

A MORE EXACT
UNDERSTANDING OF
HUMAN BEING

A More Exact Understanding of Human Being

Loyd L. Fueston, Jr.

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My soul [in Thomas the organ
for thought] is not I; and if only
souls are saved, I am not saved,
nor is any man.

From the *Commentary to 1
Corinthians* by St. Thomas
Aquinas as quoted by Hannah
Arendt in *The Life of the Mind*
(page 43).

Modernity is not simply a
historically-datable cultural
phenomenon; in reality it
requires a new focus, a more
exact understanding of the
nature of man.

Pope Benedict XVI, in a speech
given on 2008/06/07 to
participants in the sixth
European Symposium of
University Professors, which
was held in Rome from
2008/06/04 to 2008/06/07 on
the theme: "Broadening the
Horizons of Reason. Prospects
for Philosophy".

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Preface

I desire to understand what lies around me as being the work of the God of Jesus Christ, the Creator who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. I desire to praise the Creator of meteorites and rattlesnakes and bacteria and infinities of various sizes. I wish to see Creation in terms of the best and most recent of empirical knowledge and to see it as the work of God, a work that tells us much about the Almighty and His plans for us.

We men are said to be images of God. This seems a very strange and implausible claim in the light of the modern empirical sciences such as biology and physics. We seem to be self-sustaining bundles of chemicals and seem to be inextricably parts of a vast universe of physical entities. Worse still, those physical entities and that universe itself seem to operate by laws given us by the theories of relativity and of quantum mechanics and some vague narrative law underlying various sorts of evolution and development. All of this modern knowledge, precise and vague alike, fails to meet our all-too human expectations, fails to support our stories of our selves, our communities, and our world.

Nor does human history give us any reason to believe that human beings, acting as individuals or as members of communities, have much in the way of God-like characteristics. Too often, we seem to descend beneath our most brutal cousins in the animal kingdom. To be sure, we men seem to be inclined to good behavior when times are prosperous. Most of us are nice to each other and maybe to Mother Nature so long as we can be reasonably sure of our own physical comfort and safety. Yet, some would claim that true virtues show when a price must be paid for moral behavior. What do we resemble during those difficult times? Far too often we seem to be monkeys scrambling for our lives or even sharks turning on our weak or wounded brethren. When our behavior would seem to really matter, we don't often resemble any God I'd wish to honor.

We're descended from one or more family lines of apish creatures. We're close cousins to chimpanzees. We have apish brains with some hyper-development in the regions (mostly the prefrontal lobes but older regions are also involved) which allow us to think in abstract terms and to make plans which allow for objects not immediately present. It turns out that chimpanzees have similar areas, though less developed and apparently far less likely to be active. It seems to me that the human line of apes out-competed the lines of related species because we're as opportunistic as wolves and bears rather than being niche creatures as are gorillas and orangutans and gibbons and, of course, chimpanzees. Some would feel insulted by such a description of human beings. Others, including me, are struck by the wonder of it all.

The Son of God became one of us, though we're no more than apes with a few characteristics of wolves and bears added in to a mixture which includes a rich brew of biochemicals, structures, and even behaviors shared with many social mammals, some shared with reptiles, and even some shared with worms or bacteria. More than that, large colonies of bacteria seem to be, in a deep and true sense, part of us and necessary for our digestive processes and perhaps other metabolic processes. There is wonder in this world, though such a world is a bit disturbing to many who'd prefer to be fallen gods than to be men who start life as little more than apes who've risen from their knuckles and who continue to live in symbiosis with bacteria and other little creatures. I admit to not understanding why a fall from the heights is preferable to an ongoing rise from nonliving matter, but mostly I wonder at those who will turn from the world created by God. Rather than honestly dealing with these fascinating but sometimes harsh truths of God's Creation, many turn to tradition and once plausible human speculations become superstitions and lies. Tradition is wonderful, but—at its best—it's a human approximation to God's truth and approximations can be greatly improved upon when we learn more about the underlying object or objects. In this case, we can think of all that modern men have learned of these concrete and empirical realms of Creation, these realms of concrete being which we can directly perceive and physically explore.

Some of us claim to believe the God of Jesus Christ to be the all-powerful Creator of all that is not Him. We should move forward in our Christian faith to understand our world as being the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Father, and their Holy Spirit. We should realize that this is part of our communal work of helping our Maker to form the Body of Christ.

1 General Introduction

When I first planned this book, it was to be the development of a view of the human mind from the various materials of Christian revelation, evolutionary biology, neurosciences, history, and all fields of human knowledge of which I have any acquaintance even if it be only from having kibitzed at a construction site or having read a biography of a great statesman. Carpentry and installing electrical systems, dancing and running the mile, cooking and cleaning a kitchen or a yard, writing poetry and composing symphonies, involve understandings of our world and our place in it, of our communities and our roles in them.

There is more to a human being than mind and all that more contributes greatly to human understandings of Creation. Moreover, mind contributes to all that we place in the realms of heart and of hands. But heart contributes to mind and hands. Moreover, hands contribute to mind and heart. Man is a creature who thinks and feels and acts and needs to be understood in such terms. I first sought to understand the human mind as it tries to understand Creation and years ago wrote a sketch of this book which contained this paragraph:

The human mind is an entity which is shaped in response to our environments, to the world at a higher level, or even to Creation as a whole. In this way of thought, a human mind is an encapsulation of reality so far as we actively perceive it and actively respond to it. When we realize this is the nature of our minds, we can better develop them and we can begin to see that relationships, such as those which largely make up our minds, is primary over stuff. Relationships make stuff and shape stuff. God's love creates contingent being and His love continues to shape being right to the concrete realm of things. We can play our role in shaping that concrete realm of things with our active

love and our other forms of relationships, some of which shape entities of God's Creation into evil forms.

What I said about thinking can be said also about human feelings and acts. A more complete understanding of reality comes from considering human nature in light of those three aspects: mind, heart, and hands. We need thought both practical and abstract, feelings which are properly disciplined for the moral ordering of our lives, and actions toward an ordered life and an ordered relationship with the physical realms of Creation. Mind, heart, and hands.

Three aspects but one man or one woman. If we were God, mind and heart and hands would be in perfect unity but we mortal creatures are divided in this way and need to treat these concretely manifested parts of us as being what ultimately merges into a true human person: unified and coherent and complete. We are not God but we are, in some sense, images of Him. I take the position that we are children learning how to imitate our Father and our Creator. We must learn how to think as He thinks, to feel as He feels, to act as He acts, and we can do this only by learning how He has gone about His work as Creator. We are children picking up sticks and stones that we might use them as if they were tools sufficient for us to imitate His acts of creation and of shaping and of sustaining. We are guided in particular directions by our hearts, figure out how to travel paths or build better tools with our minds, and then we act with courage and faith. We might even see the dim possibility of thinking and feeling and acting being one.

I found it easier to write about thinking than about feeling and acting, easier to organize my thoughts in a rational manner, but I would not have any reader underestimate the importance of feeling or acting or think I do such. Let me quote some wise words from Jacob Neusner's collection of essays *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity* [21]:

The doctrine of emotions in the view of the sages who created Judaism remained always the same. The reason derives from the social realities that give meaning to emotion and definition to the possibilities of feeling. If we begin with feeling, we end up in society. [page 51]

In this quite plausible understanding of human nature, emotions are produced by ties or relationships and then help to strengthen and shape

those ties, shaping them to what might be called a communal heart but also helping to give birth to a communal mind, an intellect. In *The House of Intellect* [3], Jacques Barzun told us:

Intellect is the capitalized and communal form of live intelligence; it is intelligence stored up and made into habits of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning and spurs to emotion—a shorthand and a wireless by which the mind can skip connectives, recognize ability, and communicate truth. Intellect is at once a body of common knowledge and the channels through which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly, without the effort of redemonstration, on the matter in hand. [page 4]

We can return to Neusner’s book, *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity* [21], to read:

In the language of theology of the Judaism of a later age ¹ the *Mensch* of the Yiddish language, the fully human person, must become the Israel-*Mensch*. And who is this? It is the Judaic human being harmonious in affection, action, and affirmation. Together these determine who is Israel, the Jewish nation—one by one and all together.

In the Western Protestant tradition of Edwards and Schleiermacher we take it for granted that emotions speak for the private individual, not the nation. In the tradition of philosophy from the Greeks onward, moreover, emotions speak not rationally but irrationally. This other view, that of the ancient sages (a view that is also gaining currency in contemporary philosophy and psychology), sees the matter differently. It regards emotions as artifacts of culture and conceives that emotions lay down judgments. They therefore emerge as rational, public, and social, speaking not only for the individual but also to him or her. Feelings, too, define modes of symbolic behavior, as noted. When we examine the doctrine of emotions in the canonical writings of formative Judaism, we enter a world to which it is self-evident

¹This statement takes as its starting point a few generations following the recognition of Christianity as the central religion of the Roman Empire.

that feeling is subject to law and emotion is a matter of lesson and tradition. [page 51]

And:

[T]he heart belongs, together with the mind, to the human being's powers to form reasoned viewpoints. Coming from the sages, intellectuals to their core, such an opinion surely coheres with the context and circumstance of those who held it. [page 56]

I think Neusner would have made this particular statement still stronger, at least for my purposes, by bringing the hands into the above statement, but it's clear he does intend such an integration if we look at the quotes I supplied from his essay and certainly from the entirety of his essay.

I don't fully accept Pascal's famous claim: The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing. I believe the heart guides reason in many ways and also knows some things reason can't discover on its own, but I also believe that mind, heart, and hands can come to understand each other. In my way of thinking, those three human ways of knowing are different ways for a human being to learn how to participate in those divine acts which are called acts-of-being in my way of thinking, largely based upon Thomistic views of being. It's necessary that we human beings act according to all of these—mind, heart, and hands—but, if we were God, any of our acts would be all three at once. When God thinks, He also feels and acts. When God acts, He also thinks and feels. When God feels, He also thinks and acts. To do one is, for God, to do all three.

We are images of God, at least we can be such when we respond properly to our environments or—still better—to all of Creation to the extent possible. We can become human persons, encapsulations of Creation, encapsulations of the thoughts God manifested and wished for us to share with Him, and when we do so we gain the attributes of a world: unity, coherence, and completeness. There are lots of triune attributes in Christian thought and at least some in Jewish thought and other traditions of thought, but we shouldn't think they map exactly to each other. Yet, a threesome, like a tripod, seems to be the simplest stable support in our concrete realm of being. And tripods clearly map to each other in at least some abstract ways.

I'm going to quote two claims from the first chapter of E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology: The Abridged Edition* [32], a book which has a good amount of gut-level wisdom, what Flannery O'Connor called 'wise blood':

Camus said that the only serious philosophical question is suicide. That is wrong even in the strict sense intended. The biologist, who is concerned with questions of physiology and evolutionary history, realizes that self-knowledge is constrained and shaped by the emotional control centers in the hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain. These centers flood our consciousness with all the emotions—hate, love, guilt, fear, and others—that are consulted by ethical philosophers who wish to intuit the standards of good and evil. What, we are then compelled to ask, made the hypothalamus and limbic system? They evolved by natural selection. That simple biological statement must be pursued to explain ethics and ethical philosophers, if not epistemology and epistemologists, at all depths. [page 3]

And:

Self-existence, or the suicide that terminates it, is not the central question of philosophy [as claimed by Camus]. The hypothalamus-limbic complex automatically denies such logical reduction by countering it with feelings of guilt and altruism. In this one way the philosopher's own emotional centers are wiser than his solipsist consciousness, "knowing" that in evolutionary time the individual organism counts for almost nothing. In a Darwinist sense, the organism does not live for itself. Its primary function is not even to reproduce other organisms; it reproduces genes, and it serves as their temporary carrier. [page 3]

In other words, modern biological sciences including evolutionary biology support the idea that emotions aren't some sort of imperfection in the human being nor do they merely exist to give us epiphenomena to color our existence in a world which is 'just material', let alone 'only logical'. Most biologists who have had reasons to express opinions on the importance of emotion to thinking don't even consider emotions to be primarily short-cuts

to conclusions we would reach by thinking if we had the time. There is that element in feeling but also in thinking and doing. Thinking can help us when our feeling is inadequate—as any Catholic would know from reading a guide to confession which will tell us an intellectual repentance suffices when we can't muster up the proper depth of feeling. Similar statements can be made about all these three aspects of human efforts to participate in God's acts-of-being: feeling, thinking, and doing. They can each help the others along and a resurrected and perfected human being will become God-like in that he will no longer feel, think, or do without doing and feeling and thinking, all three at once.

We are given a sort of concrete human nature, including a very complex brain, which allows us to shape ourselves to encapsulate some relatively greater or lesser part of Creation. We understand Creation, created being, by these active responses, those of Fred Astaire and those of Vincent van Gogh as well as those of Albert Einstein—a viewpoint advocated by such prominent neuroscientists as Gerald Edelman and Walter J. Freeman, both of whom have written books which provide pleasure as well as wisdom to the truly literate reader. The neuroscientists Jerome Kagan and Antonio Damasio are but two who've written accessible and widely available books on the irreducible importance of emotions to human life. More completely, all of these thinkers who have come to understand human beings have discovered the truths which were known to the Jewish sages of ancient time, as Jacob Neusner tells us. Though the traditions of Western Christianity aren't so clear, St. Thomas Aquinas and others did come to understand human nature in a compatible manner.

If we are to understand Creation, spacetime and matter and all other components and aspects, then we'll understand by shaping ourselves to encapsulate Creation. We won't understand Creation if we start by misunderstanding ourselves and trying to fit created being into 'logical frameworks'. We have no such 'logical frameworks' in our brains in which to fit Creation and have no reason to believe Creation could fit into any such frameworks if they existed. In fact, even when we try in ways more proper to human nature, we're too small and too imperfect to understand much more than a vanishingly small bit as individuals and not much more even at the level of the community of the entire human race. But we're making progress in understanding some parts and aspects of Creation, a surprising amount of progress given our small and imperfect selves.

Do these components of human understanding, feeling and thinking and

doing, really respond to irreducible components or aspects of Creation? Let me first paraphrase Einstein in words he wouldn't have used but I don't think he would object to the general thrust of my ideas: Our understanding of created being should be as simple as possible, but no simpler.

Reduce reality to its various components and aspects but stop reducing when you reach components or aspects which cannot be used to fully explain or to 'reconstruct' each other. At that point in the process of analysis, it's time to look for explanations which include all those seemingly fundamental components and aspects. You might be wrong and the next few generations might busy themselves taking your fundamental components and aspects apart to find still smaller particles. First, we searched for atoms, a search which had lasted for centuries and went through such strange paths as alchemy, but did result in the deep knowledge summarized in modern periodic tables of the elements. Then, we explored the atom and discovered electrons and protons and neutrons and then strange hints of particles which didn't fit into the simple scheme of things. Then we found out that there is a large zoo of particles out there and they seem to be broken pieces of more symmetric entities.

And, yet, Christian and Jewish beliefs about God and about human nature teach us that there is a type of entity both complex and simple, multifaceted and unitary—a person or Person. This oneness in many doesn't stop there as Neusner told us about the people of Israel, many individuals who are one in that people:

In the language of theology of the Judaism of a later age the *Mensch* of the Yiddish language, the fully human person, must become the Israel-*Mensch*. And who is this? It is the Judaic human being harmonious in affection, action, and affirmation. Together these determine who is Israel, the Jewish nation—one by one and all together. [page 51]

The Christian belief about the Body of Christ is analogous to the Jewish belief about the people of Israel.

Both Christians and Jews believe that God acts and feels even as He does, and so forth. The Almighty is unified, and coherent and complete, in ways that aren't possible to us—at least in our mortal lives. Why can't we mortal men be unified in this way?

