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## Message from the President

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This instalment of *ELEUTHERIA* completes James Lowry's series *Psyche and Cosmos* that began with *Volume III, Number 2* in the Fall of 1991. The full article is available from the *Institute* as a softcover volume in its **MONOGRAPH SERIES**.

Reflection on the thought orientations of modernity; its spirit, limitations and false idealities, has been prevalent in the pieces appearing in this publication. How one understands modernity is today usually the mirroring of a disciplinary or historical education. Hence, the psychological, sociological and economic "modernities" that colour much of the contemporary realms of professional discourse.

The categories and conceptual referents used to circumscribe modernity range from the more universally illuminating to the fleeting empiricisms of anecdotal commentaries. The modern tendency to elevate the Aristotelian category of potentiality (δύναμις) above actuality (ἐνέργεια), and to ignore altogether complete reality (ἐντελέχεια), forms, for example, a sounder basis for insightful reflec-

tion than the current legislative ideologies which idealize the incidental. The necessity for philosophical coherence becomes more pronounced as our socio-political languages fragment, and institutional life is increasingly subject to artificialities of contract law and brokered interests. The inevitable result is the desiccated language, as symptomatic of significantly diminished conceptual powers, of Canada's recent constitutional forays and the spreading bankruptcy of political dialogue.

The two pieces in this issue, Roy Hanna's review of James Robertson's *Future Wealth: a New Economics for the 21st Century* and James Lowry's *Charlottetown Discord*, approach modernity from the absolutized subtexts of economics and politics. Both orientations strain humanity to the limit through an excessive one-dimensionality; economics, presupposing that advances in spirituality are only possible on a material substratum, and politics assuming that consensus not conceptual rigor and internal cohesion can lead to an amelioration of institutional life. The necessity of speculative thought as a rational basis for political and economic organization will be explored in future issues of *ELEUTHERIA*.

## PSYCHE AND COSMOS

### THE PERENNIAL PARADOX OF CAUSATION THEORY AND THE PERENNIAL DESIRE TO RETURN

James Lowry

#### V

Empiricism, not speculation, is the blood which flows in modern veins. For the ancients, speculation was the transcendent art of divine *participation*; for moderns, it is the empirical art of *experience*. Their two secularities are bridged by the Christian Faith, for which neither speculation nor empiricism is the highway to wisdom or good. Both the roads leading from Descartes, the subjective one and the objective one, are really *one* road. Hume and Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Heidegger are each as empirical as Marx, Freud, and Einstein. They all seek a cause as certainly as our salmon their ancestral home, but they do it in the modern context of inwardness.

The modern turn inward, what we have called the epistemological turn, became empirical because the same paradox of circularity occurred within it as occurred in metaphysics. Hume recognized this when he tried as did the Greeks to go from finite being to cause; only he carried out the procedure within the confines of experience rather than thought. He found that experience had the same logical structure as speculation and came to the conclusion that to exchange the limits of the one for the other did not increase our

knowledge. Rather the exchange showed us how arbitrary our knowledge was, even to the point of showing that the cause and effect relation is really the product of our own expectations; what we may call, following our previous characterization, an imaginative product. Kant, who understood, perhaps better than Hume, the implications of this self-acknowledged weakness in human knowledge, sought to undermine metaphysics once and for all by showing how the important metaphysical questions always took the form of insoluble antinomies. By doing so he discovered for himself the ubiquity of the paradox of logic which we have referred to so far. Kant, of course, thought to give up knowledge for the sake of faith.<sup>66</sup> Unlike the medieval theologians, he sought to free philosophy from religion for the sake of religion. What he actually did was to show that religion could count on philosophy no more than philosophy could count on itself. *Appearance now replaces knowledge*. This is the exact opposite of the Greek view. They gave up appearance for knowledge, the finite for the infinite. Kant leaves the infinite to the imagination and founds appearance on the very same faculty. What Kant does not give up is the *ideal* of a cause of the objective base for what must be objective appearance. The Ding an sich (thing in itself) in its Kantian tran-

scendence is only the modern dualistic counterpart of Greek matter. *Both* serve as the objective unapparent indeterminateness which underlies appearance itself. *Both* are unknowable and yet the basis of what can be known. Only with Kant the Greek ideality is turned completely around so that the source of determination is not an objective first principle but our own subjectivity. Whereas with the Greeks the One enforms matter, with Kant our mind reconstructs the Ding an sich. Kant's world becomes that of an imperative *will*, of a subjectivity at home with itself but in an *alien* world, which is able to live only *hypothetically*: "as if"<sup>67</sup> the moral world within and the starry heaven above were really real. In this he is like Plato desiring a world ὄντος ὄν<sup>68</sup>

This description of Kant's world is in no way peculiar to Kant. His world is essentially the *modern* world. The absolute for modern people is a kind of empirical appearance. Experience is the modern centre of being. With the Greeks this centre is in thinking. The Christian effort to think faith becomes in modern life transformed into experience. Hegel is the perfect example of this transformation. He seeks to empirically justify and ground his speculation in history. *History*, not the Idea which history grounds, is really Hegel's Absolute. Hegel thought he could save Greek speculation by substituting history for logic. This why his two basic works, the *Phenomenology of Mind* and the *Science of Logic*, are primarily guided by historical chronology. The dialectical method of Hegel, employed like the scientific method, is, actually, a continual realization of the circular paradox.

Premise and conclusion are continually exchanged. Because Hegel could not *prove* anything by this method any more than could the Greeks prove the relation of ultimate cause to effect or the Christian theologians prove the existence of God, he thought to get around the dilemma by using history as the proof of logic. Of course, he claimed otherwise, but the actual procedure is just so. By trying to *justify* logic through history Hegel turned the Greeks on their heads. Hegel's emphasis on history as a proof in no wise overcomes Kant's Ding an sich. On the contrary, the unknown "thing" is so exacerbated by the very logical paradox Hegel is trying to prove that he must substitute for the Ding an sich the term "*aufheben*"<sup>69</sup> as its personification. By using this term Hegel asserts the relation between knowledge and appearance which Kant denied by positing the Ding an sich. "Aufheben" is really the converse of Platonic participation. It is only causative in terms of *development* and so must imply incompleteness - a characteristic which the first cause cannot sustain. By trying to introduce development into the idea of a first cause Hegel is able to use history as an empirical proof, but at the cost of no longer having a first cause to prove.

Hegel's idea of development actually has its root in the same dilemma of *matter* that we found with the Greeks and Kant. What happened to Hegel was that, in trying to escape from the subjectivity of Kant's imaginative reconstruction of the Ding an sich, he reverted to a dialectic of otherness which he found buried in Plato's idea of not-being as other (ἕτερόν) and in Aristotle's notion of

causal contrariety (ἐναντιώσεις).<sup>70</sup> At the same time Hegel could not avoid, in trying to escape Kant's antinomial perspicacity, reverting back to the emphasis which we earlier pointed out that the Greeks placed upon essence as perfection. Tied up with this Greek predisposition was their concentration on relation rather than on existence. Hence the Hegelian dialectic, like the particles of modern physics, is primarily an exercise in *relativity*. In trying to pass over Kant, Hegel thinks to simply nullify, as Jehovah the world, the Ding an sich, but he instead is *unable* to appreciate the notion of the primacy of existence which was brought into consciousness through the Christian idea of Creation. It is for this reason that his dialectic continually moves from one point to another leaving behind the *residue* of instantial existence. The concept (Begriff) as universal is unable to account for its being - which although most trivial to itself is most essential to its own actuality. Nature's appearance for the Absolute is after all merely the converse of Kantian subjectivity. The problematic is not solved but made insoluble in itself. This is why Hegel must use history as a kind of dialectical deus ex machina.

