropriate to the explanatory level of their area of expertise. It also helps to have a transdisciplinary framework at hand that allows the researcher to separate out the important from the irrelevant—for it is impossible to truly know anything but a fraction of what there is to be known in each discipline. What is possible, however, is a framework that can tap into each discipline to pull out the relevant bits for Professional Practice. This is the work of Otto Friedman, sketched out in Appendix 1.

### *8. Language is Infinite yet Bounded*

Have I taken into account those factors that cannot be expressed in language yet may play a significant role? Wordsmiths often assume that everything that is knowable can be put into words, but strictly speaking this is not true. We are symbol using people, deeply embedded in one or more languages that express entire worlds of meaning. In the end, we express ourselves, our plans and our policies in words that mediate between ourselves and reality. And language is a beautiful tool, for it is in itself infinite in combination and potential insights.

While language is infinite in flexibility it is still bounded. There are areas of human knowing that simply cannot be put into words, areas that are nevertheless important to human living.

Language runs into boundaries when it comes to talking about God, higher mathematics and music.<sup>5</sup> All three areas transcend the bounds of language and yet are fundamental for the understanding of what it means to be human. For this reason, any plan or any policy formulated through language is *always* incomplete.

Although Western society frowns upon policy and planning session where God is mentioned, the truth is that even the most atheist are still heavily influenced by religious matters. The notion of linear time is a Jewish idea that arose when most conceptions held to a cyclic notion of history. The reliance on individual conscience as transcending law is very much a Christian belief, as is the belief that the world was created good. Even if one is not aware of these cultural dependencies on religion, these notions are still vital and active.

Religion has always had a major role in human affairs. From the God-Kings of Samaria to the Divine Right of Kings of the medieval ages, from Muhammad's conquests over the infidels to the early American pilgrim's flight from European religious persecution, people have taken their religion seriously. Even in areas where God is not mentioned, the "false idols" of power, state or one's own group still attest to this devotional need to something greater than us. The religious impulse runs deep in human affairs.

So too does higher mathematics. It wasn't until mathematicians learned to convey their meanings through symbols rather than words that mathematics really took off. This in itself is not very interesting, but what still remains a mystery is the close connection between mathematics and the realm of explanatory theory. It turns out that mathematics is *the* language when it comes to explaining how things relate to each other. The world of quantum mechanics is quite real, in the sense of verifiable and verified things and their relationships, but to explain this reality in common sense images rather than mathematical terms only invites the kinds of new-age magic where "thoughts have power to directly influence reality" and "everything is possible until we chose what possibility is to be." Mathematical illiteracy has its consequences.

The power of music ranges from the tribalistic dancing of heavy-metal to the almost mathematical dynamics of a Bach fugue, from Irish folk music that kept the cultural alive during centuries of English occupation to the playful antics of P.D.Q. Bach (Peter Schickele), from the rousing military voices of Scottish bagpipes to a mother's lullaby. Something is communicated, but certainly not in words.

Words can also create realities that don't exist. Anthony deMello, S.J., was fond of the following story.

I said to you earlier [in the conference] that words are limited. There is more I have to add. There are some words that correspond to *nothing*. For instance, I'm an Indian. Now, let's suppose that I'm a prisoner of war in Pakistan, and they say to me, "Well, today we're going to take you to the frontier, and you're going to take a look at your country." So they bring me to the frontier, and I look across the border, and I think, "Oh, my country, my beautiful country. I see villages and trees and hills. This is my own, my native land!" After a while one of the guards says, "Excuse me, we've made a mistake here. We have to move up another ten miles." What was I reacting to? Nothing. I kept focusing on a word, India. But trees are not India; trees are trees. In fact, there are no frontiers or boundaries. They were put there by the human mind; generally by stupid avaricious politicians.<sup>6</sup>

Not only is language bounded, but it can also be used to hide rather than reveal.