As noted above and in many of my essays on my blog—*Acts of Being* at <http://loydfueston.com/>, the concrete forms of being in this universe are the results of the fragmentation of more symmetric forms of created being, more abstract forms of created being. Physicists, in the Standard Theory of particle physics, have described an electroweak force which is the more symmetric entity which shattered into electromagnetic force and weak nuclear force as the universe expanded and cooled after the so-called Big Bang. The electroweak force can be described and understood in many ways but it's electromagnetic force and weak nuclear force which are manifested in our concrete realm as particular forms of that more abstract force. It's the pieces coming from the shattered symmetries, particles as well as forces, which make up the particular things of this universe.

In a similar way, we are concrete creatures who have evolved and developed from broken pieces of more symmetric, more abstract, forms of being. Feeling and thinking and doing are tightly related, can help strengthen each other, and can even cover for one another under certain circumstances. When we are what Christ promised to us, feeling and thinking and doing will be reunited into a symmetric entity we can call the 'Christ-like man'.

As I said above: Reduce reality to its various components and aspects but stop reducing when you reach components or aspects which cannot be used to fully explain or to 'reconstruct' each other. We can replace 'reality' by 'this concrete level of being' and then we can understand, by analogy to modern physics, that we can construct plausible understandings of human being in which feeling and thinking and doing are broken pieces of but one symmetric act-of-being, but those three components, again—in analogy to electromagnetic force and weak nuclear force, are irreducible components or aspects of concrete men who were born and developed in this world of concrete, thing-like being. Yet, these concrete men are manifestations in this mortal realm of entities of more symmetric and more abstract being, entities which could be labeled as 'human persons' if we were to be more consistent and more coherent in our use of the term 'person'.

So it is that we can understand much of man by understanding mind, heart, and hands, but there is no such entity as man. There are men, concrete human beings, cousins of the chimpanzees and all of that. After dealing in Part I, *Making Peace with Empirical Reality*, with our need to pay more respect to empirical reality, the concrete world as God shaped, the next three parts will deal with:

- the human mind—Part II, *The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God's Creation*,
- human feelings—Part III, *The Mystery of Human Feeling*, and
- human acts—Part IV, *Human Acts as Participating in the Story Which is Our World*.

The final part of this book, Part V, *Communal Men and the Body of Christ*, is where I'll try to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again, always a problem for even the best of reductionistic analyses. Unfortunately, such analyses are as necessary in studies of living creatures as they are in studies of matter and energy. In specific terms, I will write about men gaining the attributes of unity and coherence and completeness by writing about the formation of the Body of Christ, where men become more truly the image of God and, in fact, enter into a shared life with each other and with God.

Part I

Making Peace with Empirical Reality

2 Being Empirical with St. Thomas Aquinas

2.1 A General Approach Toward Proper Shaping of the Human Mind

Because of the importance to my thought of some insights about metaphysical subjects by St. Thomas Aquinas, I'm including a short chapter providing a short summary of those insights which are sometimes explicitly discussed elsewhere in this book but are always at the foundations of this way of thought.

Aquinas had a view of “the wisdom of this world” which greatly clarifies, or perhaps significantly modifies, the view expressed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians. In fact, the view of Aquinas is one I've struggled to communicate in my books and my Internet writings, though I've tried to expand and enrich that understanding to better consider the vast mountains of empirical knowledge which have accumulated since the 13th century. I think we should all contemplate the advice of St. Thomas to learn humbly from Creation:

[J]ust as a disciple reaches an understanding of the teacher's wisdom by the words he hears from him, so man can reach an understanding of God's wisdom by examining the creatures [God] made. . . [Page 17 of St. Thomas Aquinas' commentary on 1 Corinthians.] [1]

Even our understanding of God's purposes for Creation should be subject to testing against empirical knowledge. I'll provide another quote from Aquinas:

[T]he wisdom which attains to God through the things of this world is not the wisdom of this world but the wisdom of God. . . [page 51 of St. Thomas Aquinas' commentary on 1 Corinthians.] [1]

In terms used by Aquinas and some other Scholastics: we know God through His effects in Creation. God has told us a few things about His necessary and transcendent being, but most of what we can know about God relates to His freely adopted role as Creator of this particular Creation. And we have to remember that even God's words spoken to Moses or a few others were spoken in human languages and necessarily relied on concepts within the grasp of those the Almighty was speaking to. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas had told us:

[T]he first philosophy [metaphysics] utilizes the teachings of all the sciences in order to realize its objectives. [page 35 of *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Two: Creation* [2]]

Even theological systems are built upon metaphysical foundations. As such, they're built from the knowledge of the metaphysician, knowledge that should include that of specific sciences such as physics and mathematics and biology and history and so forth. I'll propose a definition of Wisdom which will be put in greater context in Chapter 6, *The Wisdom of the World and The Wisdom of God*:

Wisdom An understanding of Creation and its relationship to its Creator that takes into account the best available empirical knowledge but orients that knowledge as well as the knower's personal experience toward the goals given by one's understanding of the Creator's revelations.

We should learn to respond to God's Creation when forming our ways of thought, hence, when shaping our minds, rather than holding on to ways of thought which are magnificent antiques, once plausible as well as beautiful but no longer consistent with what is known about Creation. Yet, we should honor those antiques for what they are and for the role they played in allowing us to advance further in human knowledge of Creation and its Creator.

2.2 Things and Truth

St. Thomas Aquinas upset a lot of thinkers over the past seven centuries with the claim: “Things are true.” I would say that this claim makes him the most consistent empirical thinker in history amongst the more famous philosophers and theologians. This led me to a crazy line of thought culminating in the speculation that not only are things true, but also “Truths are thing-like.” This is not to say that all truths are thing-like but only those manifested in the underlying, abstract stuff of this universe—the Primordial Universe as I called it in my book. These manifested truths must include all those accessible to human thought, which is mediated mostly noticeably through the brain but also through the entire human animal and its relationships with other physical entities. Even revelations of truths beyond Creation, those regarding God Himself, have to be expressed in terms of truths which are manifested in the Primordial Universe and then are included in the stuff which God shaped into this universe.

“Things are true.” They have to be true. How could something exist if it were not true? Well, that might be possible under pagan conceptions of physical reality where matter co-exists from eternity along with any possible Creator, more accurately—a shaper or even a mere ruler. There is—possibly—a realm different from the realm of concrete beings and there might even be a realm of untruths. So why is it different for a Christian? A simplified explanation is:

In a Christian worldview, God creates all that is not Him from nothing. Any creaturely entity—quark or rock or porpoise—is a manifestation of a thought of God. A thought of God is necessarily true.

God told us Creation is good. It’s also beautiful and true. Since this phase of Creation, our universe, develops over time, the goodness and beauty and truth can sometimes be obscured or under development and appearing to be quite grotesque.

It’s important to note that a Thomistic-existentialist viewpoint can handle a universe of evolutionary and developmental processes as opposed to a more static universe of the sort which dominated philosophical and theological thought outside of Jews and Christians who saw God’s world as a story and God as Himself a participant. For all that, Christians and Jews have

both proven to be far too susceptible to adopting a static view of reality in which, for example, an ape is an ape and could never be the father of the human race.

Unfortunately, many of the philosophies of Christian history, including that of St. Augustine, took pagan philosophies based on a more static view of created being, including human nature, and then patched them crudely with the valid but inconsistent claim that God created this universe from nothing. You can't patch up a metaphysics that undervalues the act-of-being, or slights it completely, by pasting on vague statements about the acts-of-being which are God's acts of creating from nothing. Yet, there is a truth in this view of God as shaper, a truth easily absorbed into a Thomistic existentialist worldview. God is seen as both He who created the Primordial Universe from nothing and He who shaped this universe from that Primordial Universe.

"Things are true." There is another way to argue to this claim and that is simply to note that any metaphysics which separates thing-ness and truth is dualistic in a way that threatens the unity and coherence and completeness of created being. If truths are not in the things of this universe, where do we get them? Our very thinking organs are things. If we can have thoughts which are true, especially thoughts about very abstract mathematical objects, then we are all forced to be dualists or to fall into a state of mute stupidity before a universe which has a tentative contact with truth.

The computational philosophies of intelligence have produced, as an accident, the realization in clear-headed observers that these sorts of pseudo-empirical philosophies merely replace a brain and mind duality with a brain and software duality. The mind and the software have to somehow live in an immaterial realm of truth while being able to show up in the brain or computer or sunspots as I vaguely recall from my days of reading science-fiction. The unanswerable question, one known to the supposedly muddle-headed Medieval Scholastics is:

How does the brain interact with mind (or software) if they are truly different sorts of stuff? Or non-stuff?

This is not to propose a reductionistic form of materialism. Quite the opposite. I'm saying that all the truths which humans can perceive or conceive are embodied in some deep sense in the very matter and organization

of the human brain. As a Thomistic existentialist, I am willing to have the courage of my Christian convictions:

Matter is not 'mere' matter, it is sacramental stuff, manifestations of thoughts of God. As such, this universe in its totality somehow embodies all those truths which are accessible to human thought.

And that raises the question, "What is human thought?" to be answered in Part II, *The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God's Creation*.

3 What Drives Men to Know Truths?

Philosophy begins with wonder, not with systems of thought, not with textbook formulations, certainly not with the conclusions of speculative arguments made by thinkers in past generations. Theology also begins with wonder at the glories of Creation, at least for Christians. When we're young, we see even Christ only as a human child in the midst of strange and sometimes pleasing activities, similar to activities in our own lives. We are also amused in a potentially enlightening way by the activities of shepherds and kings from the Orient though we have only vague ideas about such mundane facts as the travel times from Persia to Bethlehem. We understand little but we can feel joy and wonder.

Before we can be open to God's revelations in human history, especially the Bible, we must be prepared. We must already be filled with wonder as we respond to that which lies around us in our own environments, including our fellow human beings and even that baby born long-ago in Bethlehem. Nowadays, unless a man lives in a cave, he must be capable of wondering at stars and exotic creatures he may never see in the flesh and electrons that aren't quite here nor there, unless they're here and then it appears they don't have this much momentum or that much. It even turns out that if we find they have this much energy, we can't know if they're really here now or a small fraction of a second ago or a small fraction of a second in the future.

Once wonder was simpler. In our youths, it took no more than a look into the eyes of our mother and a warm, comfortable, contemplative feeling came upon us as we were learning how to love and to be loved. In the youth of our race, men could stare into the sky and fall into a trance-like contemplation of those lights so far above, moon and planets and stars.

Now we look into the eyes of a fellow human being and we might wonder what that apish creature really feels. Is she herself being fooled into an illusion of love by her selfish genes that wish to propagate themselves into the future? Are those globes of light in the sky no more than the strangely colored surfaces we see in images taken by NASA satellites as they passed a planet or moon on journeys into the cold, empty regions of spacetime? Why do those images of the moons of Saturn, of men stepping onto the moon, or women floating about the space lab in orbit around the earth, seem less real than those televised scenes of human civilizations spanning galaxies and of human beings gathered with alien beings in bars or restaurants. Many forms of life from all planets are eating the same foods and drinking the same beverages.

We know so much more nowadays though much that we know is simply not likely to be true, certain to not be true, and sometimes not even desirable to be true. One might even say that the modern science fiction films, and many of our books of popular science, are ideological works written in opposition to other ideologies such as Creation Science. That is, many of the battles in our world are seen as occurring between those fallen into irrational ways of thought and those defending claims to higher forms of rationality. It seems more accurate to consider most of those defenders as being opposed to one particular superstition but not inclined to a truly open response to the world, especially when open responses lead them in politically inconvenient directions.

And, of course, we must remember that Darwinists didn't invent cynicism nor did planetary physicists discover the possibilities of atheistic reasoning. They have participated in a vast expansion of empirical knowledge of God's Creation which now seems a lot richer and more complex than prior generations of human thinkers could have feared. But that empirical knowledge has not led directly to a deeper understanding of this world. It, in fact, could not have led to such an understanding. After all, the world is a developing story and not merely a collection of facts and theories, however poorly or well those facts and theories have been formed into knowledge. We need a narrative understanding but it has to be built with the best of human knowledge and, so, I deal first with that knowledge and its rapid growth in modern times.

In this age, certain domains of knowledge are expanding rapidly and are even crowding out that fundamental human feeling of wonder. In place of a true and decent sense of wonder, many of us have adopted a monkey-

like curiosity that merely shifts attention from one garishly colored object to another. Others have taken the more utilitarian approach of treating knowledge as no more than a way of enlarging our zones of comfort and prosperity. These others seek to use the best of our knowledge and technology to keep themselves alive as long as possible and to entertain themselves in cheap and degrading ways. In dealing with our knowledge, especially with the mountains of modern empirical knowledge, we should perhaps return to that sense of wonder and turn away from the temptation to seek profits rather than understandings, a temptation which one might think an already prosperous people could have avoided.

Once wonder was simpler. And more honest and more admirable. Our ancestors had to do little more than memorize the dogmas of metaphysical and theological systems allied with what seemed to be the absolute and complete truths of Euclidean geometry, the undeniable Platonic and Aristotelian insights into the nature of being, and the certainties of Aristotelian claims about the nature of infinity and the implications of those claims for cause-and-effect reasoning. Most didn't even have to memorize those dogmas because they were built into cultural understandings of the Biblical narratives, built into our understanding of what we were seeing when our eyes registered those points of light in the sky. Those dogmas were even built into cultural understandings of Jesus Christ's relationship to His Father in Heaven, a relationship encoded in the early centuries after Christ and more fully rationalized during the Middle Ages as 'consubstantial' and translated inadequately as 'one in being'. But any translation is inadequate. The term 'consubstantial' carried a lot of metaphysical baggage and the general cultural baggage which even the most austere philosopher brings into his work.

So, what about the systems of the great Christian thinkers? Isn't it wonderful that there are many Christian intellectuals who've memorized the recipes found in the cookbooks of Augustinian and Thomistic thought? If not wonderful, at least those prodigies of petrified thought teach us the costs and benefits of well-built human systems of thought relative to that dangerous feeling of wonder.

In recent centuries, physicists and mathematicians—often to their own great shock—have made remarkable discoveries which have expanded our understanding of geometry, of thought in general, of being, and of infinity. The world of order and chaos at which our ancestors wondered has become a somewhat disturbing place in which there isn't even a clear boundary

between order and chaos, regularity and randomness. Chaotic systems can be self-organizing. The stability of thing-like being is best explained by weird results from quantum physics. Human altruistic behavior seems little more than a glorified version of the behavior of rodents who sacrifice themselves for their close genetic relatives. Modern logicians tell us that completeness of mathematical systems can be purchased only at the price of inbuilt errors.

The ways of dealing with these issues require at least implicit knowledge of advanced mathematics and physics not yet integrated into our general ways of thought. By ‘implicit knowledge’, I mean the sort that can be gained by reading serious histories of mathematics and physics or high-level survey works such as the one written by the Russian mathematicians Aleksandrov, Kolmogorov, and Lavent’ev [19]. A disciplined and courageous reader might also learn much by reading such demanding works as Wald’s *General Relativity* [31] or Peebles’ *Principles of Physical Cosmology* [23]. Some of these works will offer advice in the forward to guide literate laymen in using these books intended for graduate study or for independent reading by scientists or mathematicians in unrelated specialties. Many of those books can be read for profit even if technical sections are skipped.

I emphasize physics and mathematics because the issues addressed by those sciences are fundamental to our concepts of being and sometimes a little study shows us that earlier generations of thinkers were either wrong or too limited in their understanding of even time and space. We aren’t going to have any chance to understand our own moral natures or our relationships to Creation until we can speak comfortably about time and space as they are manifested in our realm of thing-like being, this realm of particular manifestations of more abstract forms of being. At the same time, we should realize that the entire enterprise of modern empirical research, in history and literature and chemistry and all the other empirical arts and sciences, has cast doubt upon the validity or—more often—completeness of traditional understandings of Creation.