Like Kant, Hegel cannot escape the paradox of circularity. To escape appearance in antinomy fares no better than escaping antinomy through appearance. As before the motivation to reach back to cause remains. Kant, in relegating knowledge to appearance, was only fulfilling the intuition of Descartes that certainty is within. The antinomies of speculation led Kant to an experience which, because of its uncertainty, seemed to free him to transcend it and to leave unquestioned the

intuition of the Ding an sich without and the moral law within. Hegel detected the assumption and thought to overcome intuition by replacing it with history, thereby fulfilling the requirement of experience. He thought to combine speculation and empiricism by making the experience that of an Absolute Idea. The development of the Absolute Idea in History into Absolute Spirit through Nature could in this way combine the subjective certainty of Descartes with Kant's knowledge as appearance. Unfortunately Hegel was, like Kant, unable to do away with the *limitation* of experience. The *temporality* of history made the development of the principle self-contradictory and *subject* to the very dialectic of "aufheben" which had seemed to sustain it. The *cunning* of reason overmasters reason itself and in so doing belies the very same problematic that made Kant posit the Ding an sich behind appearance. The cause and its effects are as unable to be related adequately as they were before. Only *now* it is clearer that the difficulty is *within* the relation of thinking and experience and not outside of it.

We can think through this new clarity most appropriately if we consider how, in Hegel's emphasis on history and in Kant's self-relegation to experience, the Cartesian landscape is transfigured. *Experience and History* have become the twin Herculean pillars of the modern horizon - an horizon we may perhaps finally only now begin to peer over. With these two pillars as bodyguards modern empirical science has triumphed so thoroughly that even its most acute critics have been unwittingly subdued by it as by the waters of Lethe. We can see within these

guards of the modern grail the same obsession as before with returning to the source; only now the effort is no longer for the soul to be one with the transcendental origin but rather with a finite historical origin. Experience is now confined by finite thinking's own limitation to temporality. The turn begun only with Descartes' outward doubt, and increasingly self-focused, has now completed a half revolution. Hegel limits God to finite experience, while Kant makes such experience uncertain. The certainty, which the need to prove God and its failure sought, is now the failure of God Himself. Nietzsche's "death of God" is nothing more than the death of knowledge in will. The limits of knowledge are ballasted in the unlimits of will, with the result that finite knowledge becomes a self-focused desire to know ever more in the certainty that the "ever more" will never *be* enough.

In short, the scientific *method* is but the *structure* of modern will *unlimited* by knowledge. In the phenomenon of *historicism* empiricism and method come together in the joint task of reducing everything to its origins. Historicism becomes the new mode of discovering cause. As with the ancients cause is tied to knowledge, but unlike with the ancients, the knowledge sought is not transcendental but temporal or, more specifically, historical. With the transfiguration of metaphysics into epistemology comes the parallel transmigration of *knowledge into history*, of *eternity into time*. We now have a thoroughly *modern* focus. History as Time now animates the unquenchable desire to return - only now the return is empirical rather than specula-

tive. A modern cosmos has replaced that of the ancients. Motion is now the criterion of rest. Our return is no longer to a  $\text{Νοῦς}$ , or to a One, or to a God; no longer to a heaven of good or love; no longer to a higher but to a lower state. Let us gaze for a while on the modern pathways of return.

## VI

The modern pathways of return are strewn with mazes of *specialization* which seem to lead everywhere and yet nowhere at once. The common thread that binds them is an analytical bent which assumes *ordinary everyday* experience as a given. Along with this given is superimposed an acute awareness of its *extra-ordinary* properties. In all modern tasks analytical awareness seeks to clarify again and again the state of the ordinary - to explain it. Modernity is focused as never before on the *given* of ordinary everyday experience, and, as never before, is conscious of its *inadequacy* as a given. Emphasis on experience has produced a psychic demand to understand it, in which the ordinary is pursued with such an unrelenting certainty that the result is not the bliss of knowledge but the ennui of anxiety. The desire to prove on the one hand and the inability to be certain on the other has produced a kind of psychic shock in which all the assumptions of modernity are perfectly mirrored. As we have seen, the move from metaphysics to epistemology is also one of objectivity to subjectivity, of outwardness to inwardness, of knowledge to will. Parallel to these movements is that of transcendence to historicity, of eternity to time. This world has

become the *only* world. A transcendental life is, of course, *naturally*, thought to be nonsensical - literally. Any other planets or forms of life are ipso facto thought to be parallel at the level of the ordinary; that is, at the level of natural law. In this *expansion* of the ordinary at the expense of the transcendental lies the residue of ancient certainty grounded in an unchanging divine universe. Initially this objective certainty, which sought an other-worldly existence, was replaced by a subjective certainty in the form of *logical* proofs. These then gave way, along with the religious hegemony which spawned them, to equally compelling *experiential* proofs. The ideal of proof remained as the residue of a psychic world in which cause and effect, as a universally intelligible existential structure, was given. But the point at which knowledge is reduced to experience is also that in which proof is reduced to an "ought", a longed for ideality which can never be realized. Reality becomes changed into appearance and change, no longer subordinate to necessity, is freed from the shackles of insubstantiality. A scientific world has replaced a religious one. It seems a more solid world because of its immersion in the everyday of common experience. But this solidity is belied by the psychic character which informs it. The scientific energy of this psychic context is double-headed in its self-reliance. On the one hand it is certain of its ability to act upon and to manipulate the given because it assumes that the everyday is knowable. On the other hand the open-endedness of this assumed context is at the same time a guarantee of the unknowability which ungrounds everyday knowledge. The circularity of this situation shows itself most devastatingly in the psychic

*ambiguity* which characterizes modern life. The extent of this ambiguity is hard to appreciate because the knowledge of the everyday is hidden in the extraordinary measures which must be taken in order to know it. Hence the extreme inwardness of modern willing tries to relieve its anxiety by setting aside its ambiguity in the pursuit of *immediate* reality or appearance. In this pursuit it happens that nothing is what it appears. The ordinary is not even ordinary and must give way to its origins.

The old obsession with origins, which we first saw in the ancient definition of knowledge as knowledge of cause, is at the centre of all modern investigation. The difference is that the modern context of cause and effect is one of *chance* rather than of necessity. The old ideality of certain knowledge is reduced to appearance. This is why modern subjectivity can no longer be comfortable with an unambiguous distinction between subject and object. Knowledge is seen as a function of subjectivity rather than as an objective state of being. It is for this reason that the psychic state of modernity is characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty. The certainty of science occurs within a context of *uncertainty* and is thus subject to the continual prospect of *change*. This is precisely why *prediction* is the ideal of science. In prediction there is not only a practical gain but a psychic stay of execution. Prediction is the psychic equivalent and replacement of the old ideal of Providence. The problematic, however, is different. Modern prediction is a function of time not of eternity. Temporality is the context of modern being. As such, modern being is in an unremitting state of becoming

or revision. This is paralleled by the nature of scientific knowledge. For scientific knowledge is never fully verifiable. In it induction must supersede deduction. Certainty must always occur under the umbrella of uncertainty. *Revision* not vision is the modern form of ideality. The structure of the modern psychic context and the modern idea of knowledge are perfectly parallel and unified. *It is this structure of uncertainty which constitutes the final vision of the modern quest for certainty and proof.* There lies in it the same paradox as we saw with the ancients, only the contrariety is *reversed*. Modern subjectivity is at home in its world as the ancient objectivity could never be, because it is "its" world, a world of its own making. The "given" is not in principle transcendent but simply present. *There is no other world to go to.* In each case, however, the present is transformed. With the ancients it was an appearance to be abandoned, with the moderns it is a reality which is, after all, only an appearance. Let us see how these transformations in modernity occur.

Scientifically the focus of transformation is the origin of the everyday. The microscope and the telescope replace the eye for the sake of an analysis that strives ever deeper for a source. The given is broken up and the re-assembled. This reassembly is the modern form of recollection in which the original ideality is sought. But because of the shift from eternity to time the emphasis has changed from *past* to *future*. For in the modern obsession with the everyday is involved the perfection of the now. To remake the everyday is the ideal of the modern will. In this the everyday is as hidden as before

since it is never itself. Plato's transcendent εἶδῶν have become the ideal typology to be proved by scientific experiment. The initial starting point is the same but the direction of movement is opposite. For Plato the process is rather synthetic than analytic. The intention in finding an original basis is the same but the whole context is different. The modern motivation is to make everyday appearance a reality, not to discover reality through appearance. Pure science in the end *must* be subordinate to its instantiation. In this we can see *will overtake reason*. Reality will be willed out of appearance. The paradox here is that the object of modern analysis is cause. Because of this it seems that the ordinary should be just seen as the effects of the cause scientifically found. This would be true if the context were the ancient one of necessity in which the certainty was an objective reality. But, as we have pointed out, the modern context is as different as can be. It is a context of ultimate uncertainty in which certainty is limited to appearance. Thus it is that knowledge is really or only *statistical*. It is *numerical*, which is to say that it is *imaginative*. The imagination, not the reason, now dominates. Proof gives way to experience. The analysis of the ordinary which seems to nullify it into the extraordinary is, after all, the analysis of appearance. Reality seems to be a function of the will which can make it into an image. In other words the *flux* of the everyday is its reality. Ambiguity, anxiety, ambivalence is not a function of care so much as a state of being in which temporality is free of eternity. It is actually a state of non-care in which reality is an appearance.