---

<sup>5</sup> George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life* (London, England: Phoenix, 1997), 63-64.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony de Mello, S.J., *Awareness*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 129-130. Italics are de Mello's.

### 9. *Freedom is More Than a Release from Constraints*

Am I concentrating on providing ways so that the truth can emerge and be acted upon, rather than simply removing constraints? This is a reminder that freedom and liberty is not freedom from—a release from constraints—but the freedom to follow the good.

Freedom has come to mean a release from all constraints. In such a world, the ultimate freedom is to create oneself as one would without reference to anything else. The flaw in this line of reasoning is that it has nothing to say about wise and intelligent living, the result of the slow, gradual development of character. A far better concept of freedom is that it means the liberty to pursue the good, to do what needs to be done according to our unique time-and-space-specific circumstance.

We tend to make physical, mental, and spiritual prisons for ourselves, comfortable and safe lives that prevent us from meeting the demands of our times. Liberty requires not only the freedom to follow the transcendental injunctions (be open to experience, be intelligent in understanding, be reasonable in judging and be responsible when it comes to deciding what to do) but to restrain ourselves when it comes to pursuing those “easy” paths that often lead to decline.

Thus there seems to be two forms of liberty: the intrinsic freedom common to all as potential, and the extrinsic freedom that results from the actualization of this potentiality through conversion and the cultivation or formation of a true disciplined adult character.

### 10. *You Can Never Do Merely One Thing*

In my drive to get something done, what else may I be doing that I’m not aware of or not taking into account?

The one single overriding truth any ecologist knows is that you can never do merely one thing. In our contemporary complex interrelated world, this principle is more important than ever, for often it is the unintended consequences of our actions and the actions of those we may never see, that bring about the small collisions and truly great disasters.<sup>7</sup>

“Collateral damage” and “side effects” are two terms that enable us to focus on what we want without having to pay attention to the other equally real and equally human-made consequences. This is especially true when it comes to opportunity costs: the plans and policies that we make walk hand-in-hand with other options that will no longer be brought into being. Resources are tied up in existing schemes; development is channeled along certain lines while other possibilities, other potentialities, are closed off. These “opportunity costs” are not only a part of what we do as the intended good, but might prove in the end to be a major loss outweighing gains.

This means that it is necessary to keep the overall context in mind, to have a broad and comprehensive perspective on human affairs within which immediate proposals take their meaning. An unreasonable demand, perhaps, but one made necessary by the current global consciousness of humankind. To do otherwise is to relax in one’s own irresponsibility.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Garrett Hardin, *Filters Against Folly: How to Survive Despite Economists, Ecologists, and the Merely Eloquent* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1985), 58.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to say that problems need to be treated on a global level, for in most cases the call for a global solution is a disguise for not dealing with the situation on a local level. It is only to say first of all that whatever we think we are doing, we are also doing something else that may be more significant in the long run and secondly that the best way to understand these other factors is through taking into account the context(s) within which the plan or policy is to be carried out.

## *11. No Idea is Totally Bad*

Have I discarded a good idea simply because it was partially flawed?

No idea is perfect the first time out. Always there is a nudging, a building where the good parts are augmented and the flaws overcome. All too often a potentially good idea is thrown out because it doesn't meet all the conditions.

For whatever reasons, our culturally conditioned response to any new idea is to criticize. Yet in design work, when what is required is a new approach, this conditioned response is maladaptive. The same goes for any situation where the tried-and-true no longer works and some other plan or policy needs to be brought into existence. What is needed is a way of keeping the idea alive, first by overcoming our immediate negative response to ask ourselves what is good about it and then by picking one part of the idea that needs work. And this is not an easy task. In our eagerness to get at the flaws we generalize the good then get down to the nitty-gritty reasons why the idea won't work. For this reason, Synectics Inc. developed the idea of an Itemized Response™ that works by bringing this critical mind to a halt and force it to actually consider the idea.