If you won’t listen to the testimony of Einstein and Darwin that traditional systems are inadequate for describing the physical universe, then listen to the testimony of Hannah Arendt and Flannery O’Connor that the complexities of modern political and moral problems lie beyond the scope of traditional thought. Complacent we are and we’ve forgotten, or never learned, that progress in a complex world opens up vast expanses to explore. Success leads to ever greater ignorance. I think it likely that one form of

the sin against the Holy Spirit is the stubborn adherence to comfortable, inherited ways of thought when God's Creation is revealing regions of greater truth which need exploring by those who claim to be images of God. All of this should lead to wonder and not to any sort of despair; most certainly should it not reinforce our all-too human complacency.

God's Creation is not what Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, thought it to be. Not even what Shakespeare and Mozart thought it to be. And it will certainly prove to be far richer and far greater than I'm describing it to be. Yet, man is capable of understanding and of shaping his mind to encapsulate a world far richer and more complex than that implied by either the traditions in which he was first educated or by his direct perceptions of his immediate environments. Should this not bring about an energizing sense of wonder, an invigorating desire to explore our world and understand it? Should we not strive to help our children to shape their minds to a greater and richer view of God's Creation?

We seem to lack the courage and the discipline to move forward in such a way that we can make fruitful use of these great opportunities. Some move in seemingly random directions under various delusions nurtured by science-fiction and Christian fantasies or even the most popular of popular science writings. Some try to stay put, erecting more structures in the ghettos of traditional thought, Catholic or classicist. Both of these forms of misbehavior separate wonder from a reason open to empirical reality. The first insulates wonder from a coherent understanding of the world as a world while the second banishes or imprisons wonder in a vain effort to protect the weak and the innocent from the uncertainties of a world which is made to God's purposes and not ours.

We are bound by moral duties to protect the weak and the innocent but we have no duty nor even a right to protect them from knowledge of God's world. Those of us called to explore and to try to understand God's Creation certainly have no right to shield ourselves from manifestations of God's thoughts in a misguided effort to protect the weak. Such behavior would be little more than a squeamish and cowardly version of the view advocated by the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Sins becomes no more allowable by being transmuted into forms for spineless men or men too complacent to properly explore Creation.

There are also some who use empirical knowledge to shut off possibilities that are uncomfortable for their sorts of minds, seeing the success of modern physics and biochemistry as a way to deny any objective goodness in the

poetry of Eliot or the paintings of Picasso or the novels of Faulkner. Even human history becomes little more than the chaotic stories of a race sharing ancestry with chimpanzees. An understanding of some aspects of empirical reality justifies a denial of those other aspects which aren't amenable to experimental study or strict mathematical modeling. That understanding can be elevated to a speculative understanding of existence and to a denial of any 'need' for a Creator.

Once wonder was simpler. We could contemplate the nobility of a great steed or a compassionate woman or a dutiful man. Like it or not, modern evolutionary biology and neurobiology and genetics tell us much about the true nature of human moral order and disorder, our biologically-founded virtues and our biologically-founded state of sin. They tell us much about the true nature of thought, and it turns out that thought isn't what Plato or Plotinus thought it to be, not what Spinoza thought it to be, and most certainly not what Kant thought it to be. Moreover it's not what our modern politicians and political philosophers think it to be, not what our modern businessmen and economists think it to be, not what our modern educators and medical clinicians think it to be, and most, most certainly not what our theologians and Bible scholars think it to be.

In *The Evolution of Civilizations* [27], Carrol Quigley used the term 'instruments of a civilization' to include its economic entities, educational systems, and the like so long as they serve the civilization and its citizens even when they necessarily serve more particular interests. He used the term 'institutions' for instruments decayed into a self-serving form.

Quigley made the observation that Western Civilization had started to collapse twice in a fundamental way in earlier centuries and emerged each time with new instruments of expansion. Speaking in economic terms, the feudal system broke down at the end of the High Middle Ages (circa 1300) and the merchants of such cities as Venice and Florence began to trade the goods of farmers and craftsmen who were yet organized in feudal systems of production. That form of semi-capitalism broke down (circa 1700) and industrial capitalism began to emerge. More recently, industrial capitalism, by Quigley's quite plausible account, broke down (circa 1930) and we've yet to see clear signs if a new economic system will develop in the West.

I'll leave Quigley's claim for your contemplation and make the obvious point that economics is only a part of any human community, even a materially rich civilization. A civilization has also spiritual and intellectual aspects, military and political, esthetic and technological. Perhaps

the economic organs of the Body of Christ have surpassed other organs in development to the point the West has become a creature with a belly two-thirds of its body? Perhaps we'll now move forward by way of cultural developments? Better philosophy and literature? Better music and dance? Or maybe a St. Francis will reinvigorate our stale societies? There are many possibilities for a revival if we have the courage and faith to respond to God's Creation.

A little thought about the situation as of the 1930s had led Quigley to a plausible theory that Western Civilization needed something of a fresh start. It would seem clear, at least to me, that the only place for that to have happened was the United States, a wealthy and powerful region, somewhat barbaric and still on the margins of Western Civilization. As it happened, the United States had begun to fall into a state of decay at a very early age, being already dominated by many of those self-serving institutions which weren't about to endanger their own interests merely to serve God or Western Civilization, nor even the United States and its citizens. A European friend of Albert Jay Nock once told him that the United States is the first country in history to have passed from barbarism into a state of decadence without having ever passed through a state of civilization. Some jokes are too sad to laugh at.

Things continued to worsen through the 20th century and into the 21st century, despite the sometimes grotesque prosperity. The current situation, as of 2013, raises fears that the American citizenry and their leaders plainly and simply failed in their responsibilities, choosing various paths dictated by greed and self-righteousness rather than buckling down to the hard work of establishing a new phase of Western Civilization. We now should be seeing that we, the American citizenry, also spent vast resources building the strangest empire in history—we invaded and conquered, committing the crimes of an expansionary empire, and we failed to profit from our crimes. We've certainly failed to revive Western Civilization and may have corrupted it beyond repair, destroying the very values we claim to be bringing to the rest of the world.

In any case, Quigley also claimed that the Western mind, practical and speculative, was once oriented toward the Christian outlook of moderate realism which is the belief that, as a specific example, there is no universal entity called Man, only flesh-and-blood men and concretely defined collections of men up to the entire species. Abstractions were drawn from concrete entities. This is, as modern scientists have shown, how the human

mind works, how it shapes itself to God's Creation, but I have claimed that being corresponds neither to Platonic concepts of Ideals nor to the naive version of methodical realism which extends our way of learning, of shaping our minds, to a theory of being.

In my understanding of being, there are levels of increasingly abstract being, but these aren't realms of universals of specific complex entities but rather realms of the abstract stuff from which more particular forms of being, such as the thing-like being of our universe, are shaped, perhaps by many stages leading from the abstract through the more constrained to the particular and the concrete. In a broad-brush way, Plato was right about his realm of abstract being, but he erred greatly in seeing, for example, men as concrete beings corresponding to some metaphysical 'man'. It would now seem that men are shaped from concrete stuff itself shaped from streams of abstract being from which spacetime and matter and fields and so on were created with hydrogen and oxygen and so on being shaped in the next step and primeval forms of life in the step leading more or less directly to men.

This understanding of being is derived from speculative contemplations upon the discoveries of modern physics about the history and nature of the physical stuff of this universe and the discoveries of modern biology about the history and nature of life. After all, if we try to penetrate concrete being, we find not ideal Man but rather a strange zoo of quarks and gluons and, inside of them, the strange stuff of quantum mechanics which seems little more than mathematical equations. If we look for the creation of man, we find instead a tangled skein of closely related family-lines of apish creatures.

For centuries, Thomistic existentialism was perhaps the most radical and most sophisticated version of that traditional Christian outlook of methodical realism, but my version of this Christian philosophy is a still more radical form of an existentialism, updated to account for modern empirical knowledge. Moreover, my version is intended to be dynamic, to allow an ongoing development in response to our developing knowledge of Creation. It's possible that Aquinas intended the same, but—to give only one problem in his works—the assumption that the existence of creatures, empirical entities, such as angels and demons can be settled by pronouncements of Church leaders and theologians corrupted his work so far as empirical reality went. Questions regarding God's Creation need to be settled, as best as possible, by way of exploring the empirical world and by forming theories and narratives from what we learn. Unfortunately, there are a large number

of human beings, including many who have academic ambitions and some sort of ability to think abstractly, who need dogmatic rules. They will tend to take contingent knowledge about empirical reality and turn it into metaphysical systems which are then forced upon empirical reality. In an address to philosophers given on June 7, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of modernity as demanding a “more exact understanding of the nature of man”. That will be only a part of a more exact understanding of all of Creation which is subject to our exploration and analysis, but modernity demands that we produce at least that, an exact understanding of man rather than an understanding in which *a priori* categories from ancient thinkers are used as if marble blocks could be used to make a modern skyscraper.

I have written a book dealing with ‘human rights’ as something only emerging in the real world, as the foreseeable end-result of a development process. This issue of rights is very important to my understanding of human nature but I’ll refer the reader to *Human Rights: An Evolutionary and Christian Perspective* which can be downloaded at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/rights.pdf> rather than taking on too much in this book.

Though he was too often conquered by an excessive respect for human authority, Aquinas was very strongly inclined to recognize that the contingent truths about created being must be settled by exploration and analysis of empirical reality. To be sure, Aquinas wasn’t seen in this light in modern times until his true principles, often hidden under heavy and seemingly fantastic Scholastic structures, were rediscovered by a significant scattering of thinkers, including Etienne Gilson, a few other Catholic philosophers, Hannah Arendt, Flannery O’Connor, and the brain-scientist Walter J. Freeman.

My understanding of being is a form of methodical realism as well as a form of the more sophisticated Thomistic existentialistic version of methodical realism, the latter (methodical realism) being used often to describe our individual and communal ways of shaping our minds to reality and the former (Thomistic existentialism) to describe an understanding of being as such, an understanding we can develop only after generations of learning about reality, shaping our minds to it, and contemplating what reality is and what we have become as well.

Professor Quigley’s summary of one aspect of this Christian outlook of moderate realism is simple and to the point (see *The Evolution of Civilizations* [27]):

The truth unfolds in time through a communal process.

How else can we discover the truth? The Bible itself necessarily states even the most absolute of revealed truths in terms of this world, in terms of a complex network of stories in which the characters are mortal creatures. Moreover, we've even read much into the Bible which couldn't have been put there by the authors. Stanley Jaki, the distinguished Benedictine priest and scholar of many fields, has documented quite well that the ancient Hebrews had no word or concept corresponding to *creation from nothingness*. In *The Timaeus*, Plato, the monotheistic pagan, spoke of the God, the Father and Creator as a true Creator, Himself the only truly immortal being. The idea of *creation from nothingness* entered the Jewish and Christian mind through the Jewish philosopher Philo who was approximately a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth [18] [24]. So far as I understand matters, rabbis who are truly fluent in the Hebrew of their sacred books, and who use the traditional commentaries, don't understand those first verses of *Genesis* to be speaking of a 'creation from nothingness' though there can be an undeveloped core of such an idea. See *Confronting Creation: How Judaism Reads Genesis* [22] by Jacob Neusner for a discussion of how a main line of Judaic sages discussed Genesis.

The point is: we read the Bible, we understand the world around us, not by some direct interpretation of what we read, what we see or hear, but rather in terms of our minds which have been formed over our lifetimes. The more complex and complicated parts of our understanding are located in our communities, in our living stories and customs as well as in our libraries and laboratories. In Chapter 1, *General Introduction*, I spoke of Jacques Barzun's profoundly insightful distinction between the live intelligence of an individual and the intellect which is "the capitalized and communal form of live intelligence." He develops this distinction in detail in *The House of Intellect* [3].

The human being is an active learner and self-shaper; he isn't a passive learner. To be more true to reality, many human beings are passive and fatalistic creatures, but any reasonable understanding of man as a product of evolution and also as a creature of the God of Jesus Christ has to acknowledge his nature as an active responder and self-shaper in a world where survival and other goods are at stake. We're not born with preformed minds. The same statements with little modification can be made about communities and intellects. I'll deal with that and related issues in Part V,

Communal Men and the Body of Christ.

Our minds don't achieve enlightenment by rising to some transcendental realm. Nor it is just raw experience that forms a human mind but rather active responses to experience. Our communal knowledge, gained over many generations, is part of the world to which the individual mind responds. We don't respond directly to some world created by God which is directly understandable by each human being, but rather to a world mediated through that communal process which can discover truth by building upon the knowledge and thinking processes of the individuals in a community, scientists and clergymen, carpenters and engine repairmen, retailers and lawyers. And so it is that mind and communal mind or intellect are formed by complex and complicated recursions and iterations.

It might take some effort to understand the power of moderate realism to both discover substantial truths and to form the very communities which engage in that process of discovery. The power is realized only so long as men fulfill their call from God to honestly and courageously shape their minds in response to Creation as well as in response to the Creator. Moderate realism is allied with an optimism, even a courageous optimism, that reality is a manifestation of certain of God's thoughts and is continuously brought into existence by the Lord's acts. This is a truer and harder-edged optimism that can face up to the sometimes harsh facts of Creation and has no need of illusions.

This is why Western Civilization has been resilient and even self-healing. The Christian peoples of the West have, at least for some past centuries, tried to understand our world and all of Creation honestly and courageously and with Christian faith. A civilization emerged as a result and recovered from seemingly fatal diseases twice according to Quigley's learned and plausible account.

Moderate realism accepts God's Creation as it presents itself to an energetic and responsive investigator who is a member of various sorts of communities. Such an investigator, acting as a member of families and towns and communities of worship, shapes his mind to the world he discovers, encapsulating his perceptions of empirical reality in the very shape of that mind, not by stuffing knowledge inside a preformed mind. Moderate realism tells us that God is capable of manifesting in our world all the truths we need to do as He wills. He could even create a human nature for His Son who came to us to reveal God more directly than any words or images or miraculous cures. The incarnation of the Son of God was the start

of a new and more explicit phase of the formation of the ultimate human community, the Body of Christ. I'll be writing more about the nature of this community in Part V, *Communal Men and the Body of Christ*.

It seems to me that this moderate realism lies far outside the mainstream of thought in all modern communities, including those of Christianity. Any revived Christian philosophy of moderate realism will spotlight the frightening truth that we aren't just in error in our understanding of Creation, we've shaped our minds so that we can't even think plausible thoughts about God's own work, not even the once plausible thoughts of prior generations. We don't respond to Creation so much as we confront it with our minds being already shaped to views drawn from and enforced by textbooks and the mass-media including the entertainment divisions of that industry. The end result is a set of preformed views, convenient to various hierarchies including those of Christian churches. Those preformed views are made up of all sorts of equilateral triangles and squares and circles and paths which are straight and narrow. This forces a certain literalism upon our ways of thought. In Thomas Jefferson's terms: a perverse sort of literacy (literalism) has rendered Americans, and increasingly all modern human beings, invincibly ignorant. It hardly matters to us so long as everything is presented in glossy illustrations and so long as those who might be smart enough to do better are bored into submission to the herd on the move.

Once the West was a Christian civilization in the sense that Western men subjected their selves to the testimony of God, the testimony the All-knowing Lord gave in Holy Scripture and the testimony the All-mighty Lord gave in Creation. It was an imperfect bowing to the authority of the God of Jesus Christ, to be sure, but it was substantial enough to have made Western Civilization into a manifestation of sorts of the Body of Christ. Human civilizations in this mortal realm start out with some sort of honest response to Creation—if only economic or hierarchical realities—and then will usually retreat into ghettos of self-justifying delusions. With moderate realism dominant in the West, Western Civilization was being shaped by an open-ended and honest response to Creation, to reality in a deeper sense than the 'reality' of modern jargon. Something has gone wrong and part of my goal is to point to the foundations which are rapidly eroding under our very feet. More than that, I'd like to start the construction of new foundations for a new civilization or—I might hope—a new phase of Western Civilization.