## VII

The pervasiveness of the modern context is everywhere to be found as was the ancient in ancient times. We can initially most easily discern this new context in the shapes which are especially peculiar to it. These are the modern discoveries of psychiatry and genetics, and the emphasis on economics in political life. In psychiatry, which is the most typical form of modern religion, the original state is thought to be the cause of the everyday state; only the original state is unconscious - it is amorphous and ambiguous; that is, it is a dream state which serves as the reality of appearance. The ideal is to bring this origin to consciousness so that it can be used to manipulate the everyday, to bring it into an imaginative line. Here we can easily see how the context of clarity occurs within what is by definition, as unconscious, unclear. This is parallel to uncertainty. Further, since psychiatric theory is scientific, it is open to the principle of revision, which is a fundamental character of uncertainty. The ideal of psychiatry is thus normative in the sense of functional. The subject is said to be well when getting along in the everyday. Thus the will is here quite unfocused; not in the sense that it ought to be, but rather in the sense that it cannot be. The everyday is, in the end, malleable to its core. In medicine we see an effort to find the origin of disease, and increasingly of health, by analyzing life into its biological and chemical elements. The microscope must dominate the everyday. This is occurring most powerfully in the study of genetics in which there is the appeal that the everyday can be perfected by the manipula-

tion of cause. Here again we can see the principle of endless revision in seeking the ability to change finitely the infinitely permutable genetic codes. The emphasis is, as in the case of psychiatry, to serve the everyday. If we push the chemical far enough in the direction of cause, we will end up in the same pursuit of the origins of the universe which we have already considered. This means that medicine is always a limited pursuit in a limited context. In other words causation occurs within an ultimately uncertain frame of reference. This is underlined in the ambiguous relation of medicine and psychiatry in which is really mirrored the problem of how the psychical and the physical, or the ideal and the material, aspects of being are related. Reducing the one to the other is only another form of trying to solve the riddle of the universe.

Economics has in a sense taken the place of politics in modern societies. This is because the "good" life is no longer judged in transcendental terms. The ideal is a kind of heaven on earth, a land flowing with milk and honey for everyone everyday. Thus the true social venture is to discover in the study of economic forces the origin of social forms and by economic prediction to be able to produce a desired state of affairs. What is interesting in this economic effort is the way in which ethics and mathematics are combined. The desire for certainty in an uncertain world seeks an ever changing knowledge in an unchanging form. The reduction of the psychology of supply and demand to numerical form is the endless task of the economist. Relating these figures to the means of production and its consumption have become



the primary focus of the politician. The now notorious circumstance that economic prediction, like that of the weather, is more often wrong than would be statistically desirable is the chief, though hidden, indicator that the numerical form, as the functional equivalent of quantity, cannot account for the qualitative factors that are inherent in political life. These factors are usually voiced in terms of preferences which are thought to be reducible to the polling of opinion. This form of *ex post facto* leadership, in which the formulators of policy become the sheep instead of the shepherd, is essentially dependent on the very same statistical context that obtains in economics and serves as a model for the modern context of uncertainty.

The physical formulation of this principle in the field of particle physics is the most perfect paradigm of the modern predicament. It is a normative statistical paradigm in which the general picture is assumed from an induction which must by definition fail to be able to discern the individual instances which it depends upon. In the photoelectric effect, which is the kind of model paradox underlying the formulation by Heisenberg of the "uncertainty principle", the total number of particles cannot *as individuals* be predetermined as to place and time. It can only be determined en masse how many will go one way or the other. The probability is certain but the *instantiation* is uncertain. It is just this model which illustrates the *psychic* dilemmas of modernity. Theoretically, as the Heisenberg corollary to this dilemma states, there can be no absolute proof on an atomic level because the act of experimentation will

prejudice the results. In other words the objectivity sought becomes itself a function of the subjectivity which seeks it. Thus the ultimate basis of knowledge must be unknown. This is just the same situation which obtains in the macrocosmic efforts of physicists to get at the origin of the universe. The various theories have the same paradox as the conditions which lead to the idea of uncertainty. Premise and conclusion change places in both situations, with the result that no certain result can be obtained. Epistemologically this means that knowledge is impossible. Only varying states of ignorance are possible. Or we may state it more clearly by saying that our certainties occur in a context of uncertainty. Thus we have the vision of revision or continuous change, in which the distinction of subject and object no longer obtains, because their relativity is the fundamental characteristic of modernity.

## VIII

Once the modern emphasis on revision is understood the world of modern philosophy, which seems to be a specialized enclave unto itself, becomes transparent as the mirror image of modernity, as the theoretical form that revision is. Modern philosophy seems hard to characterize because it appears so specialized. It is divided into political or social philosophy, into ethics or metaphysics or epistemology, into philosophy of religion, of science, of language, into aesthetics. There seems to be a philosophy of anything and everything but no philosophy. And, of course, this is the character of the modern world

itself, in which there are only visions of revisions. In a sea of uncertainty in which proof is only relatively possible it is normal, we might say normative, that *description* should replace explanation; that cause and effect should be undistinguished in the same way as subject and object. The obsession with origins is submerged in the *analysis* of limited certainties. Philosophy as failed epistemology now takes the form of descriptive analysis of the ordinary everyday. Laws which are arbiters of certainty must give way to convention or the temporality of imposed subjectivity which supposes to undo itself in consciously being neither subjective nor objective, but preconscious. The context of uncertainty brought about by the inability to "prove" anything brings a shift of emphasis from agreement to *interpretation*. We saw the beginnings of this shift with Hegel who had tried to substitute for proof the idea of history. Refutation had to be empirical or experiential. Because Hegel did not want to give up certainty or objectivity, he tried to elevate subjectivity to an "Absolute" experience of self, in which uncertainty was relegated to the nothingness of Being. However, this absolute experience, because it could only sustain itself in time, loses its certainty in the absence of a more than possible origin for its development. Because it is caught in the linearity of time its own being is questionable. The *aufheben* which is supposed to sustain it is really its own apotheosis. The paradox of circularity becomes its own self-nemesis, in which the non-existence of the world is its own intolerable burden of solipsism. In Hegel we see the beginnings of a consciousness of subjectivity which is by his successors transformed into the absolute indifference to absolutism. The

failure of absolute self-development is thought to be the clarion call to complete finite subjectivity without the limits of certainty. History as proof is now consciously retained as the book of origins within a finite river of becoming. Nietzsche can describe God as dead because he no longer need think of Becoming as grounded in anything else.<sup>71</sup> The *biography* of the Absolute now becomes the biography of beings in which metaphysics, as the ground of politics, is itself to be grounded in *psychology*. Finite subjectivity is now, rather than the Absolute, the *only* being. With this series of peregrinations absolutism is only underlined. What claims to be hatred of science and technology is really its theoretical form. The scientific method is the impersonal form of pursuing the reality of finite beings, of their biography. This is why for science the real focus of explanation has been *evolution*. Evolution is, after all, a serial biography in which origins are sought as explanations. Here the cause and effect relation remains intact. We have here the old chain of being in a merely finite, temporally linear form. Evolution is the scientific form of historicism. The triumph of science and of *becoming* as historicism in biography is the triumph of modernity.