An Itemized Response™ works in two stages. Once the mind has been brought to a halt and the idea stated in a single sentence or short paragraph, the first step is to give *three* distinct and specific reasons in support of the idea—no generalities or abstract statements allowed. Only after the presenter of the idea is satisfied that the other person has truly considered the good in the idea is it possible to move on to the second step, namely to identify the one most important thing that needs work. When identified, this “flaw” has to be stated as a “How to” statement. In other words, the mind is shifted from cutting off further discussion to finding ways to get around the problem. The resulting idea is then subject to the same consideration—and so it goes until the core idea relaxes into a coherent feasible solution. One can then turn to some other option, but at least that bit of good in the original idea was not lost—and it may turn out to be the one idea that offers a way out of the current problematique.

## *12. And then what?*

Have I been so focused on getting this project going that I've forgotten the reasons for doing it?

In our concern over reaching objectives, the broader consequences and implications of what we seek are often set aside in favor of marshalling evidence and support for the things we wish to do. One way to counter this bias is to ask the question: If we achieve our goals, then what?

To some extent this is an appeal to history, for anyone with a sense of history knows that there is always a “then what?” It improves one's sense of context, which in turn deepens one's understanding of the present situation. It also breaks one free from a goal-orientated view of human effort to the primary task of regulating human behavior. So she gets married or earns a degree—but that “goal” is not an end point, only a transformational stage where new forms of regulation are required, e.g. how to make a marriage work or how to hold a job.

“And then what?” also helps free us from a narrow-minded concern with the present. In a way, the Moral Horizon presented in Chapter Two provides the end point to a series of such questions, the end point being within the communal life of the Trinity.

One the other hand, if you say, “Great! Now we can start integrating the spiritual gifts of our elderly into the whole body of the church!” Then . .

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*, revised and updated. New York, N. Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1972.
- Alinsky, Saul D. *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Amery, Jean. *At the Mind's Limits Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*, translated by Sidney and Stella P. Rosenfeld, first published in German in 1976. New York: Schocken, 1986.
- Anonymous. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, introduced by Laurence Freeman OSB with original text rendered by Evelyn Underhill. Rockport, Massachusetts: Element, 1997.
- Atwood, Craig D. *Always Reforming: A History of the Christianity since 1300*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001.
- Augustine, Saint. *The City of God*, translated by Marcus Dods, D.D., introduction by Thomas Merton. New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1993.
- Baring-Gould, Sabine. *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, reprint of essays originally published 1866-8, with an introduction by Leslie Shepard. New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1967.
- Baron-Cohen, Simon. *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997.
- Bauer, Yehuda. *A History of the Holocaust*. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts, 1982.
- . *Rethinking the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Bax, E. Belfort. *Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*. New York: American Scholar Publications, 1966.
- BBC, "UN warns of population surge". BBC News report, 2003/12/09 05:36:04, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/s/2/hi/science/nature/3302497.stm>.
- Beesing, Maria, O.P., Robert J. Nogosek, C.S.C., and Patrick H. O'Leary, S.J. *The Enneagram: A Journey of Self Discovery*. Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1984.
- Bell, David V. J. *Power, Influence and Authority: An Essay in Political Linguistics*, New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Berger, Peter L. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963.
- Bielecki, Tessa. *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Writings*. New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1994.
- Blass, Thomas. *Contemporary Social Psychology: Representative Readings*. Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock, 1976.
- Boettinger, Henry M. *Moving Mountains or The Art and Craft of Letting Others See Things Your Way*. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969.