To build a new civilization, perhaps a new phase of Western Civilization,

we need to respond in a valid way to God's Creation, though that response will be necessarily incomplete and defective because of our finite, creaturely natures. To respond in a valid way to God's creatures, we need to shape our minds properly, we need to iteratively discipline our feelings to the moral rules mediated first in a primitive form by our feelings, and we need to act in unison with our thoughts and our feelings. We need to exercise our full humanity in heart and hands as well as mind.

The man who shapes his mind to accord with God's Holy Scriptures is learning how to think along with God, but so is the man who shapes his mind to accord with God's Creation. The modern man who can re-shape his damaged mind to accord with both God's Holy Scriptures and the Almighty's Creation has learned best of all how to think along with God. We can speak in similar terms about our feelings and our acts including our most basic habits.

At this time, early in the 21st century after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, there are mountains of empirical knowledge, undigested or partially digested. Even at this early stage of trying to make sense of a universe we know so much about, and understand so little, we can say for sure that there is much empirical knowledge in conflict with many of the speculative teachings of Christianity. We even know that, at the most basic level, time and space and matter aren't what they are assumed to be in those teachings. How can we intelligently discuss the possibility of life without end if we don't even talk about time and space and matter in terms consistent with scientific knowledge of those creatures in this mortal realm? Heck, if we were more honest or at least more clearheaded, we'd realize that we speak gibberish even to our own selves and to God when we pray. Any honest and faith-filled Christian should feel an obligation to himself and to those he teaches or influences and to God, an obligation to deal with that knowledge and to rethink his understanding of Creation. We shouldn't be willfully blind, turning away from the evidence of God's Creation—however harsh it might be at times. We shouldn't be willfully ignorant or stupid, refusing to work hard at the God-ordained task of making sense of God's Creation—however harsh the demands placed upon all thinking men, especially theologians and philosophers, to learn much of modern empirical knowledge.

We have to be willing to detach ourselves from the speculative thoughts of our Christian traditions, even those which mean the most to us, that we might ask such questions as:

1. What ties together the human mind and Creation?
2. Is it that relationship between the human mind and Creation which really makes us (perhaps only in potential) images of the Almighty Creator?
3. What ties mind and heart and hands together to form a truly unified human creature?
4. Can we develop new ideas of being which are consistent with both the revealed truths of Christianity and the contingent truths of modern empirical knowledge?

As of 2013, I've been trying to deal with such questions for 25 years or so of writing novels and seven years of writing (mostly) non-fiction books. In the past few years, I've released a number of my books on the Internet for free downloading. See Chapter 18, *Other Writings by Loyd Fueston* for a list of those books and links for downloading.

Unfortunately, most Christians, including even theologians and clergymen, have failed to even try to disentangle the speculative content of their tradition from the core truths. Or perhaps they simply don't know enough to try. Perhaps this is why I've thus far failed to get the attention I think is warranted for this effort to re-understand Creation in the richer and more complex terms we can develop using modern empirical knowledge. As I've noted, the human mind and Creation are entangled in a way that forces a joint discussion, though the discussion has to start with the human mind which has a truly unique and interesting relation to Creation, to created being of all realms from the most concrete to the most abstract.

The human mind didn't come into existence in some final form when an ape-man first began to brew beer. The human mind is an entity which lies beyond the reach of our existing concepts and terms, meaning that we need to reshape our minds to consciously encapsulate the ways in which our minds are reshaped. In somewhat Modernist terms which might well be appropriate: our minds are processes and are part of the larger scale processes of our universe and of all of Creation. As we come to deeper and wider knowledge and understandings of Creation, our minds, especially our intellects or communal minds, will grow deeper and wider.

We need to realize that the fundamental aspects of Creation need to be accepted as such and not deformed to the shape of our favorite preconcep-

tions. Or again: we need to recognize that to understand our own minds is to understand something that is always moving just beyond our perceptions and conceptions, something that expands toward an encapsulation of all of Creation, something that would form relationships with each and every entity of Creation and with Creation in its entirety. We do better to concentrate on what lies outside of us, the manifestations of God's thoughts in concrete, thing-like being.

The first ape-man to brew beer might well have had the same individual elements of a human mind that Einstein had but those elements couldn't have been shaped into an Einsteinian mind because that ape-man didn't grow up in the same late-1800s Western Civilization as Einstein. Even if the genes and soma of that ape-man were the same, in a static way, as those of a modern man, we also have to deal with recent discoveries of more dynamic aspects of genes and gene-soma interaction. For example, some of our genes can be programmed by our mothers' bodies when we're in the womb. A clear if still hypothetical example comes from another species. There is serious evidence that Rocky Mountain grizzly bears, especially the males, were much larger in the 19th century than they are now; this is too short a time for evolution to have changed the size of those bears. How did that change come about? It might be that the mother's body differs depending upon whether grizzlies are a dominant or subordinate species, whether she has to scramble for food or can take anything she can see. Then the mother's body might signal her embryos, especially males, to grow large if they are dominant and can eat anything that is around or to stay relatively small if their food possibilities will be more restricted. For all that, the main reason for the difference in Einstein and an ape-man with a powerful brain is that Einstein grew up in a social environment that presented him with possibilities for powerful mental development, to which possibilities he responded well.

The human mind is the relationships encapsulating what that human being understands by active responses to its perceived environments. The mind of a human being is not some immaterial substance implausibly attached to his embodied parts at conception but is rather his participation in that communal process by which truth unfolds and his participation in a variety of processes involving the soil beneath his feet and the car he drives.

To repeat Professor Quigley's summary of the Christian outlook of moderate realism [27]:

The truth unfolds in time through a communal process.

My suggested alternative version is:

The human mind develops in time through individual and communal processes.

If an individual human mind were powerful enough and large enough, these processes would bring that individual mind to a state approaching that of the communal mind of the entire human race. In a sense, this is what happens as I will discuss in Part V, *Communal Men and the Body of Christ*.

My current knowledge of history tells me that the human mind might have developed by an odd pattern: first man came to appreciate and to handle practical empirical knowledge (such as tool-making or pyramid-building) and then revealed knowledge (the revelations to the Hebrews) and then speculative knowledge (Socrates and Plato) and then theoretical empirical knowledge developed sporadically (Archimedes was early but he seems to have been more of a precursor than a founder of schools of thought) until the explosion that had no clear beginning but did have a clear public airing in the work and disrupted career of Galileo. As I now see matters, the persecution of Galileo was a second part of a war against the human mind as, necessarily, an empirically shaped entity. An earlier part of this war, still going on, was waged by the Franciscans of Oxford, such as Duns Scotus and William Occam, against the intertwined appreciations St. Thomas Aquinas had developed for empirical reality and that for the human mind which shapes itself by active responses to that reality ¹.

We modern men have an opportunity for a great expansion and enrichment of the human mind. I mean that literally and not as a round-about way of saying we can put better knowledge into our preformed minds. By learning how to integrate what modern empirical knowledge tells us about created being, we can form better minds, in ourselves and in our children. By doing so, we can also start building the foundations for the next phase

¹To be a little more accurate, Aquinas developed that theory in regards to those aspects of human nature we call 'moral'. He never accepted the possibility that the brain could be flexible enough to engage in abstract reasoning and speculated that a 'soul', a non-human reasoning agent, is attached to the embodied human being. I've corrected this error in understanding of the flexibility of flesh and produced a more consistent view of human nature.

of Western Civilization, assuming there is another phase. If not, we'll leave something for another human civilization, perhaps one that may be forming in Latin America or China or India or—most likely in my opinion—around the Pacific Rim. In any case, as individuals seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, we can be better imitations of Him if we better understand the actions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Creator of our world.

4 What is it Like to be a Human Being?

4.1 An Overview of Human Nature

We are born as physical organisms with some well-formed traits but many of our traits are subject to substantial development or even subject to taking one of several forms depending upon perhaps our choices or environmental pressures. This is not a process which happens at just the level of the individual, though we better apply the overlapping but different term ‘evolution’ to the shaping of the human mind at the species or racial level. There are some aspects of our minds which developed over the millenia as our ancestors evolved by responding to specific environments and there are some aspects which develop during our lifetimes or the lifetimes of particular communities as we respond to our own environments, even to the world as a whole. In this context, it’s important to realize that we don’t have pre-existing minds that can be filled with knowledge but rather minds that are shaped as we deal with the world in a way that can be seen as a knowledge-generating process. There’s not a clean separation between mind and knowledge, though we’ve been taught to think in terms of systematic knowledge that can be pushed into a more or less empty mind. I’ll be speaking to that issue in Part II, *The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God’s Creation*.

For reasons both good and bad, we tend to think of our basic human natures as given and thus it is that too many discussions start with some more or less plausible idea of these human natures as givens with the status of metaphysical absolutes. We talk of blank slates when the slate itself has a lot of properties. In a rough way of thought, we can consider that slate with those properties to be the ‘racial mind’ of the species *homo sapiens*.

What gets written on the slate is then the results of development during our individual lives, development mainly the result of our active responses to our environments.

You should quickly try to move beyond this analogy because development of our individual minds cause changes to the slate, though only to a relatively small extent over our lives, and the slate itself comes with some characters already written upon it. And, of course, there is the ‘intellect’ which is the communal and capitalized form of live intelligence. Intellect is also, within terms of the above limited analogy, writings upon a given slate though perhaps having some deep relationship to the evolution of the human mind at the racial level.

It will require the efforts of a number of thinkers to come to some greater and more exact understanding of the human individual and communal minds. What I’ve said applies, with perhaps some changes, to heart and hands as well. On the whole, this book is based on the position that there are reasons to sometimes discuss mind and heart and hands as if truly separate, though not true ultimately. But we don’t yet live in ultimate regions and so it is that I will generally write according to the traditional way of viewing men as being made of mind and heart and hands as I’ve already discussed in Chapter 1, *General Introduction*.

The four sections which follow are a very brief summary of what will be found in the rest of this book. These sections are short and only intended to let the reader see where I’m headed.

4.2 What is the Human Mind?

Mind is being, though not in the way that some philosophers have claimed; this is to say that there is no mind-stuff but rather a form of being more relational than substantial. In my way of thinking, created being is a manifestation of God’s thoughts. I also advocate the idea that being lies on a spectrum from abstract to concrete and the things of this world are shaped from abstract forms of being which are partially described by such expressions of mathematical abstraction as the wave-functions of quantum mechanics or the curved spacetime of modern gravitational theories. Those strangely abstract forms of being can be explored by way of their effects upon concrete being and that is similar to the claims of some traditional Christian thinkers that we know God mostly through His effects in Creation. In fact,

I'd say that quantum mechanics and other branches of modern science explore and describe some particular effects of God in shaping this world and using it to tell His story, a story centered around the incarnation, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.

Pieces of this overall understanding can be found in the thoughts of many modern thinkers, including some non-Christians such as William James who realized the human mind forms as a fundamental, ground-up response to reality; in his thought, mind is seen rightly as a faith-filled and courageous exploration of and response to contingent being. On the other hand, he quite deliberately refused to so much as conjecture a world which would give an ultimate shape, in principle, to that mind. He would only construct, from bottom-up, the pieces of a world but wouldn't explore so much as the possibility it was all meaningful as part of a world, the universe seen as morally ordered. In fact, it's not clear to me he even had quite so inclusive an understanding of 'universe' as some modern reductionistic materialists.

Created being is a manifestation of thoughts God chose for this Creation. Once manifested, created being has an objective existence, whether as the abstract truths of transfinite set theory or as flesh and blood and rocks and interstellar gas. At this level of concrete being, these are things and, as Aquinas told us, those things are true. That Medieval genius seemed to be largely going on instinct and a faith in the sacramental principle of Christianity, but I've got a more systematic reason for saying "Things are true": things are at one end of a spectrum of being and abstractions; those basic truths manifested by God as the raw stuff of Creation lie at the other end of that spectrum.

4.3 What are Feelings?

I'm going to loosely define feelings as following:

Feelings Human thoughts which are perhaps conscious but not structured rationally and not under full, or necessarily even partial, control of the feeler/thinker.

Feelings can be resident, in a manner of speaking, in the brain or in glands or even in muscles or in environments, social or physical. Human beings are not fully contained, sometimes not even mostly contained, inside their own skins.

The most important aspect of feelings in the context of this book is their relationship to scales of relationships and time beyond what we as individuals would be able to think about on an ongoing basis. Moreover, feelings sometimes force us to respond in ways which meet the needs of greater communities or of family-lines extended over time when we would rather take care of our individual needs and desires.

As I write in Section 8.3, *Why Do We Have Emotions and Feelings?*:

Properly formed emotions and feelings lead us to do our duty to ancestors and descendants, family and nation, God and church—even at great sacrifice. It’s probably best to realize these emotions and feelings, even in a natural and undisciplined form, led us and our ancestors to simply have children and to fulfill our communal responsibilities, where the community is family group or hunting band or tribe at the largest.

4.4 What Are Human Acts?

Again, I’ll provide an introduction to only one aspect of what I’ll claim regarding these actively responsive aspects of human nature. As odd as it might seem, in this discussion of hands and not mind nor heart, I’ll refer to an essay I published in 2008 regarding the importance of active responses in the formation of the human mind.

In 2008, I published a short essay on my website, *Acts of Being* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=230>, in response to a summary article, *Psychologists Show Experience May Be The Best Teacher For Infants* found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080930144218.htm> In that article we can read:

Researchers have found that infants who had an opportunity to use a plastic cane to get an out-of-reach toy were better able to understand the goal of another person’s use of a similar tool than were infants who had previously only watched an adult use a cane to retrieve a toy.

We shape our minds by active responses to our environments and to greater parts of our world as we learn to think abstractly. When we’re responding to an environmental need to heat our house, we learn how to use

a wedge-ax to split wood with short verbal instructions from a knowledgeable relative and then a lot of practice. After several sessions of exhausting effort, we learn to better use such a tool given the action of our particular bodies and the behavior of the wedge-ax when we lift it overhead and then bring it down toward the log sitting on end.

This is one of the problems with classroom instruction as currently practiced. It's a passive and non-effective way of learning in which the overburdened teacher is trying to push pre-processed knowledge into the heads of thirty students of varying talents and interests and levels of maturity. This is also a problem with any teaching efforts of the various science or history or religious channels on television. I know some who try to interact with the programs they watch, taking notes and writing down questions to look into or to discuss with friends, but those viewers are few and far between. This passiveness is also a problem with so much of our popular literature which doesn't engage and challenge a reader. Far too often, modern readers are merely passing their eyes over line after line of black marks. This is a bit like working out with 2-pound dumbbells.

4.5 A Human Being, Individual and Communal

We are mind and heart and hands, but each of us is also a unified 'me', if only defectively unified. I described a man in a state of fragmentation in my novel, *A Man For Every Purpose* [7]. That novel is a dark comedy of sorts and describes our state in this mortal realm by way of some extreme situations. But we Christians believe men can be healed at what might be called the end of the road, in the world of the resurrected. If and when we reach that world, we will be in that better state of a true person, unified and coherent and complete, true images of God. We will have all the important properties of mind and heart and hands, but when we think, we will also be feeling and acting. When we feel, we will also be thinking and acting. When we act, we will also be thinking and feeling.