The celebration of modernity's triumph is the bacchanalia of modern philosophy. At first freed from religion, then religion's tool, philosophy is yet again a sacrificial lamb - this time at the altar of natural science. The way in which this has occurred is twofold. One way can be placed under the rubric of "phenomenology", the other under that of "analysis". Such categorizations may seem to be only conceptual generalizations which do not

account for the plethora of philosophic forms. This is only true if the modern context of uncertainty remains ungrasped. No doubt it cannot be a true characterization *unless* a standpoint can be reached which is out of the reach of ancient, medieval, and modern forms. This is exactly *why* it is so important to be *able* to make this characterization. In the *act* of making it, if it is valid, we are *finally free* after two thousand years from the dawn of philosophy, to see daylight, and to *think* a philosophy which is *no longer* a midwife or a handmaiden or a laboratory assistant.

We must not be put off by claims of modern existentialists née phenomenologists that they do not follow science or that they are free of conceptual thinking; nor should we be put off by the claims of those who would only clarify scientific experience analytically through conceptual thinking. Analytical and existential philosophy are actually only two sides of the very same coin. It is not a coincidence that both think philosophy as metaphysics is dead and that systematic thought has been or must be overcome. That both emphasize method, whether it be scientific or phenomenological, should not seem strange. Nor is it accidental that both seek to outflank metaphysics by reconnoitring in language. Each tries to formulate words anew, by searching as archaeologists of ideas among the ruins of etymologies long forgotten or in the scrap heaps of ordinary usage for a formula which will transform ideality into the finitude of a temporally linear experience which is oriented in the prospect of an infinite futurity. It should not be altogether surprising to us that existentialists and

analysts tend to have a love-hate relationship with numbers as with each other. While the quantification of language into an unchanging symbolism of logical relations might seem the perfect vehicle of scientific clarity, it can also miss the qualitative nuances of life relations. The reduction of experience to numerical serialization can seem rather like a soap opera masquerading as a drama of depth. On the other hand, emphasizing qualitative nuance to the point where every experience is deeply unsayable in the saying of it can seem logically as trite as any melodrama. The linguistic glue that binds analysts and existentialists together is their common allegiance to the deity of description as surrogate for truth and meaning. Their difference lies only in their disparate struggles to achieve an adequate expression of uncertainty, of the psychic universe of modernity. The endlessly varied coloured lights of modern philosophy, like those of any philosophy of any time and place are filtered through the lenses of any number of individual minds. As in literature some of the lenses are more accurately ground than others and let the particular lights through with unequalled clarity. In the case of the last phases of modernity Wittgenstein and Heidegger are those lenses. Both of these men are obsessed with *language* and with the *everyday*. Both seek to expose metaphysics and both, like all true philosophers, are consumed with origins, and are imbued to a heightened degree with that irrepressible desire to know, to return to cause.

Heidegger will give up the logic of the concept and will return to an "originary"

experience of Being in Language. Wittgenstein will give up the exactness of the logical as the bottom of the real and will seek a return to the existential origin of language in its "use". Heidegger will no longer use language as a tool but rather decides to let it use him. Wittgenstein on the contrary will play language's "game" by recognizing that language is a set of tools that no human architect can employ with enough precision to exhaust the infinitude of its useful variability. For Heidegger another language must discover us, while for Wittgenstein the otherness of language can never be eminently disclosed. The work of both men lies unfinished. Both turned from an early attempt to say all that could be said and found that the form of their thought could only be expressed intermittently in ever various investigations of a given that would never, could never, fully disclose itself or be disclosed. The seriality of historicity and the linearity of time could finally be formulated only in the endless questioning of essays and paragraphs. The silence of answers gave way to the anonymity of questions which must either await an answer or be satisfied with another question to an always partial answer.

Wittgenstein at first tried to limit knowledge in the old conceptual way by drawing the limits of uncertainty between the poles of tautology and contradiction. In doing so he came to the view that *meaning* could only occur non-metaphysically; that only the finitely experienced could be real. In this he was at one with scientific experiment and its method of verifiability. But Wittgenstein soon realized, as many of his less gifted contemporaries did not, that the implications of the

limits of meaning were the opposite of his original intention. Instead of increasing certainty he had undermined it. The ideal of a ritualized logical language, as a kind of linguistic calculus, was not normative but *derivative*. Its origin was the ordinary, the everyday. Only by analyzing the use of language in the everyday, could Wittgenstein see how one might in the end mean anything. But, of course, the everyday is through and through temporal and conventional and, thus, uncertain. No amount of analysis could make it otherwise. This Wittgenstein intuited. This is why he was so uncertainly ambiguous in his later years. He had made what we may *now* call the typically modern "turn", from logic to the ordinary. The experience of his followers has shown him to be prescient. While they have tried to develop his ideas they have had to face the same infinity of end that he did. The ordinary cannot be systematized or made logical as such. The more it is clarified the more fleeting it becomes. Wittgenstein saw this in his "turn", which was in the end just the recognition that the logical was derivative form the ordinary. This position is really the same as that of Heidegger.

Heidegger too started out from a scientific ideal; namely, phenomenological description in the strict Husserlian mode. His relation to Husserl parallels that of Wittgenstein to Russell, as do Husserl and Russell to each other, in that each wanted to have philosophy as a "strict" science.<sup>72</sup> When Heidegger tried to apply phenomenological description as a scientific rule to existence he found the same kind of limits that Wittgenstein encountered in trying to reduce language to the equivalent

of a phenomenological ἐπιόχη. What Wittgenstein experienced as the meaninglessness of metaphysical statements Heidegger experienced as the temporality of Dasein<sup>73</sup> in the thrownness of care. Heidegger also turned to the light of ordinary experience from the darkness of logical or conceptually abstractive description. He as well saw the logical as derivative from the ordinary, everyday. And so, Heidegger too, made a "turn"; and it is not coincidental that his "turn", like that of Wittgenstein, was into the non-conceptual, what he thought of as the pre-conceptual, world of ordinary experience. Heidegger was never able to clarify Being because he had no language for it. He consistently tried to use non-conceptual language rooted in the preconceptual or first experience of Dasein. This is strikingly parallel to Wittgenstein's fascination with the idea of language "games" in which the "hidden" meaning behind the apparent is belied by usage - the linguistic equivalent of experience. Both he and Heidegger were inordinately interested in the *hidden* aspects of reality. Yet neither Wittgenstein nor Heidegger could ever finally go beyond the ordinary; for Heidegger as for Wittgenstein the *ordinary everyday* was the primordially "given".

What Wittgenstein and Heidegger bring to consciousness philosophically is the existential state of the modern psyche. It is a soul caught in an *inbetween* which has not got a beginning or an end. It is a state in which uncertainty reigns, however much one tries to temporally assuage it at one time or another. Both saw the problematic and felt its force, but both knew that it had occurred

as a *result* of, not in spite of, a previous state of certainty. They could not, therefore, simply advocate a return to the Christian religion or to a Greek universe whose existence was unquestioned. At the same time they could not see how to live without the "hidden" ambiguity of the world they had described. Existential Angst and the constant clarifying of what can never be clear are the psychic results of this psychic world.

Both Heidegger and Wittgenstein accepted the ambiguity of historical and descriptive relativity, of an understanding that cannot be grounded. Wittgenstein will not "require"<sup>74</sup> anything of language. Heidegger will wait until it "requires"<sup>75</sup> him. It is uncanny how the two move in opposite directions from the same logical or conceptual space until in time they both find in human thinking only a descriptive relativity to future happening. Heidegger, locked into the "world" of beings, wants to regain "Being" by thinking anew. Wittgenstein too, by distinguishing meaning from thinking, will undo traditional thinking. But he chooses rather to stay with "beings" than to leave their company. Neither can find either an ultimate meaning or an ultimate thinking. Their differences in the end are not so much that their Lebenswelten<sup>76</sup> are different - in fact both represent fully what we have called the psychic world of modernity - but that Wittgenstein has given up his silence by losing himself in endless investigations, while Heidegger has withdrawn into the silence of their implications. Both men gave themselves up to "Language", not as something new, but as something original and primordial. Had Wittgenstein persisted in investigating the

assumptions of his investigations of the "being" of his givens, which he himself realized was a battle against the bewitchment of the limits of language, he too might well have been driven, as was Heidegger, by the force of his own thinking to a recognized need for meaning in transcendence. Heidegger's "nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten"<sup>77</sup> is the call of "everyman" who has struggled with the depths of the modern predicament, with the "games" of language, with the felt need to form a new language for thinking what cannot yet be thought. Heidegger wanted to *think* what the Greeks only lived. He wanted to experience what Wittgenstein and he both knew to be beyond language. Wittgenstein's *silence* before what cannot be said, even as transformed into saying inexactly, is Heidegger's *piety* in listening for Being.