- Bostom, Andrew G., MD, ed. *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, foreword by Ibn Warraq. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2005.
- Brady, Thomas A., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, eds. *Handbook of European history 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*. New York: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Braudel, Fernand. *The Wheels of Commerce*, translated by Sian Reynolds. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1979.
- Bridgman, P. W. *The Intelligent Individual and Society*. New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1938.
- Bronowski, J. *The Ascent of Man*. London: BBC, 1973.
- Bryson, Bill. *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. Canada: Anchor Canada, 2003.
- Burke, James. *Connections*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978.
- Cahill, Thomas. *Desire of the Everlasting Hills: The World Before and After Jesus*. New York, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1999.
- Chesler, Phyllis. *The New Anti-Semitism: The Current Crisis and What We Must Do About It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Chesterton, G. K. *Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox."* New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956. First published by Sheed & Ward, 1933.
- Copplestone, Trewin, general ed. *World Architecture: An Illustrated History*. London: Hamlyn, 1963.
- Crowe, Frederick E., S.J. *Christ and History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982*. Ottawa: Novalis, 2005.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Nostromo*. 1904. Reprint, with introduction and notes by Martin Seymour-Smith, 1983. London: Penguin, 2001.
- Copplestone, Trewin, general ed. *World Architecture*. New York, N.Y.: Hamlyn, 1963.
- de Chardin, Teilhard. *The Phenomenon of Man*, translated from the French by Bernard Wall, with an introduction by Sir Julian Huxley. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1959.
- de Mello, Anthony, S.J. *The Song of the Bird*. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984.
- . *Awareness: The Perils and Opportunities of Reality*, ed. J. Francis Stroud, S.J. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992.
- . *One Minute Nonsense*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1992.
- . *The Way to Love: The Last Meditations of Anthony de Mello*. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992. Originally published as *Call to Love* in India in 1991 by Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.
- de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*, translated with preface and introductory notice by Henry Reeve, C.B., edited by Bruce Frohnen. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2002. Originally published London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1889.
- Deutsch, David. *The Fabric of Reality*. London, England: Penguin, 1997.



- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1999.
- . *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2005.
- Doran, Robert M. *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
- Dowbiggin, Ian. *Suspicious Minds: The Triumph of Paranoia in Everyday Life*. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1999.
- Dror, Yehezkel. *The Capacity to Govern*. London: Frank Cass, 2001.
- Dunne, Tad. *Loneragan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985.
- Ehrlich, Paul & Anne. *Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species*. New York, N. Y.: Random House, 1981.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2005.
- Ferguson, Wallace K. *Europe in Transition: 1300 – 1520*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.
- Fichtenau, Heinrich. *Living in the Tenth Century*, translated by Patrick J. Geary. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. New York, N.Y.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- Foundation for Inner Peace. *A Course in Miracles*, combined volume, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992.
- Freeman, Charles. *The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason*. London: Pimlico, 2003.
- Friedenberg, Edgar Z. *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes*. Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1976.
- Friedman, Thomas L. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. Updated and expanded. New York: Anchor, 2000.
- Friesen, Abraham. *Thomas Muentzer, a Destroyer of the Godless: The Making of a Sixteenth-Century Religious Revolutionary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Fromm, Eric. *The Art of Loving*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1956.
- . *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.
- Gerrish, B. A., ed. *Reformers in Profile*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.
- Goertz, Hans-Jürgen. *Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary*, translated by Jocelyn Jaquiere, edited by Peter Matheson. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993.
- Goffman, Erving. “On Face-Work”, *Interaction Ritual: Essays of Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York, N.Y.: Anchor, 1967. Originally published as “On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in

- Social Interaction” in *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, Volume 18, Number 3, August 1955, 213-31.
- Green, Thomas H., S.J. *When the Well Runs Dry: Prayer Beyond the Beginnings*, new revised edition. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1998; originally published 1978.
- Gregory, Brad S. *Salvation at Stake: Christian martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Gritsch, Eric W. *Reformer without a Church: The Life and Thought of Thomas Muentzer [sic], 1488?-1525*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.
- . *Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966.
- Grove, Noel. *National Geographic Society Atlas of World History*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1997.
- Harbison, E. Harris. *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1956.
- Hardin, Garrett. *Exploring New Ethics for Survival: The Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle*. Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1972.
- . *Filters Against Folly: How to Survive Despite Economists, Ecologists, and the Merely Eloquent*. Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1985.
- Harris, Sydney J. *The Best of Sydney J. Harris*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
- Haughton, Rosemary. *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*. Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1980.
- Hawken, Paul, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*. New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown and Co., 2000.
- Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*. New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1955.
- Hillerbrand, Hans J. “Thomas Muentzer [sic]” in *Reformers in Profile*, ed. B. A. Gerrish. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, 213-229.
- Himmelfarb, Gertrude. *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Jacobs, Jane. *Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics*. New York: Random House, 1992.
- . *Dark Age Ahead*. New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2004.
- Janson, H. W. and Dora Jane Janson. *History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day*, revised and enlarged. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- Jonas, George. “Pragmatic Anti-Semites.” *National Post*, October 27, 2003.

- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: New American Library, 1958.
- Kasper, Walter. *God the Father*. New York: Crossroad, 1984.
- . *The God of Jesus Christ*. Translated from the German by Matthew J. O'Connell. New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 2003.
- Kaplan, Robert D. *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy*. New York: Vintage, 1997.
- . *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*. New York: Vintage, 2000.
- Kempis, Thomas à. *The Imitation of Christ*. Revised edition, edited & translated by Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Kennedy, Marilyn Moats. *Powerbase: How to build it; How to keep it*. New York: Macmillan, 1984.
- Kereszty, Roch. "God the Father," *Communio* 26 (summer 1999):258-277.
- Kimball, Charles. *When Religion Becomes Evil*. New York, N.Y.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002.
- Koestler, Arthur. *The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1959.
- . *The Act of Creation* (Revised Danube edition), London: Pan, 1970.
- . *Janus: A Summing Up*. London: Pan, 1978.
- Kramer, Elliot M. *Complicity: Terrorism in the News*. Self-published, to be re-released by Lafayette, Louisiana: Alpha, 2004.
- Kurtz, Ernest and Katherine Ketcham. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Journey to Wholeness*. New York, N.Y.: Bantam, 1992.
- Lasswell, Harold D. *A Pre-View of Policy Sciences*. New York: Elsevier, 1971.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Birthday of the World, and Other Stories*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Lerner, Barbara. "Bush vs. Geneva," *National Review Online*. December 3, 2003.
- Lessing, Doris. *Re: Colonized Planet 5, Shikasta*, first volume of *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. New York: Knopf, 1979.
- . *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*. Massey Lectures, 24<sup>th</sup> series. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1986.
- . *Conversations*. Ed. Earl G. Ingersoll. Princeton, New Jersey: Ontario Review Press, 1994.
- Levi, Anthony. *Renaissance and Reformation: The Intellectual Genesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Lewis, Bernard. *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. London: HarperCollins, 1944.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F., S.J. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1957.
- . *Method in Theology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.
- . *A Third Collection*. Mahwah N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985.
- Loyola, St. Ignatius. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by Anthony Mottola, introduction by Robert W. Gleason, S.J. Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1964.
- McBrien, Richard P., general ed. *The Harpercollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism*, first edition. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Reformation: A History*. New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2004.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *A Short History of Ethics*. New York: Macmillan, 1966.
- Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*, vintage Canada edition. Printed and bound in the USA: Vintage Canada, 1996.
- Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, translated from the German by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils. New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936.
- . *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1943.
- Matheson, Peter, trans. and ed. *The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988.
- Melchin, Kenneth R. *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics based on Bernard Lonergan*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Meyer, Ben F. *The Aims of Jesus* with a new introduction by N. T. Wright. San Jose, California: Pickwick Publications, 2002.
- Moore, R. I. *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215*. (*The making of Europe*, series editor Jacques Le Goff). Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Mullis, Kary. *Dancing Naked in the Mind Field*. New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1998.
- Nozick, Robert. *Philosophical Explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Oberman, Heiko A. *The Impact of the Reformation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994.
- O'Toole, Fintan. *Shakespeare is Hard, but so is Life: A Radical Guide to Shakespearian Tragedy*, revised edition. London: Granta, 2002.
- Ozmont, Steven. *The Bürgermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.
- Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