We're certainly not yet in such a healthy state, but we should always keep our ultimate state in mind. As the neuroscientist and philosopher, Walter J. Freeman tells us in *How Brains Make Up Their Minds* [6]:

The examples of the athlete and dancer demonstrate what I

consider to be the three main properties of intentionality. The first is unity. Our brains and bodies are entirely committed to the actions of projecting ourselves corporeally into the world, and our perceptions are unified across all our senses at rates faster than we can perceive. Here I distinguish between the self, which is unified, and the awareness of self that we experience as the ego, which is not unified but can be splintered like sunlight on waves. The second property is wholeness: the entirety of life's experience is brought to each moment of action. The experiences of games and dancing are generalized and continually built upon. It includes an effort, described by Aristotle and again by Goethe two centuries ago, as a blind, organic striving toward realizing our full potential within the constraints of heredity and environment. The third property of intentionality is purpose or intent, because, whether athletes and dancers are aware of it or not, their actions are directed to some end.

So perception is a continuous and mostly unconscious process that is sampled and marked intermittently by awareness, and what we remember are the samples, not the process. The fact that consciousness need not enter into the description of intentionality opens a new vista. Consciousness is not a good place to start a theory of brain function. . . [page 18]

Our unity, coherence, and completeness as individual human beings isn't enough for a Christian or Jew, though it might well be the ultimate goal for a virtuous pagan or some others.

A Jew seeks to enter a communion with his fellow Jews, to become an Israel-*Mensch* or a completed Jew, within the People of Israel. That Body will be in a close communion with the God of Abraham.

A Christian seeks to become a member of the Body of Christ, still retaining fully his individual human being but also attaining a communal human being within that Body. This is similar to the ideal of God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, where the three divine Persons remain individuals but are one God. Each member of the Body of Christ is the body in the small and the Body is each member in the large, though mostly its Head: Jesus Christ.

Part II

The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God's Creation

5 What Means ‘Re-creation’?

In an older dictionary from a more literate period of our Modern Age, ‘re-creation’ is defined as follows:

Re-creation A forming anew; a new creation or formation. [1913 Webster [29]]

The hyphen makes all the difference. Without that little mark, the definition becomes:

Recreation The act of recreating, or the state of being recreated; refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil; amusement; diversion; sport; pastime. [1913 Webster [29]]

I have chosen to use the hyphen in the title of this part of the book but the meaning I intend has elements of both ‘re-creation’ and ‘recreation’. Let me try to give a dictionary-style definition:

Re-creation An effort to understand the Creator’s acts-of-being by both playful and serious imitation of God in His freely chosen role as Creator of this particular Creation which includes this particular world in which we mortal men live and die.

I could forge a long chain of definitions in this effort to refocus our thoughts and to encourage new thoughts, but that isn’t the best way to lead most readers through this sort of an effort. Yet, the term *act-of-being* is so important that I’ll propose one more definition before moving on to my preferred way of developing ideas, using a semi-narrative and digressive style.

act-of-being An act by which God brings to existence some-thing or some 'raw' stuff where nothing existed or by which He sustains created being or by which He shapes created being. God is His own Act-of-being, the supreme Act-of-being.

It's incumbent upon me to explain how it is that a mere man could imitate God in His role as Creator. Can we bring something to exist where there was nothing? No, for various reasons including the rather obvious truth that we're born as creatures of concrete substance. We exist as particular creatures in which created being from abstract and concrete realms are focused in a social creature of flesh and blood. We have concrete substance and relational aspects, the prior from this readily perceived realm of concrete being and the latter from various realms of abstract being. Yet, all concrete being is shaped from more abstract forms of created being and those abstract forms of created being remain even in the most seemingly inert of physical objects, rocks and interstellar gas clouds.

In some past writings, I provided a diagram to help me present my claims that our understanding of our own moral natures can be enriched by borrowing from modern science. For example, I had noticed that we speak of our moral paths through life in Euclidean terms but those terms seem inadequate for human beings who live in societies grown tremendously complex and rich. In addition, we seem to inhabit a world in which some sort of basic stuff was shaped from strange and abstract stuff in the early fractions of a second after our universe began to expand out of the so-called Big Bang. That basic stuff was then subjected to various shaping processes at different scales of spacetime, evolutionary processes and other sorts of developmental processes.

Based upon all of this, I speculate that created being is shaped from the extremely abstract truths manifested by God as the raw stuff of this Creation through more particular and less abstract realms up to the very concrete, thing-like being of our universe. I present the following diagram in the hope this makes my claim clearer and more plausible:

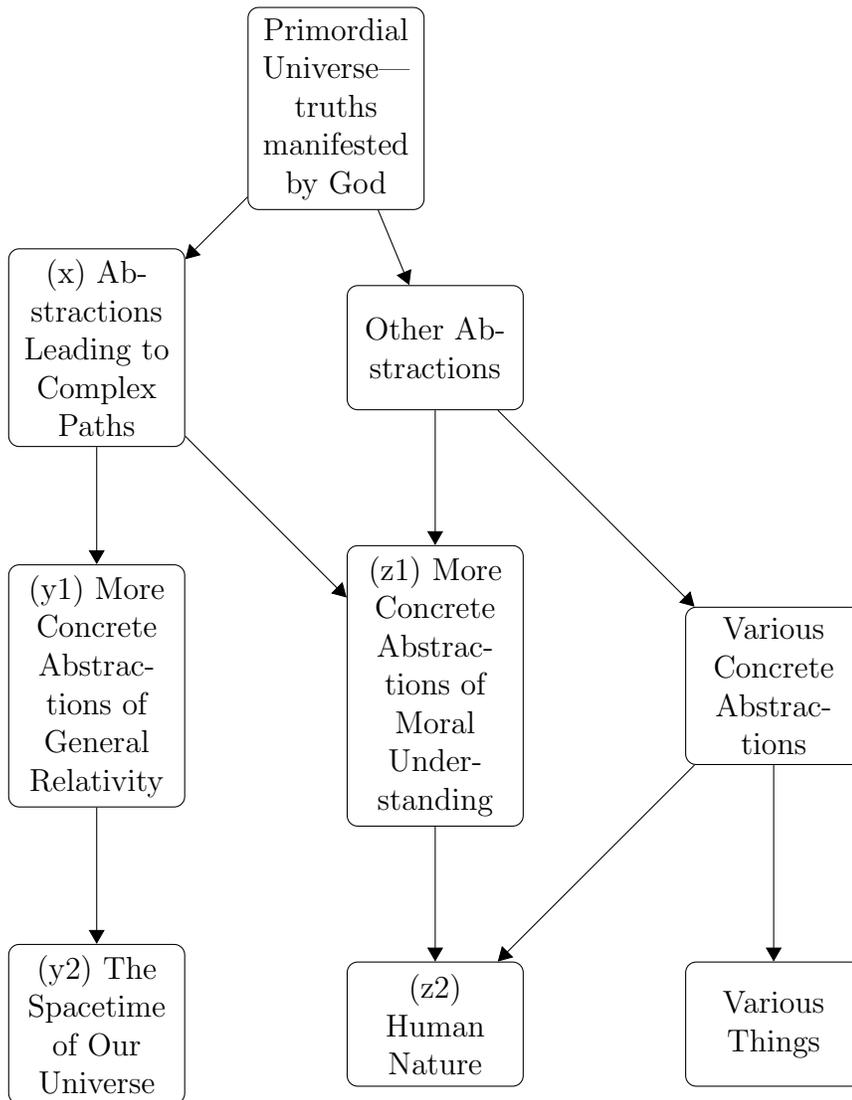


Figure 5.1: Simple Relationships of Abstract and Concrete Levels of Being

This issue of the spectrum of being, abstract to concrete is very important, part of the new foundations that modern Christians need for producing what I call a worldview, a very expansive understanding of all of Creation, at least all that we can know about or plausibly speculate about. This worldview includes a narrative understanding of this world and an understanding of the greater narrative which covers all of Creation. This worldview also necessarily contains metaphysical understandings of being and a basic theological framework carried over from revealed knowledge, dogmas.

The diagram above is misleading in one way. It might imply some Platonic realm in which exists ideals such as ‘dog’ or ‘man’, the world of Ideals (or Reals, the language flips and flops over the centuries), the world in which complex entities have what might be called Ideal Prototypes. A simple diagram for Platonic concepts of being is:

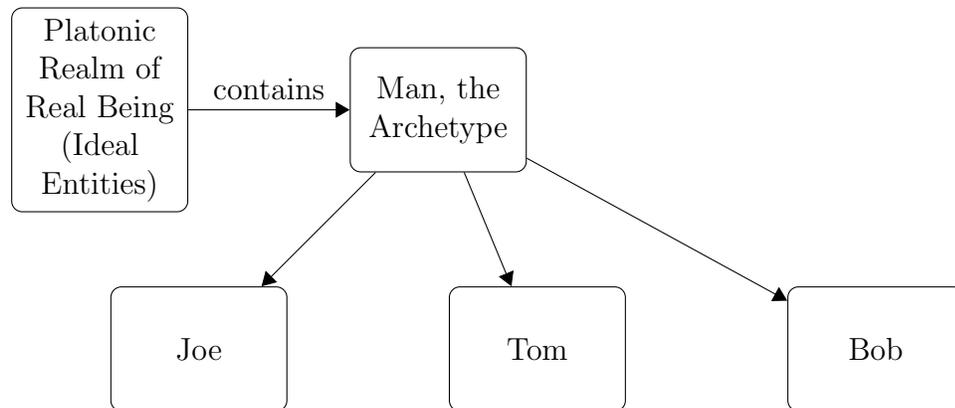


Figure 5.2: Platonist Particular Entities **Do** Come From a Single Archetype

In my multi-layered view of being, there is no prototype for men in the realms of more abstract being. A simple diagram gives but a flavor of what is involved in a world where being flows in from more abstract realms and is subjected to various evolutionary and developmental processes:

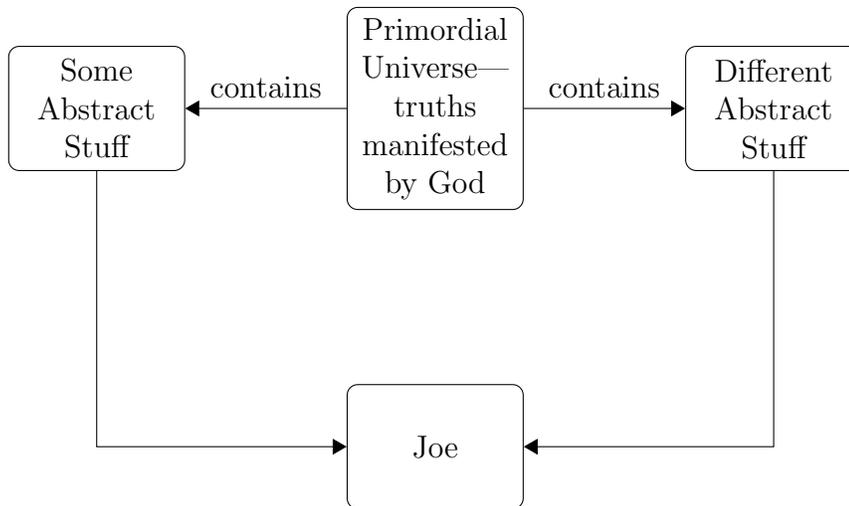


Figure 5.3: Particular Entities **Don't** Come From a Single Archetype

The main point of this is that there is an ongoing flow of being from abstract realms into this universe, this realm of concrete being. Each thing, no matter how mundane or seemingly simple, is shaped from a complex of different forms of being going deep into realms of abstract being.

At the same time, currently available empirical evidence and theoretical arguments tell us there was a special flow of certain fundamental forms related to the beginning of the current expansionary phase of this universe. Did this universe exist as such before it began to expand? If the physical stuff which we know as the matter, energy, and fields of this universe did exist before the so-called Big Bang, was it already embedded in relationships with the forms of abstract being which lead to what might be called the 'immaterial' aspects of this world?

Imagination is necessary to provide the speculative glues which bind empirical knowledge and revealed knowledge into the various understandings which correspond to our metaphysical and narrative understandings of human being, of star being, of the universe as container and as a unique

entity on its own, of—most importantly—the world which is the universe seen as the morally purposeful story which God is telling.

We inhabit a universe which exists as a particular universe with concrete substance. We can’t possibly so much as imagine regions of nothingness. The very fact that we must speak as if nothingness is in a ‘region’ to be ‘reached’ should indicate the sheer impossibility. We can’t deal with existence in the primary sense as can I-am. All that exists truly and without qualification is God, who is a pure Act-of-being. Created being, contingent being including concrete and thing-like being, is made up of objects of God’s attention; they are acts-of-being, manifestations of specific thoughts of God in His freely chosen role of Creator. This doesn’t mean that all such entities are ‘objects’ in a concrete sense, but that’s an important complication which I have to approach indirectly.

I’ve made the claim in various writings that modern science indicates that matter is frozen energy, low-temperature energy. More recently, I’ve even adopted a sound-bite of sorts: matter is frozen soul-stuff. More exactly: matter and energy were shaped from some strangely abstract stuff. Sometimes I’ll try to restate my ideas by writing fresh words without referring back to words from an earlier chapter or an earlier book. Rather than doing that here, I’ll quote from my book, *Four Kinds of Knowledge*, a book freely available on the Internet at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/know.pdf> [11].

In my first published book, *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9], I traveled back in time to the Big Bang and then beyond. I’ll not repeat that journey here, but I’ll say that the first step in my contemplations about the nature of this universe was to note that astrophysical observations of fossil remains of the early universe and particle physics experiments here on earth tell us that at high temperatures or—equivalently—at high densities, matter and energy and fields begin melting down into a smaller number of classes or types of ‘things’.

Moving forward in time, I said in *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9]: “When the temperature cooled down to a certain point, the stuff of our universe went through phase changes much like that of water cooling down and suddenly becoming a different state of matter—ice. In the case of what is called the electroweak force, cooling caused it to change state so that it

partially froze into the hotter, or higher-energy, electromagnetic force and the cooler, or lower-energy, weak nuclear force. One specific symmetry was broken.” In this statement, I intended to say that both forces were much cooler than the electroweak force but weak nuclear force is hotter, or more energetic, than electromagnetic force. [The quotation is from the second edition, [11] but it has been corrected because that second edition, [11] had an error: I had formatted it to turn a summary of several paragraphs from *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9] into a quote. I also got the relationship between the weak nuclear force and the electromagnetic force backwards.]

Little is known about the state of the various entities which existed at the extremely high densities which occurred in the first thousandths of a second after the expansion of our universe began but I hypothesized in general agreement with speculations in theoretical physics that the melt-down continues. I have taken no hard position on the state of the entire universe at time 0 or on ways of avoiding a mathematically disastrous singularity, though I have speculated on what happens on the ‘other side’ of that ‘singularity’ where the entire universe was so highly compressed. By ‘mathematically disastrous singularity’, I mean only that we can’t calculate anything by current understandings of mathematics. This may be a true limit to mathematics which human beings can deal with or one caused by lack of knowledge of a more expanded human mathematics. There are various schemes worked up by physicists to deal with that ‘singularity’ and not all are consistent with my proposal but one interesting idea is that time and space as we know it don’t exist on the other side of the Big Bang.

General relativity has sometimes been summarized, in a formula attributed to the physicist John Wheeler, as follows:

Matter shapes space which then tells matter how to move.

What is space without shape? Yet, if matter shapes space, what was true in the very early fractions of a second of the current expansionary phase of the universe? Did space exist without shape? That might make sense in light of the more abstract views of modern geometry but it makes no sense in light of traditional understandings of geometry and space. Matter, as we know it, thing-like stuff, didn’t exist and it’s hard to

imagine what it means to speak of space when no concrete matter existed. Whatever stuff existed was neither stable nor thing-like, but rather stuff that was in something of a self-interaction that continuously erased any particular physical states. There was no here and no there, no left and no right, no up and no down. Even when matter came into tentative existence, there would have been various sorts of particles but no particular particles because each particle of a given type occupied the same physical state.