## IX

The old passivity which we found in the Greek *θεωρία* is now the modern silence born of uncertainty, ambiguity, and care. While this new silence may seem to be overcome in the din of the everyday it will be found to be rather the measure of the everyday - the *signpost* of the paradox of understanding seeking to think what its thinking could not understand. At the point that we can catch the *perennial* mode of this relation we can achieve a philosophical stand that no longer only lies under that of the ancients, medievals, or moderns waiting to be discovered, but rather, *as discovered*, stands on all sides and above as below. For we *now* can finally seek to realize that history itself is

historical. Man in his temporality is the child of eternity; in his uncertainty he is the heir of consolation; in his subjectivity he is the offspring of objective existence. Our power over the world is still bemused by our power over ourselves. That exploitation through the special sciences must be scientifically grasped by ever more general ones like ecology and ethology only parallels the need for government that limits nations as aspects of a world. The question of the survival of species other than man merely shows the relation that humanity must establish with others in order to respect itself. Emphasis on human rights does not accidentally occur at a time when the demand for proper care of animals and indeed for the environment in general is demanded. Our power over all our being, both over ours, and that which forms our context - the life of the planet - can now no longer be seen as endless. The everyday, the ordinary, in its finitude is *not* its own measure. Its survival is not just its historical or interpretive or linguistic total; perhaps its daily life is so determined. Its *very* life is not. Uncertainty demands certainty, ambiguity determinateness, time eternity. Epistemology without metaphysics, subjectivity without objectivity, experience without knowledge, is as futile as language without meaning. What history, philosophically transcended, can teach us is that while the converse is equally untrue, so is the obliteration of the distinctions. Like the paradox of cause and effect and the desire to return to origins there are *perennial* philosophical structures, what we may call the *thinking of thinking*, which form an ideal problematic which is endlessly instantiated, but never exhausted. It is this ideality, which is essentially but not existentially absolute,

which we might better call phenomenal than noumenal. Its instantiation in the temporality of history is essentially, but not existentially, absolute. Life is no more reducible to physics than to mind. *Our philosophical quest* must now be within the fuller context of an absolute that is no longer absolute but is, nevertheless, as real as apparent. Our own unconquerable desire to know as phenomenal, which has led us historically to this conclusion by transcending history as a *result* of history, is our

motivation. And in the end our thinking must issue in an *ethics* that is as *liveable* as it is *transcendental* - a phenomenal yet historical existence that can be what it "ought" to be.<sup>78</sup> On the *thinking* through of this ethic depends, as upon the old gods of antiquity, and subsequently, upon Yahweh, Allah, and the Trinity, the very life and lives of our planet. The beauty of earth and all it contains is in the hands of *our* thinking. Wonder has become of age.

## NOTES

66. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxxx.

67. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic; esp. the section: *Von der Endabsicht der natürlichen Dialektik der menschlichen Vernunft* (The Final Purpose of the Natural Dialectic of the Human Reason), A669/B697 - A704/B732.

68. Plato uses this doubling phrase to distinguish real from apparent being. We see this same phenomenon whenever metaphysicians try to reach beyond the paradox of language's logical self-limitation to its roots in ontological self-reference. For example: Plato uses the phrase  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\theta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron$  (itself according to itself) in trying to express the ideality of his "ideas" (*Phaedo*, 100b6). Aristotle speaks of the actuality of the life of God ( $\delta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ -\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ) as a  $\nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \nu\omicron\eta\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  (thinking of thinking thinking) which is  $\eta\ \delta\epsilon\ \nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \eta\ \kappa\alpha\theta\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\eta\nu$  (a thinking according to itself) (*Meta-physics*, 1074b34 and 1072b18). Hegel conceives his Absolute Geist (Mind/Spirit) as the eternally "an und für sich seiende" (in and for itself) Idea (*Enzyklopädie*, Paragraph 577). Even anti-metaphysicians find recourse to such doubling or intensified self-referential language inescapable. Nietzsche wills will as a "Wille auf Wille" (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse, die Freie Geist*, Paragraph 36) and a "Wille zu Wille" (*Aus den nachlass der Achtzigerjahre, Werke*, ed. K. Schlechte, vol. 3, p. 449) in his traumatic refuge from mechanism in a will to power (Wille zur Macht). Heidegger speaks of a "Nichten des Nichts" (nothinging nothing) (*Was ist Metaphysik?*, 9th ed., Frankfurt, 1965, p. 36) on his way to an apotheosis in the "Geheimnis der Sprache" (mystery of language) as the experience (Erfahrung) of appropriation (Ereignis) in which: "Die Sprache als die Sprache zur Sprache bringen." (Language as language bears language.) (*Der Weg zur Sprache*).

69. Hegel revels in the idea that "aufheben" can mean both to destroy and to preserve. (*Wissenschaft der Logik, Erstes Buch, Erster Abschnitt, Qualität, 1. Kapitel, Sein, Anmerkung to 3. Aufheben des Werdens*). He uses this word as a kind of technical code tracer whenever he wishes to make a transition from one contrary to another. This use of "aufheben" as a metaphysical euphemism, or what we might term a camouflaging of contradictions, parallels the language of intensification, briefly alluded to in note 68 above. Both these phenomena occur always at the point that language proves to be incapable of expressing the intuitive whole, which *results* from and is the *assumption* of its discursive nature. An exemplary example of Hegel's use of "aufheben" can be found at the end of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, where he is arguing for the idea of the concept (Begriff) as finally an "immediacy as mediation" (again the doubling phenomenon) (Es [the Concept as the Truth and Reality as its own result] ist ebensosehr Unmittelbarkeit als Vermittlung.) (Vol. 2 of the *Meiner* 2nd ed. of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. by G. Lasson, pp. 498-499). To fully appreciate Hegel's constant almost relentless use of "aufheben" as a metaphysical code word it is necessary to follow through its use in his writings generally.

70. Aristotle's four causes are, in fact, contraries. The formal (ἡ οὐσία καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶηαι) is contrary to the material (ἡ ὕλη τὸ ὑποκείμενον); the final (τὸ οὐ ἐνεκα καὶ τὰ γὰ θόν) to the efficient (ὄθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως). His problem is to see how they can come together in substance as their underlying unity or ὑποκείμενον. Aristotle sees the failure of his predecessors in their inability to get beyond contrariety and thinks of his theory of substance as its solution. Aristotle argues this clearly in *Metaphysics* Λ, 10. The idea is that what underlies contraries cannot have a contrary. A close reading of this text will reveal, however, that Aristotle uses this sense of ὑποκείμενον first for matter and then goes on to argue that all contraries have matter. His problem is that he needs an *immaterial* principle with no contrary. His dilemma, as we have argued, is that of the Greek cosmos generally: matter "is", though *logically*, it should "not be"; hence, Aristotle's prevarication with δύναμις as potentiality which as *such* is without actuality. But in true Greek fashion this impossibility of not-being is solved by Aristotle in a manner parallel to Plato's use of ἕτερον as "other" by positing motion as the "actuality of the potential as such": ἦν τοῦ δυνάμει ἢ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ ἐργεῖα λέγω κίνησιν. (*Metaphysics*, Κ. 9. 1065b16). Movement is thus a contradiction in terms. True to metaphysical form Aristotle will define κίνησις as an ἐπὶ ἐργεῖα τοῦ ἀτελοῦς (*De Anima*, 431a6) - which is to say that motion is an incomplete actuality - or, we may say, a potential actuality or an incomplete completion! Motion for a Greek must move to completion. Ψύσις must end in Νούς as with Aristotle or Being in the One as with the Neoplatonists.

71. The central themes of Nietzsche's Weltanschauung - God is dead, the will to will, eternal recurrence - are all grounded in the ungrounding of becoming. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is Nietzsche's most penetrating and only complete weaving together of his modern paean.