- Peters, Joan. *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine*. U.S.A.: J. Kap, 1984.
- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. New York: Bantam, 1974.
- Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, first released in 1944. Boston: Beacon, 1957.
- Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Vol. 1, *Plato*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., revised. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- . *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Vol. 2, *Hegel and Marx*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed., revised. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Prades, Javier. "The Attractive Mystery," *TRACES – Litterae Communionis* 8 (1999): 23-4.
- Rahner, Karl. *On Prayer*. New York: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1958.
- Rhineland, Philip H. *Is Man Incomprehensible to Man?* San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1974.
- Rosenberg, Nathan and L. E. Birdzell Jr. *How the West Grew Rich: The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World*. U.S.A.: Basic, 1986.
- Rubin, Barry, and Judith Colp Rubin. *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Rupp, Gordon. *Patterns of Reformation*. London: Epworth Press, 1969.
- Scott, Tom. *Thomas Müntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Sennett, Richard. *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*. New York: Vintage, 1970.
- Smith, Norman. *A History of Dams*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1972.
- Spufford, Francis. *Backroom Boys: The Secret Return of the British Boffin*. London: Faber and Faber, 2003.
- Stapledon, Olaf. *Last and First Men / Last Men in London*. Published in one volume by Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972. Both volumes were originally published by Methuen in 1930 and 1932 respectively.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- . *Errata: An Examined Life*. London, England: Phoenix, 1997.
- Sumption, Jonathan. *The Hundred Years War*, volume I of *Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991).
- Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *Jewish Literacy*. 1991. Reprint, New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Thomas, Gordon. *Journey into Madness: Medical Torture and the Mind Controllers*. London: bantam, 1988.

- Thomas, Hugh. *A History of the World*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Toffler, Barbara Ley. *Final Accounting: Ambition, Greed, and the Fall of Arthur Andersen*. New York, N.Y.: Broadway Books, 2003.
- Toner, Jules J., S.J. *A Commentary on St. Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits: A Guide to the Principles and Practice*. St. Louis, Missouri: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982.
- Toynbee, Arnold J. *A Study of History*. Abridgment of Volumes VII-I by D. C. Somervell. New York, N.Y.: Oxford, 1957.
- . *Change and Habit: The Challenge of Our Times*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1966.
- Tuchman, Barbara W. *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. New York, N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1984.
- Van Creveld, Martin. *Command in War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- . *The Transformation of War*. New York: FreePress, 1991.
- Van Dülmen, Richard. "The Reformation and the Modern Age", in *The German Reformation*, edited by C. Scott Dixon. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Originally appeared as Richard van Dülmen, "Reformation und Neuzeit. Ein Versuch". *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 14 (1987), 1-25.
- Vickers, Sir Geoffrey. *Value Systems and social Process*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1968.
- . *Freedom in a Rocking Boat: Changing Values in an Unstable Society*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1970.
- Walker, Williston, Richard A. Norris, David W. Latz, and Robert T. Hariday. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Scribner, 1985.
- Wallace, Peter G. *The Long European Reformation*. New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Wapnick, Kenneth. *A Talk given on "A Course in Miracles"*, fifth edition. Roscoe, N.Y.: Foundations for "A Course in Miracles", 1993.
- Watzlawick, Paul. *How Real is Real: Confusion, Disinformation, Communication*. New York: Random House, 1976.
- Watzlawick, Paul, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson. *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1967.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons. New York, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Williams, George Huntston. *The Radical Reformation*, third edition, Volume XV Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, Charles G. Nauert, Jr., General Editor. Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992. First edition published Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Williams, Rowan. *On Christian Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Winchester, Simon. *The Map that Changed the World: William Smith and the Birth of Modern Geology*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Wohlstetter, Roberta. *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*. Stanford, California: Stanford University press, 1962.

Ye'or, Bat. *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, translated from the French by Miriam Kochan and David Littman. Madison, UK: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002.

———, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005.