I contemplated these confusing, even disorienting, facts and speculations, along with many others from the world of modern empirical knowledge, in light of Thomistic existentialism, including the insight that:

Things are true.

From there, I developed my own ideas on the stuff from which this universe was shaped by first noting the ties between thing-like being and truths. Things are true and, I added, “Truths are thing-like in being.” That is, I began to wonder if God had created truths as we know them. I began to wonder if those strange states of being which may have preceded thing-like being were manifested truths of ‘substance-ness’ and ‘here-ness’ in the process of becoming concrete and particular—thing-like.

Soon enough I’d expanded my worldview to include the basic stuff of Creation, the Primordial Universe, a manifestation of the truths God chose for Creation, the source of the being of this particular universe with its thing-like being. Details can be found in my first book, *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9] or in various writings at my weblogs:

- *Acts of Being* [8] which also has several nonfiction books and a greater number of novels available for download and free personal use, and
- *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [10].

As we explore and respond to God’s Creation, we’re like children watching our father go about his work. As our father picks up a wrench to tighten the connections on batteries, we, with no knowledge of electricity or the principles of internal combustion engines, pick up a plastic wrench or a stick and try to imitate his movements. We may even pick up a few words, such as ‘battery’ or ‘short’ or a few curse-words. As our Father in Heaven shapes this universe, we follow with our various tools, those of the mathematician and theoretical physicist, those of the poet and musician,

and those of the farmer and mechanic. We re-create by struggling to understand what God did, by learning to praise God as Creator, by shaping His world in the small-scale and by nurturing life.

This is what St. Thomas Aquinas had to say about this issue:

[J]ust as a disciple reaches an understanding of the teacher’s wisdom by the words he hears from him, so man can reach an understanding of God’s wisdom by examining the creatures [God] made. . . (Page 17 of St. Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *1 Corinthians* [1].)

We reach an understanding of God’s wisdom by “examining the creatures He made,” but we do still more than that. We form our minds in response to empirical reality. The regions and activities of the human brain which are the foundation of our individual minds and our intellects—our communal minds, were shaped in their general capabilities and constraints by way of responses that many generations of apish creatures made to their environments. The creatures that made adequate, proper or lucky, responses were able to live to reproduce. That formation of the human mind at the species level is encapsulated in our genes which provide for a substantial preformation of the brain. That preformation of the brain is the single most important foundation of the mind. I repeat the important fact that those genes themselves are the results of the responses by our ancestors over immense amounts of time. In this book, I’ll sometimes write as if the entire development of the human mind occurs during an individual lifetime, though the development is three-fold, occurring over eons at the level of human communities and over years at the individual level, both of those developmental processes occurring on top of the evolutionary changes that resulted in human being and those evolutionary changes took vast amounts of time, billions of years going right back to the primeval forms of terrestrial life.

As will be true at other points, I speak in an overly simple way that the argument not be burdened unduly. In fact, the formation of all parts of the human body, including the brain, is not due entirely to our genes, but also to other factors such as the chemical signals our mothers’ bodies send into the womb. The importance of soma (body) as given us by our mothers is a key issue not yet fully understood and still being studied actively. I’ll also be adding the complication of the formation of social intelligence,

intellect defined by Jacques Barzun as “capitalized and communal intelligence” [3]. It is this intellect which is the result of developmental changes at the communal level.

One way to make the transition to this view of the mind is to think of a human mind as both container and contents, an entity in which the contents tell the container how to shape itself and the container tells the contents how to position themselves and how to form relationships. I could even say the human mind is movement and what moves and what is moved. This implies that our minds are very crude approximations of He who is His own Act-of-being ¹. By coming to understand the Creator’s thoughts, we make them our own, we come to think along with God, to think as God thinks. As God has created, we re-create, in very small realms and in very imperfect ways. But our re-creations are for real. An abstract thinker such as myself looks behind and under and over the stuff and events of ordinary life, but Fred Astaire re-created the movement of matter and a bricklayer re-creates God’s shaping of mountains and stars and William Wordsworth re-created the sheer joy of God at His own Creation.

Our acts of re-creation are imitation but also a participation in God’s acts-of-being, the acts by which He has created the raw stuff of created being from nothingness, the acts by which He shapes that raw stuff into particular things including human beings, and the acts by which He continuously sustains in being that which He has created.

¹This will also be subject to complexification and complication when I claim heart and hands as aspects which have to be studied alongside mind.

6 The Wisdom of the World and The Wisdom of God

6.1 What is Wisdom?

In *The American Story* [13], Garet Garret speculates powerfully:

Wisdom is the fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge.

Ahhh, but what does it mean to know? And how can I endorse a statement which casts into doubt wisdom so honored in the Bible? Isn't wisdom a trait attributed to God Himself? Many human traits are attributed to God, including our creative powers. That doesn't mean that God's power of creating things and the underlying basic stuff of created being are well described by a potter's efforts, nor even those of a storyteller. God's knowledge is also not well described by the sort of "fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge" found in such sages as Plato or St. Basil the Great. True philosophers, true lovers of *wisdom*, seek to know in the way of God, a knowing that goes beyond the sort of knowledge possible to mortal men.

This seems a bit like gibberish. And it probably is. We need to understand what it means to know. (See *Four Kinds of Knowledge* [11] for a very preliminary attempt to understand human knowledge.)

In the old testament, "to know your wife" meant to be intimate with her, including that form of intimacy which is the sex act, but not restricted to that act. In general, the ancient Hebrews and the ancient Greeks, at least those in the line of Plato and Aristotle, used "to know" in the sense of an intimacy, a profound communion, even an act, a doing. Knowledge, to modern man, is often no more than an organized form of data of the sort which can be stored in computer memory.

Knowledge of the sort which is mechanically processed data isn't usually worth much even when it's fresh, but wisdom, as I've defined it, is also not of permanent worth except for its usefulness in guiding us to a better sort of knowledge. Wisdom, like faith and hope, will pass away when no longer needed while perfect knowledge is one aspect of love. To know one's wife isn't just to have sex with her but to love her in a more complete way. To know God is to love Him just as His perfect knowledge of us is His love of us.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.

...

So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. [1 Corinthians 13:8 [30].]

But let me speak of knowledge of an imperfect sort, knowledge which is growing and being enriched. This imperfect but true knowledge deals with this world in terms of what can be learned by empirical investigation while prophecy deals with God's revelations of His transcendent Being and also of His revelations of His purposes for Creation. We must remember that even God's revelations come to the physical creature called 'man' by empirically investigable pathways which lead to changes to that empirically investigable entity called the 'human body'.

I've stated in slightly different contexts, that the physical world becomes a morally ordered narrative when we at least try to see that world in light of God's purposes. I'll give an example.

Man, viewed as a natural animal, is somewhat reluctant to kill or seriously harm members of his own species. Some have trouble killing members of other species which have human-like traits, even so much as soft eyes which are similar to those of a human baby. We have far from an absolute barrier against killing other human beings. Wolves, despite their reputation, are more reluctant to kill other members of their own species than men are to kill other human beings. In this sense, wolves are morally superior to human beings, at least so far as instincts go, yet, men have substantial moral instincts. From these instincts and from man's other physical aspects

and his context, we can derive by legitimate reasoning a strong and natural inclination under which human life has high value and we all have strong obligations to treat each other with respect, to at least avoid taking each other's lives. That's about all that can be established with certainty using well-disciplined reasoning applied to the known empirical facts of man and his environments. More can only be established by working with some understanding of this world as a story. (See *Human Rights: An Evolutionary and Christian Perspective* [12] for my attempt to do exactly that, establish a greater understanding of human rights as being real but the result of evolutionary and cultural developments rather than given at the largely imaginary beginning of the human race.)

Our knowledge of human beings and the environments in which we live has grown greatly in volume and in conceptual richness, though Creation and its entities has been increasingly stripped of that purposeful ordering which comes from Biblical commandments and other revelations. We've piled up vast mountains of partially processed knowledge about human evolution and human perceptions and human thought processes. Those who follow the 'traditions' of natural law seem to me to be antique-dealers who wish us to pay them good money for some strange objects from ancient Athens and Medieval Paris. In a sense, those objects are worth much but only so they can be stored respectfully in a museum where they can be studied by scholars. We shouldn't try to use the metal-working tools of the ancient Canaanites nor the farming implements of 13th century peasants from the Po Valley. Nor should we try to understand ourselves and to organize our communities according to our traditions of natural law.

Our efforts to understand the Word of God also involve wisdom, that "fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge." We can't truly place our selves even in the place of the authors and redactors of the books of the Bible, let alone in the place of God as He spoke with them. We don't even know the true meanings of some of the words or the true background to the stories, nor do we know clearly what God is saying to us. Let's consider war. The fifth commandment, "You shall not murder" and various commandments including those which limit vengeance commit Christians to at least the constraints of just-war. We need, at the very least, to have a just-cause for going to war and to never deliberately attack a civilian target. Christ Himself seemed to expand the commandment to cover even hateful thoughts (at least if we nurture them and thus shape ourselves as embodiments of hatred) and He refused to even defend Himself against the High Priests and the Ro-

mans. Does this give reason to expand Christian limits on violent acts to such extremes as radical non-resistance? It opens up the possibility, but we simply don't know for sure. Even so strong an advocate for non-resistance as John Howard Yoder admitted that just-war theory is intellectually coherent, though he also claimed that just wars seem an impossibility under modern political conditions [33]. Yet, I believe that just-war theory would be enriched and strengthened by honest consideration of the reasons some Christians advocate radical non-resistance.

Holy Scripture, the revelation of God through inspired authors, tells us of strong limitations upon our acts of violence toward one another but revelation doesn't provide us with a crystal-clear recipe nor with a large number of examples which we could generalize. Our knowledge is imperfect and we stumble along, trying to make conjectures in matters where only God has perfect knowledge. Those conjectures which seem to us to carry some serious truth are labeled as 'wise'. This view of 'wisdom' being a clouded and incomplete knowledge holds even in science, for example, Einstein's principle of "just as much simplicity in theories as is possible and no more," or the general assumption of esthetic principles in forming theories, such as the assumption that the foundational stuff of the universe is symmetric in basic ways. Those sorts of principles might very well correspond to truths of this Creation of God, but they, in their current form, certainly aren't clear or complete; they are wisdom rather than perfect knowledge.

Yet, while human knowledge and human prophecy in this mortal realm are both quite imperfect, they can tend toward the perfect forms of knowledge and prophecy. To prophesy is to speak truly of God and of His love and His laws. It is a way of speaking God's truths and it will certainly not pass away in the world of the resurrected so much as it will be perfected. At that time, knowledge of Creation, of ourselves and others, of the meaning of time and space and matter, of morality and narrative, will be perfected. Faith and hope will have disappeared. What sense does it make to have faith that God exists when you live in His presence? What sense does it make to hope for God's mercy when you've already received it?

Each resurrected human being might still have only a tiny share in the perfected knowledge held by the Lord Jesus Christ, but it will be complete in its communal form—when we include the Head of the Body of Christ, the Son of God Himself. Each resurrected human being will have a share of the perfect knowledge of Creation and of the Creator. Wisdom, in the sense of a "fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge," will be a remembrance of

things past.

And, yet, we use the word *wisdom* to hint of some sort of understanding which passes beyond empirical knowledge, and that is a legitimate usage of the word so long as we properly qualify that usage—if only silently in our minds. I’ll use wisdom in that positive sense from here on in unless I specifically say otherwise.

6.2 Defining Wisdom

To know a woman is to actively love her, to act properly toward her, to have the proper feelings toward her, and to share some sort of common understanding of the relationship and of each other. To know anything is to have some ‘data’ in one’s head but it’s also integrates it into our total human nature, our thoughts and feelings and acts. In the end, it’s to feel something about it, to have not just thoughts about it but thoughts corresponding to it, and then to do something proper.

There’s no static knowledge separate from this more complete and very dynamic knowing—they’re one. Even when it comes to data stored on a computer, it’s not knowledge until someone makes use of it. This is not a mere gloss on our ways of knowing, thinking, and doing, but rather a profoundly different understanding of mind compared to an understanding based upon “data-as-knowledge” and an allegedly separate “capacity to make due use of it.” But it is an understanding of “knowledge” already well-established in mathematics where it’s a cliché that the student should always have a notepad at his side and a pencil in hand when reading mathematical works. Even in mathematics, doing is knowing which is itself doing and this becomes possible only with the proper attitude, the proper feelings and emotions toward the task of learning mathematics. The most complete statement is: living is knowing is living.

As St. Thomas Aquinas claimed in the 13th century, as William James largely claimed in the late 1800s, as brain-scientists are claiming in our day, a human being forms his mind by actively responding to his environments. By “actively responding,” I mean that the human being doesn’t just react to what has happened. He anticipates and pursues. He actively explores. When caught by a surprise event, he learns to anticipate similar events. Even when trying to learn the skills of writing, he keeps that same pencil in hand that serves him well in mathematics. Following in the paths of

Abraham Lincoln, the genius of language, he learns the rhythms and usages of the English language by copying passages in *Hamlet*. He memorizes, imitating the doer by way of memorizing so that he can repeat the act and maybe eventually do something good on his own. He does that which our modern educational system teaches him not to do.

The modern educational theorists, though not themselves accomplished in any meaningful field of study, know that memorizing is a silly and useless activity. Others have known and know that memorization can play an important role in shaping our minds to the great writers and speakers and thinkers of Western Civilization or other civilizations. Or to the Bible. These others have known and know that it is a profoundly useful activity. We modern men of the West know only that we should leave the minds of our children clear so they can memorize the lyrics of modern pop-songs or lists of baseball sluggers or biographical summaries of celebrities famous for being famous.

The true form of stupidity isn't lack of abstract reasoning ability, certainly not that sometimes admirable refusal to deal with textbook knowledge, but rather a passiveness toward the surrounding environment, including the inability or refusal to turn experience into significant knowledge. And passiveness is what's demanded in most modern educational settings.

We are born with a capacity for developing a human mind, a capacity which is not due to a supernatural substance nor to an unexplainable trait of human beings but rather to the human brain which evolved as our ancestors responded to their environments and met with reproductive success or failure. Our cousins, such as those which were in the family line of chimpanzees, settled down into niches as they responded less aggressively to opportunities and problems than did the apes in the human line or they might have been driven into those niches by the ancestors of modern human beings. In either case, those in the human line began to slowly shape their behaviors and their justifications for those behaviors to fit with their environments—at least those did who were in family lines which reproduced successfully. Vast regions of created being were suddenly opened to human exploration.

The regions of light were, more or less, considered to be wisdom in the form of explicit knowledge, and the regions of darkness—in the sense of obscurity, were considered to be wisdom of a mystical sort. We guessed at what might be in those regions of dark according to the fate of those entities which entered and came back. We judged by what came out of

those regions of dark.

There are no dark regions where God is concerned. If He is truly the God of Moses, the God of Jesus Christ, He—so to speak—sees all regions of created being. I qualify the prior statement only because it's more accurate to speak in terms of acts-of-being where God is actually and actively present in all regions of created being, as Creator. He doesn't see; He is present. In fact, He is always at work bringing those regions into existence.

Let me attempt to define wisdom so that we can consider perfect wisdom to be perfect knowledge and imperfect wisdom to be a combination of true knowledge and interpolations to cover regions of ignorance. The reader should also keep in mind my claim that knowledge is more than the sorts of data which can be stored on a computer.

Here's a definition of God's own wisdom concerning contingent being:

Wisdom of God Perfect knowledge of all that exists or could have existed.

And here's my shot at a working definition of human wisdom:

Human Wisdom An understanding of Creation and its relationship to its Creator which embodies the best available empirical knowledge by reshaping a human being, orienting the resulting man to think and feel and act in conformance with the divine purposes given by one's understanding of the Creator's revelations.