72. With regard to Russell we may think of his interest in deriving mathematics from logical premises (*Principia Mathematica*, 1910-1913) and his further efforts in the direction of what he called "logical atomism". With regard to Husserl we may think of his essay, "Philosophy as a Strict



Science" (*Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, 1910-1911), and of his efforts generally at defining and describing the ideal of a phenomenological reduction to essences.

73. *Dasein* literally means "being-there" and can be translated as presence or existence. For Heidegger its use obtains a kind of technical ethos which is best understood as simply "existing as what it is"; that is, the ordinary sense of something existing without an analytical breakdown into essences and accidents.

74. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, paragraph 107.

75. See Heidegger's essay, *Der Weg zur Sprache*, where he thinks of language as an "appropriation" (Ereignis) of man.

76. *Lebenswelten* means "life-worlds"; it is a term made current by Husserl and refers to the phenomenological idea of each individual having a unique temporally finite perspective.

77. *Der Spiegel*: Nr. 23/1976. "Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger an 23. September 1966."

78. My book *Mentaphysics: the Life of Spirit as Love* (Chiron, Halifax, 1978) is an effort to think out the systematic theoretical framework of such an ethic.

## *Future Wealth: A New Economics for the 21st Century*

by James Robertson

Published by The Bootstrap Press, New York, 1990.

Reviewed by *Roy Hanna*

In *Future Wealth*, James Robertson expands on his earlier writings on local economic development and the future of work to provide a broad outline of the nature, principles and scope of what he describes as a "new economic order" for the twenty-first century. As such, Robertson builds on and adds to the work of a diverse and growing number of individuals and groups that collectively is frequently referred to as the "new economics movement".

Robertson argues that the prevailing view of economics and economic development, and in particular its underlying assumptions and premises which essentially grew out of the industrial revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is leading the world to environmental and social catastrophe. A growing number of social and environmental activists and their supporters have come to recognize that "economics as conventionally understood is not an objective science which must be accepted on its own terms, but an unsound way of thinking that mystifies and distorts both reality and the morality of people's behaviour towards one another and the natural world". Some of these underlying assumptions and tendencies of conventional economic practice and thought include:

- ◆ that individual motive centres on maximizing the monetary value (or notional monetary value) of what they can get from their economic activities;
  - ◆ that economic growth is synonymous with economic and social progress or prerequisite to it;
  - ◆ that people, natural resources and the environment have no "value" in themselves except in the context of formal economic activity (i.e. as inputs to production or as consumers of goods or services);
  - ◆ that production and consumption are essentially separate processes, with some people "producing" goods or wealth and others consuming it;
  - ◆ that the only real or meaningful economic activity is that which occurs in the formal or monetary economy;
  - ◆ that economics is about the wealth of nations, and the paramount unit for economic policy making must be the nationstate.
- Over the past 200 years, the practices associated with this way of thinking have led to the growing dependency of individuals and local economies
- ◆ that people are selfish individuals bent on maximizing their own satisfaction ("utility"), and that "satisfaction" comes from consuming;

on wage or paid employment and large institutions (be they corporations, trade unions, or government) as well as growing disparities in wealth both within industrialized societies and between the “developed” nations and those of the Third World. Encouraging consumption and growth for its own sake, the system by its very nature is systematically wasteful, polluting, and by implication, non-sustaining and thus not sustainable for much longer into the future.

A revolution in the way the world thinks about economics and organizes economic life is needed in order that the present system can be transformed to one which is geared to “the real needs of people and the earth”. Such a system should:

- ◆ be systematically enabling for people;
- ◆ be systematically conserving of resources and the environment;
- ◆ treat the world's economy as a multi-level one world system;
- ◆ be supported by up-to-date economic ideas and be based on a more positive and flexible view of human nature.

Twenty-first century economic organizations and theory must recognize the dual selfish, but also altruistic, nature of human beings and be organized as a system of rights and obligations, risks and rewards, that will channel people's selfishness into the common good (while preventing it from damaging the interests of others) and energize the altruistic desires and capacities of people to help one another as well as themselves - and in so doing, contribute to creating a better society.

This new order must go well beyond the conven-

tional horizons of capitalism, socialism and the mixed economy. Instead of systematically creating and extending dependency, it must systematically foster self-reliance and the capacity for self-development - as individuals and as people co-operating with others. It must enable and encourage people to participate, rather than simply produce and consume, and it must attribute value to people's capacity to manage their own lives. Besides being enabling and conserving, it must restore to the word “wealth” its original meaning of well-being; it must harmonize and integrate economic activity with ecology as the management and science of our earthly home; it must accept that the era of the “wealth” of nations is past, and treat the twenty-first century economy as a multi-level one world economy with hundreds of complex and inter-related sub-systems through which the lives of all people on Earth interact with one another and the ecosystem.

*Future Wealth* is full of measures to support and give effect to this new world order: a universal guaranteed annual income for individuals; establishing international rules, institutions and practices (including a global currency) which will reflect the reality of a one-world economy and encourage enabling and conserving; developing an international tax system that taxes imports between one nation and another, international currency exchanges, and activities that pollute the global commons; shifting the tax system from one based on income to site-value land taxes and the taxation of pollution and energy use; de-centralizing economic policy and adopting measures to encourage local economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency; stimulating self-employment and informal economic activities; and the greater empowerment of individuals who remain in formal organizations. Change is also required in how we define and what we measure and count

as wealth and economic activity in society. Most importantly, no longer can economic wealth be neatly separated or segmented from the overall "social" wealth of society.

Robertson also accepts that a transition to an enabling and conserving economy will have to be accompanied by a transition to an enabling and conserving politics. The assumption that economic life must be dependent on big economic institutions has been common to all industrialized western democracies, with the main differences between them being variations on the extent to which people should be dependent on either the private sector (as represented by employers, companies and unions) or the public sector (as represented by government and the various elements of the welfare state).

However, economic policies that will systematically enable people and places to be less dependent on either of these two alternatives have simply not fitted into the conventional political agenda, nor has conventional politics been about enabling people to become more self-reliant. The prevailing assumptions of economic theory contain prevailing assumptions about power, and the prevailing structures of economic life reflect prevailing structures of power. Thus, the transformation of today's economic order into a new one for the twentyfirst century will of necessity involve transforming today's structure of power and the assumptions presently surrounding it.

Nevertheless, people with "more power and wealth do not willingly give them up, and people who enjoy security and order do not willingly see them threatened". Robertson recognizes that it is foolish to underestimate the potential resistance to the changes which will be needed, and it remains to be seen whether this transformation

can be successfully accomplished given the collective political wisdom, cooperation and leadership which will be needed from many different actors on many different national and international stages.

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Although it is easy to be critical of various aspects of this book, Robertson and others of the new economics movement are to be commended for questioning the prevailing approach to economics and economic development that has essentially accompanied the Industrial Revolution and the ascendancy of the nation state. With the rise of the environmental movement and our growing awareness of the detrimental environmental effects of certain aspects of "conventional" economics, such arguments and perspectives are likely to gain added momentum over the course of the next decade.

Overall, I agree with many of Robertson's views on the long-term effects of conventional economics and the need for systemic change. In terms of a longer term direction for our society, I am

generally in agreement with most of Robertson's view of the "transformation" needed in the way we view ourselves and the natural, as well as the man-made, realities around us. Although I find some of his measures, such as the guaranteed annual income for all individuals, unrealistic in terms of either practice or cost, other elements, such as the need for a system of global taxation on various activities (energy use, currency transfers and the activities of multi-national corporations) are both necessary and desirable. Relying on the foreign aid of the developed world is not going to be sufficient to deal with either the poverty faced by those in the Third World, or with the growing global environmental problems which we will all face to varying degrees over the

course of the next few decades.