It's not just the brain which is reshaped but rather the entire human being, but I'll often speak in the more limited way.

Even the most absolute of truths need to be stated in terms of a human mind which is part of Creation and develops in response to its environments. This argues against any form of Fundamentalism, including Biblical Literalism which pretends the all-too human words of the Bible somehow float free of culture and individual idiosyncrasy. The delusion of Literalism leads many to try to read a text, written in human language, as containing the fullness of the Creator's wisdom. There is another way to read the Bible or other sacred texts, where the reader is careful to honor the intentions of the human authors who were being inspired by God. Even beyond that, you should try to hear what God said to those human authors rather than being restricted to what they could say as children of their ages. Moreover,

you should try to hear what God is saying to you now through the events of your life and through the world around you. Our understanding of Creation and, hence, our understanding of God in His freely chosen role as Creator, should always be developing to keep up with the advancement of empirical knowledge, the best of our knowledge of Creation and the development of the human mind which comes as a proper response to that knowledge.

Above all, we must remember that God freely took upon Himself a specific role by bringing into existence a specific Creation. Often when I refer to the ‘Creator’, I mean not the transcendent God in His necessary being but rather God as He appears to His creatures through His works, or through His effects upon our world as a Scholastic might have said. Since this Creation represents but an infinitesimally small proportion of all that is possible to God, we have a very limited view of God even if we were capable of seeing all of Creation. We certainly can’t see God in His necessary Being and we know that He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit only because He told us, but that doesn’t matter because we men shape ourselves to be images of God in the Almighty’s contingent, freely-chosen role as Creator. We can’t be images of God in His necessary Being but we have been blessed with the capability to shape ourselves to imitate God in His role as Creator of this particular Creation.

There is a good analogy for the point I’m driving toward. Think of a mother and her child. That child has a limited view of that woman, to her that woman is perceived only as ‘Mommy’ when she’s an infant and still mostly as ‘Mommy’ for years after that. Even as a teenager, she’ll have trouble wrapping her mind around the image of her mother as having been Grandpa’s little princess or a young woman who’d dated that nice man who owns the restaurant on Main Street. That woman’s true being includes her decision to properly play the role of ‘Mommy’, yet, she is more than that.

God is infinitely more than His freely-chosen role as Creator of a very particular Creation, but that role is fully compatible with His greater and necessary Being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one God. Part of God’s role as Creator is to teach those He has chosen to be companions to His Son, and He teaches first and foremost by the example of His Son incarnate as a mortal man but also in His acts as Creator.

As Aquinas said, we learn the wisdom of God by studying His creatures, including those creatures named Moses and Isaiah. Creatures they were and they spoke God’s truth to the extent they could fit it into their minds and their languages. Our minds have continued to develop in the centuries since

Moses walked up Mt. Sinai. We've shaped our racial mind to the Creator, just a tiny bit better, so that our all-too human minds can range over higher levels of infinity and the strange behavior of subatomic particles, can range over the history of man's struggles for freedom and self-expression in the Modern Age, can range over the possibilities beyond those given to us by Homer and David and Dryden and Hopkins, can range over—perhaps most importantly at the moment—the self-awareness of peoples and the entirety of the human race given to us by Herodotus and Gibbon and Newman and Pelikan. Newman and Pelikan are so important at this stage in my discussion because of their awareness of this need to express even the most absolute of truths in the concepts and languages available to the one who is thinking or speaking or writing. They are important as prophets to human minds awakening to God's Creation as modern men can now see it, far greater and grander than even Augustine and Maimonides and Aquinas could have imagined.

Even the necessary truths God revealed about Himself must be restated in fresh language that makes sense to our views of reality. In other words, as the very name 'Creator' implies, we see God in His role as the Creator of a specific Creation. When our inherited ways of speaking of God as Creator no longer make sense in light of our knowledge of Creation, founded upon empirical knowledge from physics and mathematics and history and biology, then our faith is endangered. Christians believe God is the Creator. If this world seems other than one likely to have been created by the God of Jesus Christ, then our faith is endangered. And so it is that a lot of Christians have lost their faith. After all, they live in a world difficult to reconcile with the sermons or homilies they might hear on Sunday, difficult to reconcile with the lessons in their Sunday School or CCD classes.

This raises three issues:

1. The very unity of Creation which I advocate makes it impossible to speak of the structure of Creation one level at a time when our views of Creation need to be reformulated at nearly all levels. We certainly can't speak easily of one room or one piece of furniture at a time until we know the role that room or furniture could play in the greater scheme of housing.
2. That very unity of Creation can only be seen within a corresponding understanding of human knowledge, revelations and empirical knowl-

edge gained by exploration of Creation. The human being shapes his mind by responding properly to empirical reality, including the abstract aspects of reality which arise when we struggle to penetrate the mysteries of concrete being in this world or in parts or aspects of the world. This puts my views in very direct and irreconcilable conflict with modern views on specialization and the partitioning into separate realms of knowledge.

3. New words and phrases, sometimes perhaps new tenses or other bits of grammar, have to eventually develop to speak truly new insights, but this is something that takes time and is largely invisible to most human beings in most locations and most ages. This sort of process might even be largely hidden to the active creators of those new words and tenses, however much they might be aware of their own frustration at trying to say the unsayable. A deep incoherence in our understanding of Creation can cause or exacerbate what some have called an alienation of man from his world, for creative wordsmiths and insurance brokers alike.

The time is right to enrich Christian understandings of God's Creation and of the Creator in His freely chosen actions of creating contingent being and then shaping that created being. These understandings of God's Creation and of His own freely chosen actions are nowadays known as 'science'. Yet, Christian philosophers, theologians, and Biblical exegetes are little concerned with such matters as Einstein's redefinition of 'space' and 'time' or Cantor's redefinition of 'infinity'; they remain unaware that Kolmogorov and Chaitin redefined 'randomness' in the 1960s as a matter of algorithmic complexity. Algorithmic complexity in the realm of knowledge would seem to correspond to a sort of factuality in the realm of being.

If we do nothing more at first than to try to restate the speculative parts of Christian beliefs to account for this updated view of God's Creation, we will produce a greatly enriched understanding of that Creation. Moreover, such enriched understandings allow new insights into the revelations of God as regards His necessary being.

The oft-noted historical consciousness of modern men allows us to see thinkers such as Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, and Newton in historical context, not only allowing us to see their time-bound knowledge for what it is, magnificent but no longer fully plausible, but also allowing us to recover

some remarkable insights from great thinkers by trying to converse with them rather than reading their books as dictations of dogmatic systems.

The better thinkers of the modern world, Albert Einstein as well as John Henry Newman, have gained much insight by being able to see their predecessors in the context of their time. Newman, as historian of Christian thought, is interesting because he explicitly realized how time-bound are statements of even the most absolute truths. To read Irenaeus, an early historian of heresies as well as arguably the first Christian systematic theologian, in the context of his time is an act of engagement with the past, an act which will lead to some degree of reshaping of the modern historian's own mind. This is far different from a pretense that a mind is some sort of intellectual processor that simply evaluates knowledge the way that a calculator evaluates numerical data. The man who disciplines his mind to understand Plato or Irenaeus or Aquinas in his historical context will receive a strong and humbling hint that even our modern ability to partially transcend historical viewpoints and engage in a meta-analysis is itself time-bound. I would also suggest that only a small percentage of recent thinkers have managed to use the modern consciousness of historical change to even partially transcend the parochial visions of a particular place and time.

Back in the 13th century, Aquinas knew how to come to an understanding of created being though many of his specific arguments and conclusions can now be seen as deficient due to lack of empirical knowledge or as deformed due to his errors, perhaps caused by that inadequate empirical knowledge and perhaps due to his mortal and fallible self. I suspect even Aquinas never thought that created being could be so radically different and so much richer than what we could guess from our ordinary everyday experiences. He certainly would have been surprised by such modern fields of study as differential geometry, transfinite set theory, the theories of relativity, genetic studies, and quantum physics. He would have perhaps been far more surprised by modern empirical data-gathering and analysis of the Bible and of Church history. Based upon my expansion and updating of Thomistic theories of the human mind, I can claim that the results of these fields of study can become truly human knowledge only when we respond to modern knowledge in such a way that our minds are reshaped to the frightening strangeness of quantum mechanics and the intimidating abstractness of space and time in modern theories of physical being such as the theories of relativity. Modern empirical knowledge can become part of a Christian worldview only when we Christians are willing to become that disciple who

“can reach an understanding of God’s wisdom by examining the creatures He made. . .”

J.C. Polkinghorne is an insightful thinker, a man who was first a distinguished theoretical physicist and then an Anglican priest and college administrator. In *The Quantum World* [26], he expressed what I think to be a profound and likely true proposal:

The wavefunction is the vehicle of our understanding of the quantum world. Judged by the robust standards of classical physics it may seem a rather wraith-like entity. But it is certainly the object of quantum mechanical discourse and, for all the peculiarity of its collapse, its subtle essence may be the form that reality has to take on the atomic scale and below. Anyone who has had to teach a mathematically based subject will know the difficulties which students encounter in negotiating a new level of abstraction. They have met the idea of a vector as a crude arrow. You now explain to them that it is better thought of as an object with certain transformation properties under rotation. ‘But what is it *really*?’ they say. You implore them to believe that it is an object with certain transformation properties under rotation. They do not believe you; they think that you are holding back some secret clue that would make it all plain. Time and experience are great educators. A year later the student cannot conceive why he had such difficulty and suspicion about the nature of vectors. Perhaps we are in the midst of a similar, if much longer drawn out, process of education about the nature of quantum mechanical reality. If we are indeed in such a digestive, living-with-it, period, it would explain something which is otherwise puzzling. A great many theoretical physicists would be prepared to express some unease about the conceptual foundations of quantum mechanics—in particular, about Copenhagen orthodoxy—but only a tiny fraction of them ever direct serious attention to such questions. Perhaps the majority are right to submit themselves to a period of subliminal absorption.

For the last three decades or so of his life, Einstein waged battle against any effort to take quantum mechanics as a true description of our universe.

I'll digress, partly to be fair to Einstein and partly to make an important point. There is something wrong or incomplete about the totality of physics as we have it in quantum mechanics and general relativity, the very small and the very large or very massive. Quantum mechanics in the form of QED, or quantum electrodynamics, is the most successful of all quantitative theories we have about any aspect of reality. General relativity is probably just behind it in terms of success in dealing with some other aspects of reality. Yet, the two don't meet anywhere ¹. They can't be reconciled, at least not in any way yet tried, as being descriptions of the same universe. That is, there is something wrong if you assume that the entirety of physical theories about the thing-like stuff of this universe must be reconciled in the sense of collapsing to one unified theory, encompassing spacetime as well as matter and energy and fields.

It may well be, as I've suggested before, that quantum mechanics and general relativity can't be reconciled in that sense because they come from different streams of created being as it has flowed from more abstract forms of being toward more concrete forms. In other words, the world is a story in which the different aspects of the setting and the characters might not flow from a single well-defined set of axioms or doctrines or whatever word ends up being most appropriate.

Yet, there is also the element of sheer obstinacy in Einstein's refusal to see that, at least in some domain of physical being, quantum mechanics predicts what we would have never expected and those predictions bear out with unreasonable accuracy.

There is an explanation of Einstein's attitude which makes his famous comment, "God does not play dice," less attractive from a Christian perspective. In *Critique of Scientific Reason* [17], the philosopher Kurt Hubner claimed:

Einstein was claiming that reality consists of substances which remain unaltered by their relationships with other substances while Bohr was claiming that it is the relationships which are primary and those relationships bring substances into existence.

Einstein's position is in direct opposition to the Christian claim that relationships, such as God's love for me before I was even conceived brought

¹Yes, Stephen Hawking and others have found a meeting-point of sorts in the quantum evaporation of a black-hole, but that is a rather exotic and unusual setting.

me into existence. All of Creation, came to be as the result of God's free-will decision to love it even before it existed.

One more comment about this specific issue can be made in reinforcement of my claim we should shape our minds in response to reality, to what God has created.

In *Quantum Physics: Illusion or Reality?*, Alastair Rae adds a wrinkle to that important comment of Einstein ²:

When Einstein said that "God does not play dice", Bohr is said to have replied, "Don't tell God what to do!"

Listen to God. Listen to His direct words in the Bible and pay close attention to the Story and the stories He tells in that Holy Work. Listen to God in the traditional worship and prayer practices of His Church. Listen to God in your experiences of His world and in the results of hard thought and contemplation and empirical research as recorded in the best works of men.

Don't tell God what to do, listen to Him when He speaks in the Bible and when He speaks in the experiments and theorems of quantum physics. Listen to Him even in that story which is your own life and let your mind and all of your being be shaped or reshaped to God's words as manifested in Creation.

As is true of all human beings, we Christians shape our minds by certain responses to our environments. Unfortunately, far too many of us react to the de-Christianization of the West by shaping our own minds in parallel to the minds of those we think to be enemies. We've accepted what might be called the Spinozean theory of specialized realms of knowledge. We ask, "Physics deals with the physical matter of the universe and what has that to do with the Creator?"

Implicitly, we've denied God is the Creator. We don't think that the thoughts He manifested in the form of space-time and matter in this universe have anything to tell us about our Maker and our relationship with Him. We're willing to use the best of modern empirical knowledge when it can help solve our medical problems, when it can bring us more convenient forms of transportation, but we think that we can use sloppy or outmoded understandings of this universe when we seek to understand the Creator

²Alastair Rae notes that there's some doubt as to the "historical accuracy" of this exchange but that doesn't matter to the point I'm making.

and His work. By trying to fit archaic understandings of God's promises of salvation into the same mind that deals with stories of our apish ancestors and discoveries of ties between sexual disorders and specific genetic conditions, we've created for ourselves a nightmarish world which is little more than a somewhat arbitrary collection of environments.

There is no awareness in modern man that those environments are found within a world itself found within a greater Creation. There seems to be only sporadic awareness on the part of Modernistic Christians that they are also Modernists when they are dealing with the Christian aspects of their lives. When some of those Modernistic men enter their mode of 'Christian belief', they seem to forget that their beliefs have to make sense in light of the best available empirical knowledge because there is but one God and He is Creator of this world and we understand many aspects of this world in terms of available empirical knowledge, best or otherwise. Our understanding of the sinful nature of man has to make sense in light of man's evolutionary past. Any speculations as to the nature or meaning of sin by past Christian thinkers has to be rejected if it makes no such sense. Our understanding of the resurrection has to make sense in light of our best understandings of time, space, matter, and infinity. This doesn't mean we can explain, let alone explain away, God's promise of a resurrection for those who will be companions of His Son. It does mean that we have to tell a story covering all aspects of human life that places our mortal lives and our lives after death in the same Creation. After all, the Italian poet Danté did exactly this in his *Divine Comedy* based upon his understanding of Scholastic thought and that understanding allowed him to put hell and purgatory and heaven in the same Creation as the earth of mortal men.

Certain fundamental aspects of created being don't fit into the slots of our minds as we've chosen to shape them, relying on pre-modern or early modern schemes to organize human knowledge. By doing so, we put the Creator on the far side of an infinitely deep and wide chasm. He interacts with His own Creation by various acts of long-distance magic. Moreover, it seems to be a Creation He happened to find because it has rules and laws not adequate to His purposes, necessitating truly dramatic acts of magic. Others have gone still further astray, concluding God doesn't exist at all or maybe that He's so radically Other that it would seem impossible He cares about men or their world and maybe doesn't even know they exist.