While one can easily criticize many of Robertson's measures or initiatives which are intended to give effect to this transformation, what is becoming increasingly obvious is that the present "system" is not "working" for an increasing number of people within industrialized economies (let alone those in the Third World), nor does it serve to foster and give effect to the environment we should be able to create for ourselves as individuals and as societies as we approach the twenty-first century. Although Robertson likely intended his book as a broad overview of the range and scope of the changes needed in this transformation, I found much of his discussion of "the problem" with conventional economics and its effects to be lacking. While he recognizes that economics must be "reabsorbed in the main body of moral and political thought", the problem is, in my view, more deeply rooted than this. A more central question is why conventional economics and the ethic of consumption and materialism associated with it has become so apparently ingrained in Western societies? Writing in the mid 1800's, for example, both John Stuart Mill in England and Walt Whitman in the United States felt that mankind had more than enough material abundance at that time, let alone what we have over a hundred years later, to satisfy the material needs of most individuals. For Mill, the problem was not that society needed to produce more, rather the need was for more equitable distribution of the goods and services already being produced; for Whitman, the time had come to shift from meeting material wants to developing and improving the nature and character of the individual within society.

Throughout his book, Robertson makes reference to the essentially "moral" nature of human

beings and states that the basic questions about economic life are "moral questions". Yet, if human beings are so "moral" and especially individuals in the developed West, how is it that we have come to have such a problem with conventional economics and its adverse social effects? Perhaps, the problem lies in part with how our "morality" has become conditioned over time by the so-called "reality of the market", and, from a broad social perspective, in part on how it has been taught, shaped, and internalized in terms of everyday living by successive generations of individuals over the course of the last few hundred years. With the decline in the influence of the Christian churches and organized religion, the increasing marginalization of philosophy as an academic discipline in universities, and the perceived increasing remoteness or ineffectiveness of the institution of government in many Western societies, can it still be assumed that an understanding of the concept of "morality", let alone an innate "moral" nature, still resides in most individuals in society?

Despite the views of Mill and Whitman which were expressed over one hundred years ago, most individuals in Western society still seem to be seeking a sense of satisfaction, fulfillment or identity through a materialism that increasing amounts of material abundance appear to be unable to satisfy, and growth for growth's sake remains the dominant political and social paradigm. Given this, it would appear that there is a much greater philosophical dimension to the problems we face (at least in the Western industrialized nations) than Robertson cares to recognize.

Many questions are relevant. What is the state of morality and ethics in Western societies today? What "moral" obligations do we have to those less

fortunate and why? Do we have a moral obligation to protect the natural environment, and if so, what does this entail? Do we have obligations and responsibilities to future generations yet to be born, and if so, what does this encompass and how far into the future does it extend? With various diverse cultures and values in the global economy today, is it possible to talk in terms of a "morality" which is, or will be, universally understood - let alone recognized and accepted? What is the likelihood of these "moral" issues being raised, acknowledged, understood, and accepted in even Western societies, where social cohesion and politics are becoming increasingly fractious?

This is not to denigrate the material abundance that conventional economics has brought us, but simply to point out that perhaps we now have a problem of perspective on the issue. This problem of perspective is further illustrated by what has happened to our sense of "time and space" over the past one hundred years or so. For both society and individuals time and space have become increasingly "compressed" and we now strive to participate in a global economic system which is being driven by an accelerating pace of change. Of necessity society and the individuals in it have no choice but to "keep up the pace", and "adjust" to change which is being effected by forces that are not only beyond their control, but which are often dictated by individuals or organizations in communities or nations thousands of miles away.

When the problem of material well-being is viewed in a global context, however, the material affluence and living standards of those in the West pales in significance with the poverty, squalor and living conditions found in much of the Third World. Yet this has been the case for some time now. What seems different now, and

seems to have refocused our perspectives and horizons, is the degradation of the environment and the serious problems that this potentially poses for mankind - regardless of whatever nook or cranny of this planet people occupy. Perhaps, this re-emergence of a more holistic view of our relationship with nature will spawn a corresponding reassessment of individual morality and ethics, and provide the basis for a new sense of what our rights and privileges, as well as our responsibilities and obligations, are as individuals within a society and as global citizens.

However, even if one accepts Robertson's views regarding the need for and depth of the transformation required, I feel it will be much more difficult to bring about the broad economic and social changes he proposes. As Arthur Schafer recently noted in an article in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (August 19, 1992), although vastly more people now recognize that mankind faces a global crisis of overproduction, overconsumption and overpopulation, there is still no major party in North America or Western Europe that advocates a "no growth" policy. Moreover, in the present recessionary environment, raising this issue for public discussion, let alone advocating it as an official position or platform, would be suicidal for a political party with any aspirations of being elected to form a government in the liberal democracies of the West.

Despite the great scope for progress in education, the arts and culture, care of the young and the old, and the need to foster a sense of self or personal identity which is less dependent on what one does in a job or career, the rallying cry now being heard throughout most of the industrialized world is "competitiveness" and the corresponding focusing of education and training systems to produce a more skilled, knowledgeable, flexible (and competitive) work force to

maintain growth and through it, the high standards of living found in the West. This is the case even though, as Schafer notes, the logic of the argument is simple and compelling: if the poor nations of the world are to develop economically in an already overdeveloped world, then the wealthy nations must cut back significantly.

Yet, despite an increasing pace of change, rising unemployment, and clear indications of serious social problems such as rising crime and violence, growing poverty amongst children and increasing abuse within families, we have not been able to reconceptualize how we might go about reorganizing and reordering society to make it more functional, fulfilling, and rewarding for individuals as we approach the twenty-first century.

Writing at the onset of what was formerly termed the Great Depression in the 1930's, John Maynard Keynes remarked in an essay entitled, *Economic Prospects for our Grandchildren*:

"...the economic problem, the struggle for subsistence, always has been hitherto the primary, most pressing problem of the human race. If the economic problem is solved, mankind will be deprived of its traditional purpose.

Will this be of benefit? If one believes at all in the real values of life, the prospect at least opens up the possibility of benefit. Yet I think with dread of the readjustment of the habits and instincts of the ordinary man, bred into him for countless generations, which he may be asked to discard within a few decades... Thus for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem - how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy his leisure, which science and

compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well."

Some 60 years have passed, and the technological sophistication and productive capabilities now at our disposal have expanded considerably since the days of Keynes. Rather than his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, we have the opportunity to reconsider, and to begin to give effect, to some of his lesser known advice. Yet, a common thread between these remarks of Keynes and those of Mill and Whitman is a conscious shift in our perspectives and values as a society to encourage and enable us as individuals to develop a more integrated and holistic "awareness" of ourselves and our environment based on a much richer appreciation for, and understanding of, what the term "individual" can encompass. It is indeed time to move beyond "economics" and the assumptions regarding human nature and motivation that are integral to it, and to rekindle a sense of collective personal and spiritual exploration, discovery and feeling for life and living appropriate for a new age. Although such a transition will be difficult, perhaps we have learned enough and matured enough to be able to make this age old dream become a reality for an ever increasing number of people rather than the elite of a comparative few.

Although I remain somewhat pessimistic regarding our capacity to manage a transition of the magnitude Robertson outlines, it is well worth the effort to try. Robertson's book at least serves to identify the main issues, question conventional "wisdom", and propose possible solutions. What is needed now is to stimulate much broader public awareness, discussion and debate on these issues, as a precursor to meaningful political action on the broad challenge Robertson has identified.

## The Charlottetown Discord

James Lowry

### I

The overwhelming negation of the agreement among Canada's oligarchic classes - represented by the provincial premiers and their handlers, a federal government self-reduced to provincial status, and an increasingly bureaucratized conglomerate of aboriginal interests - was an incredible surprise to the Charlottetown elite, who had imagined that they could carve up Canada in whatever way *they* thought best.

All the rhetoric about the "democratic exercise" of a referendum served up to the public, supposed to be dumb though not deaf, was in fact only rhetoric. That the rhetoricians got caught in their own net of cynicism has distressed them to no end. The homogeneity of their outraged response simply mirrored the lockstep of their "accord". For with one accord the cry of "the economy" was the choral song of the defeated. "We must," they lamented, "address the economy. Canadians want us to see to the economy." Citizens of Canada should forever take pride in showing up this homogenous nonsense as the vapid unintelligent self-serving puffery that it is. Fortunately for the country all of the people could not be fooled on this issue.

We were told by leaders one and all that we had been consulted by them in unprecedented quantities. We were told that through their generosity with our money never had so much effort gone into getting such "agreement". What is truly incredible is that the Meech Lake back-room mentality remained so unimpaired. The consultation was only a facade used to dupe the public with its own capital. The shallowness of the process became evident when the aboriginal

leaders got together in Vancouver over four hundred strong and allowed that they had not had time to digest must less to agree to the accord, and in their wisdom left the city in the throes of ambiguity so strong that they could muster neither a "yea" nor a "nay" to the Charlottetown pact. In this their intuition proved acute. For the so-called Accord was indeed a "mess" only an untalented author could love.

The most remarkable aspect of the referendum campaign turned out to be the fact that the supporters of the Yes brigade never indulged in an explanation of their project. Certainly it was not a carefully crafted document. This alone belies the emotional expediency of its foundation. The "premiers" merely laid out some principles and left it to their bureaucrats to assemble a broth mild enough to be swallowed by everyone. The whole Yes fiasco consisted of no more than an exercise of piety served up on a platter of vituperative attacks on those who would not blindly follow their leaders. The puerility of such attacks were symbolized by an hilariously illogical article in a St. John's newspaper by a philosophy professor at the provincial university, who "philosophized" that the only really good reason for casting a Yes vote was that he did not like anyone on the No side. His dislike took the form of encasing his enemies in stereotypes and urging the good people of Newfoundland to vote Yes because anyone who was anyone was for the package wrapped up in Charlottetown. The best we can say for Professor Jackson is that he cannot be accused of being a metaphysician of any stripe, liberal or otherwise. The sophistry of his position is easily turned on himself. Equally invalid reasons using the same reasoning could be proffered for voting No. The end result is the whole problem



of the Accord - a project without a shred of rationality; only the "self-evidence" of special interests.

The reason that there was no analysis by the framers of the Accord is that nothing of substance was framed. Quebec's veto became everyone's veto. Ontario's senators became everyone's senators. Alberta's resources were left for Albertans alone; British Columbia's for British Columbians alone and so forth. The so-called "compromise in the best Canadian tradition" was no more than an instantiation of the craving of provincial special interests. Aboriginal self-government was merely an agreement to extend the trough of provincialism to those now outside of it.

The delusion of the Yes supporters - their disbelief that they really supported *only* themselves - became wonderfully apparent in the aftermath of their depression. Their rationalization, wrung from the lips of everyone who is anyone in Canada, is that the naysayers voted for "special interests"; that the "English" vision and the "French" vision exclude each other and the "aboriginal" vision as well. Of course, the Charlottetown vision is itself the kind of cultural and racial stereotyping which the voters in *their* wisdom were trying to fend off. It is not the economy that the oligarchs were being told to return to, but to a vision of freedom and equality and fairness that they had, in their provincialism, failed to address, understand or live up to.

The vote against the Charlottetown provincial deal cannot be easily interpreted as simply a vote by a disgruntled electorate concerned with a stagnating economy where jobs are the main concern. The fallacy of this argument is amply demonstrated by the vote itself. The three provinces with a clear Yes vote are the poorest

provinces with the most dependence on government largesse. In Ontario the vote was a virtual dead heat. One would have expected that these areas, which have the highest unemployment (Nfld., NB., PEI) and loss of jobs (ON) would have been the most disgruntled and thus would have had the biggest No vote.

## II

In the wake of the Canadian public's rejection of the leadership elite's Charlottetown Accord, commentary, public, academic and otherwise, has been generally visceral, provincial and superficial. The problem for commentators is that a negation of the elite's dichotomous vision does not necessarily represent a viable alternative vision. What ought to be discussed is *why* the country's elite is so lacking in vision and in the quality of leadership which should go with it. An analysis of this phenomenon is what is necessary to develop a vision more suitable to a free people.

Such a discussion is not well served by adversarial propaganda which rejects the idea of an "elite" on the one hand and makes the countercharge of "narrow special interests" on the other. Every country has always had an elite and there is little likelihood that this will ever change. What is germane is what form such an entity takes; whether it is based on birth, or money, or merit. What is further not really disputable is that elites always represent the best educated part of the public - either in themselves or through their bureaucratic intermediaries. The adage that "knowledge is power" is a cliché but true nonetheless. If the best educated men and women of Canada can do no better than the patchwork quilt of Charlottetown, the inescapable conclusion must be that these men and women do not have the education necessary to do a better job. This

is the simple fact of the matter. A Constitution represents not merely the immediate political experience of the time but the mental life of its framers. And this mental life is the result of education first and experience second.

Reflection on the fact that the present generation of American elites could no more conceive and write the *Constitution of the United States* than carry on a learned discussion of classical and theological matters, will indicate that the problem is not confined to Canada. Of greatest moment is that the problems America suffered under its *Articles of Confederation* over two centuries ago are the very ones Canada now suffers. The biggest issue for the twelve colonies was over the question of a Senate. Large States, like Canada's Large Provinces, did not want to give up power. Small States like Small Provinces did not want to be effectively powerless under the provision of majoritarian rule. The U.S. Senate represents the compromise agreed upon by the American colonies. Although Canadian experience differs from that of America in that it has an "official" linguistic duality, a legal code duality and very many aboriginal groups who would like to expand duality manifold, the problems of greatest moment that face the country are the very ones that America suffered through over two centuries ago. At the time of the *Articles of Confederation* there was a lack of free trade and much ado about one state protecting its interests from another. Similarly in Canada there is no free trade within country. The Civil War was, of course, over the question of the sovereignty of States. In Canada the argument, so far theoretical and rhetorical, is about the sovereignty of provinces and other such entities, invariably based on land ownership.

Within this context we should remark that there is no more chance of Canadian elites producing documents of the calibre of the *Federalist Papers*

than of being able to "carry on a learned discussion of classical and theological matters". We may also observe that America's present-day elites have only the capacity to "tinker" with their Constitution; both because of the historical precedents set by the outcome of the Civil War, and because of a mental incapacity caused by the same educational malaise as in Canada.

No doubt at this point one might well ask what "classical and theological matters" could possibly have to do with writing a Constitution. Simply this: a classical and theological education requires learning in history, the ancient tongues, and transcendental principles. Without such learning the mind is bereft of anything other than personal experience and technical expertise - both of which are antithetical to anything other than problem solving on a piecemeal basis. Hence the patchwork mentality of Charlottetown and the vacuity of the commentary on its demise.

We have not in this space the ample room of setting forth a seasoned discussion of all the implications of the Charlottetown Accord and what will be necessary to resolve and correct it. A work on the order of Plato's *Republic* for our time and place is ultimately necessary. We will, however, point out what seems to us as salient a point as any.

Much has been made of the need, indeed the "self-evident" moral necessity, for native self-government. No one feels this disputable except on the crass grounds of resource and land ownership. What is lost is that the "self-evidence" is exactly in the opposite proposition. There is no such thing as "native" self-government any more than there can be "French" or "English" self-government. Self-government is governance of self and implies free individuality. Any form of "collective" rights, "collective" government,

etc.always stamps on "self-government" and has always led, and will always lead, to some form of barbarism - either the tyranny of families and oligarchies; or various theocratic and ethnic repressions; or a species of totalitarianism. There is always an appeal to some special or exclusive interest to "justify" the particular form of repression, but it is repression by any other name. What humanity in its better nature has striven for over time is the freedom of self-government, free of any particular prejudice or attachment to some accidental form of language or religion or race. We say "accidental" because any "essential" aspects of language, religion or race are adequately preserved when separated from the state. The great irony is that at the point where they are regarded as essential to the state they become merely accidental, and serve merely sectarian or ethnic interests. The unprecedented discovery which the American experiment represents is that this irony must be overcome. While such

irony is generally neglected in the contemporary obsession with particular [i.e. collective] as opposed to universal [i.e. individual] rights, it is only so neglected because the primacy of universal rights is assumed. What we are now having to deal with as in the Civil War and World Wars I and II and the Cold War and the Gulf War is the persistent evil of elites too uneducated to recollect the true nature of freedom as universal and the complementary necessity of using their power to allow family, tribe, religion etc. to flourish only *within* an universal context which is not arbitrated by their accidental nature. Either our elites, *worldwide*, will educate themselves to the point of being able to carry on a learned discussion of these matters or we will continue to follow the route of warfare, in which the bottom line is power without knowledge and an existence that is not only self-destructive but negates all other life as well.

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