A man, especially if he lives in a complex civilization, is shaped as he responds to a messy collection of educational systems and religious prac-

tices, entertainment and exercise customs, social relationships and other parts of his environment. If we were true to our beliefs about God, we would seek in those responses to become better images of our Creator, to shape our minds, first and foremost, so that we form proper beliefs about His work as Creator. Christian theologians and philosophers and other intellectuals and spiritual leaders should be formulating speculative systems to encompass Creation, God in His freely chosen role as Creator, and also to encompass the realm of necessary truths, God in His transcendence. We would work at this as earnestly as a physics graduate student seeks to shape his mind to the best of human empirical knowledge in that field of study. This is part of the problem, part of the wrongful view of a war between Christian beliefs and modern empirical knowledge. We Christians, as believers, are generally lazy compared to that physics graduate student. We prefer to sit passively in classrooms and have tightly structured knowledge poured into our heads or perhaps to read a work of Augustine in a passive manner rather than challenging that work and actively shaping our minds.

We must discipline our selves to respond actively to our best perceptions or second-hand knowledge of God's Creation, to the knowledge of modern biology or the knowledge given us by St. Augustine, or to our personal environments. Being lazy, we who read Augustine's books would prefer to swallow whole even the most speculative of his arguments as if those were revealed truth. We must learn to analyze and to even update the thoughts of our traditions. To accept our doctrinal heritage, our intellectual heritage in general, as if it were some sort of settled body of truths might work in some sense during periods of stable knowledge. In the modern world, it becomes a strange effort to pour Christian teachings stated in Medieval or ancient terms into minds shaped to the modern empirical knowledge. The result is truly ugly and likely painful to those victims who don't manage to escape the part of the process least important to their perceived needs in the modern world: the teaching of Christian truths.

I believe that most highly skilled practitioners of either a so-called science or a so-called art would nod their heads in agreement to the claim that they have a duty to shape themselves to the demands of their musical instrument or their skills and instruments of engineering design. It's certainly true that such a process is necessary for the fluid mental movements which make for truly creative efforts, in narrating history as well as exploring regions of abstract mathematics. And, yet, our religious instruction, in philosophical and empirical areas as well as doctrinal—even that given

to future priests and ministers, assumes that God's revelations, have to fit into the categories and relationships found in our favorite, already-existing human systems of knowledge. When we follow those Pharisaical paths, we hardly even notice the modern empirical knowledge which is part of the ways of thought and behavior of those who drive cars to Sunday worship or have their bodies scanned for signs of cancer. As I noted in the title of an essay I posted on my website years ago: we are guilty of *Taking the Fresh Fruits and Giving God the Leftovers*. That essay can be found at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=466>.

Even God's revelations are deformed as we force them to fit inside our strangely shaped minds. Those minds of our ancestors were (at least possibly) living and healthy minds formed to knowledge that was not yet archaic but fresh and vital and plausible. When we shape our minds in response to archaic knowledge in conflict with current understandings of Creation, we end up with misshaped minds and we end up as alienated either from God's Creation or from an understanding of God as Creator.

In all generations, and especially during transitional phases of civilization, thinkers have had to learn to respect empirical reality rather than rigidly adhering to the systems of thought they'd inherited. Unfortunately, the speculative thinkers who set themselves to the task of making sense of modern empirical knowledge were mostly idealists, that is, they thought of truths as largely or fully separate from thing-like being, of knowledge as something to be fitted into proper slots in a preformed mind. These thinkers were straying from the traditional philosophy of the Christian West, methodical realism. Descartes and Kant and Spinoza had decided that truth was directly accessible to some implausible entity that they considered the human mind to be. They'd rejected, explicitly or implicitly, the Christian view that, in Professor Carroll Quigley's words [27]:

The truth unfolds in time through a communal process.

I've proposed the expanded claim:

The human mind develops in time through individual and communal processes.

I'm arguing that there are deep connections, approaching some sort of equivalence, between being and mind. This isn't an Idealistic statement

of any sort. Unlike Berkeley, as he is ordinarily understood or perhaps misunderstood, I don't say the tree exists or that it falls because a mind perceives it existing or falling. I say that the tree is a manifestation of a thought of God, but that, in my metaphysics, is the definition of object. So far as the human mind goes, it gains something, is shaped a little differently, because it perceives the tree as it exists or as it falls. We shape our minds to imitate God in His acts-of-being and, thus, we begin to participate in God's life.

Those who were working explicitly as Christian theologians and philosophers and educators, most especially those who claimed to be Thomists or Augustinians, failed to adequately defend the truly traditional Christian understanding of truth and of being—at least the understanding dominant during the periods of growth in the West, though often held implicitly and not consciously. This unseen traditional view is truly fundamental to the Christian common-sense view of created being to the extent where I'll claim it's necessary for understanding the Sacraments as much as for understanding the sacramental nature of this world. The Christian understanding of created being is to be found in its fullest form in the communal mind, the developing mind of the Body of Christ, the community of those who will share life with Jesus Christ for time without end. Though I like to think I've added to this understanding of created being, my work is itself a sign that such an understanding remains alive in the communal mind of Christians, the mind of the Body of Christ, despite the evidence we're in some sort of advanced state of decay. Yet, the truly traditional understanding of knowing as starting with a child-like acceptance of what God has created is held by only a small percentage of modern Christians and few others.

Against all forms of idealism, I claim the only valid systems of human knowledge are those which are formed by free and energetic responses to God's revelations or to His Creation. In a similar vein, I claim a well-formed human mind is shaped by generous responses to God's revelation and to His Creation, those responses being at the individual and communal and species levels. Idealistic views of mind as a pre-existing entity that can access truths independent of that mind's empirical setting are bound to move on to judging God's Creation rather than learning from it.

If we were to adopt a properly empirical attitude, we might be able to develop the moral-intellectual skills and knowledge to deal with the various problems of ape-men living in huge and complex societies possessing terrible powers to rip apart the earth's surface or to destroy entire cities in a fraction

of a second or, possibly, to alter the human body in ways that are likely to be more profitable than wise. If we reshape our minds to the modern empirical knowledge which is generating our problems and our opportunities, then maybe we can be in a position where we can deal with those problems and opportunities. When we insist on trying to organize our communal, moral selves according to theories of virtues developed for ages when even great cities had a few tens of thousands of residents and political organization was akin to what was seen in the movie *The Godfather* then we should expect to be incompetent at dealing with the problems of an age where some armies have a population of warehouse clerks greater than that of Athens when Aristotle and others were telling us how to organize our political communities. For now I'll say only that many problems are created by sheer size just as many gravitational problems only arise when there is a large amount of mass.

God made us inside a specific Creation and told us to explore it and to act as His stewards in those parts which we influence, most certainly including the development of our own minds and those of our children. God didn't give us any schemes of knowledge nor did He give us some sort of non-empirical mind pre-tuned to truths which transcend Creation. He shaped our rather imperfect mental capabilities through the strange processes described by Darwin and his successors, including those who study the developing embryo or the developing brain at any age. That world in which our race evolved, and greater realms of Creation, are now ours to explore and we have no authoritative guides, no maps and no encyclopedias unless we draw or write them ourselves.

7 Broadening the Horizons of Human Reason

7.1 The Primacy of Relationships to Being and Mind

In section 6.2, *Defining Wisdom*, I wrote about Einstein's problems with quantum mechanics, much of it coming down to his reluctance to accept relationships being primary over substance. It is relationships which bring substance into being, as Bohr was arguing in an obscure way. In a seemingly separate line of arguments in my book *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9], I also argued that we're not born persons; we're born human animals and become human persons, or not, as a result of our responses to those around us, to our physical environments, and—most of all—to God.

In other words, I was already anticipating my more explicit claim that it is relationships which are primary in the viewpoint of a true and rational Christian Creationism. There are other arguments against Intelligent Design, but this is one of the strongest: Intelligent Design places substances ahead of relationships, static structures ahead of narratives. Good narratives, of course, are mostly about entities engaging in various sorts of relationships. Let us hear the Biblical version of this:

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. [1 John 4:7]

And again:

We love because He first loved us. [1 John 4:19]

We know God by way of His self-revelations and also through His effects in His Creation, through everything that exists. And both of those sets of revelations speak to us of love. If we accept the love offered by the Almighty and struggle to live up to the demands of that love, we become persons, human beings who are being born of the Spirit, that is, being reshaped to become a God-centered and morally well-structured human person. And we are changed deeply by the relationships we take on. We can accept God's love and try to order our selves in response. We can order ourselves to the satisfaction of our creaturely desires for safety and comfort or perhaps for control of our world.

In responding to relationships, certainly in accepting certain relationships and refusing or slighting others, we're not autonomous, pre-formed persons who remain unaltered. We become different creatures than we would have been if we'd made other choices. And we change others by forming relationships with them, or even offering them relationships.

7.2 Hellenistic Metaphysics is Too Small

Hellenistic metaphysics is too small for me and it should be too small for any modern man. This was the point raised by Pope Benedict XVI back on September 12, 2006, when he caused a bit of a stir in a talk at the University of Regensburg. He caused the stir because a few of his comments about barriers around the thoughts of Moslems led many to see it as an attack on Islam. A simple reading of what he said would lead to the realization that he was making a general critique of the thoughts of the modern world, most certainly including Catholic Christians. And I'll make it clear at the beginning that he was saying modern human thinkers aren't open enough to the world, not saying we should turn back to some alleged Golden Age of Christian thought.

From here, I'll address the true thrust of his speech and not those remarks which were taken out of context.

Pope Benedict stated his intention as follows:

The intention here is not one of retrenchment or negative criticism, but of broadening our concept of reason and its application.

In a speech given at a conference of academics titled *Broadening the Horizons of Reason. Prospects for Philosophy*, Pope Benedict XVI expanded his plea for openness to the modern world by telling us:

Modernity is not simply a historically-datable cultural phenomenon; in reality it requires a new focus, a more exact understanding of the nature of man. [Vatican Information Service announcement, 2008/06/07, the same date as the speech.]

Along those lines, I will argue for an enlargement of Hellenistic metaphysics by way of a proper use of modern empirical knowledge and modern efforts, failed and partially successful, to understand that knowledge in the greater terms of created being. I believe that this enlargement is possible because of the tremendous growth of empirical knowledge in recent centuries, knowledge which points to the reality which shapes the human mind and, in fact, shapes the entire human being into a truer image of God. My belief in this regard is shaped by modern scientific knowledge as well as the plausible forms of speculative knowledge based on this recent progress in physics, mathematics, geology, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience over the past few centuries. We also have learned more than some people would appreciate from the human events which have occurred since the days of the ancient Greek thinkers. Even in literature, we now see greater possibilities for the movement of the human mind and spirit than the Greeks could have realized. All of this knowledge can be pulled into a surprisingly coherent Christian worldview if we have faith that God truly is all-powerful, that the physical universe is the way He made it to be and not the result of some primordial fall from a state of grace. With this faith, we can begin to understand the universe, which becomes the world when seen as morally ordered, as a place of evolutionary and developmental processes and not the static or cyclical cosmos which was part and parcel of Hellenistic metaphysics. This is not to deny reason nor even to deny the truths given us by the ancient Greek thinkers. It is to say that Hellenistic metaphysics is too small for the God of Jesus Christ, a Creator who has shown through modern empirical knowledge that He is not limited to the systems of mathematics and logic which gave birth to the thoughts of Pythagoras and Plato and Aristotle. He is not even limited to the systems of mathematics and logic which gave birth to the thoughts of Cantor and Einstein and Planck, Heisenberg and Schrodinger and Dirac, Godel and Turing and Chaitin.

Hellenistic metaphysics is too small for modern empirical knowledge and for modern speculative knowledge such as the theories which make partial sense of our physical universe and those which have expanded our ideas of what ‘number’ is and what ‘mathematics’ is. And those physical and mathematical theories are entangled in surprising ways, though I only note that so the reader doesn’t think there is an ultimate division between speculative, or theoretical, knowledge and empirical knowledge. I addressed the issue of human knowledge in my first published book, *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9], and went more deeply into the subject in another book, *Four Sorts of Knowledge: Revealed Knowledge, Speculative Knowledge, Scientific Empirical Knowledge, Practical Empirical Knowledge* [11], which can be downloaded for free. Ultimately, the only two sorts of knowledge are: knowledge of God and knowledge of Creation, which is knowledge of God in His acts-of-being as Creator. Even that split might be somewhat artificial from God’s viewpoint but it’s a necessary division in knowledge from a creaturely viewpoint. But the four-fold division in knowledge is forced by our ignorance and by the frailties of the human intellect.

The Greeks gave us much we should appreciate and much that underlies even the most radical forms of modern speculative knowledge, that is, the more rational forms of modern speculative knowledge and those which are empirically supported.

Let me turn to an area where powerful forms of reasoning have clearly led to an expansion well beyond Greek thought. Modern mathematics has not proven that Euclidean geometry was wrong but it has proven that it is not the only possible geometry. There is plenty of evidence that our universe, at the large-scale, does not have a physical structure fully describable in Euclidean terms though the true structure is not yet known. In fact, it’s probably more accurate to say that the questions about the geometry of this universe have been so complicated and complexified that it seems unlikely that we can even settle on a single geometry for all of physical reality. Any broad and realistic view of physical reality now involves multiple forms of geometry to describe that one reality. Roger Penrose’s book *The Road to Reality* [25] is a good example of such a view—that book is a tangled maze of geometries and various mathematical systems which are employed to describe that one reality. Greek metaphysics, and all the non-Thomistic metaphysical systems I know of, assumed that physical reality must be describable by one speculative system of thought employing one mathematical model, or at least a single family of models. Now it seems that reality is

unified but no one human system of thought can cover even the purely physical aspects of that reality.

Concrete reality does not seem to be the sort of entity which is being built the way a child builds a bridge with an erector set or even the more complex way an engineer builds a bridge in a busy city. Concrete reality is rational and well-ordered but its rationality seems to be more complex than the thoughts that can be credited to the Greeks, though they are the fathers of the later thinkers who have expanded the range of human thought. It has mathematical aspects but those aspects are far beyond anything the Greeks could have recognized as mathematics, though Euclid can be seen as the father of Cantor and Cauchy, Gauss and Kolmogorov.

In the same way, Plato and Aristotle can be seen as the fathers of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. It was Aquinas in particular who gave us the foundations of a truer Christian metaphysics which seems to be immensely greater in scope than Hellenistic metaphysics. St. Thomas Aquinas expanded the possibilities of metaphysics more than he probably expected by noting that metaphysics uses the specific sciences and by endorsing Aristotle's claim that the human mind is shaped by its physical environments, though even Aquinas didn't suspect there was also a shaping of the human mind, in a species sense, over an immense amount of time¹. By paying attention to Creation, we learn from what God actually did and does and we draw upon God's imagination which is far more powerful than any human imagination.

The differences between Greek metaphysics and modern metaphysics bear some similarity to the differences between Greek mathematics and modern mathematics. By this I mean that the enlargement of scope creates a variety of seeming contradictions that mask our Greek heritage to those who prefer reductionistic or surface views. There was a seeming contradiction between Euclidean geometry and others discovered in the late 1700s and early 1800s but that was caused by Euclid's fifth axiom which he knew to be doubtful: parallel lines never meet and never diverge. In fact, consistent geometries can be developed using other assumptions about the

¹As usual, I have to qualify this discussion by noting that, to Aquinas, the mind attached to a human being is a non-human entity; he didn't believe a physical organ such as the brain can be flexible enough to engage in abstract thought such as categorization of entities into species. On the other hand, his view of the developmental processes of human moral nature accord very closely to the discoveries of modern scientists about all cognitive aspects of human beings.

relationships between lines that are ‘parallel’ and use of more abstract ways of thought, such as differential geometry, develop these geometries as different varieties of a single type of mathematical system. This isn’t so fancy a speculation as it might seem. Anytime a plane flies a substantial distance, the pilot sets the path by way of a ‘great circle’ which is a ‘straight-line’ or ‘shortest distance line’ for the surface of a sphere. The lines subject to the specific understanding Euclid had of ‘parallel’ are lines of that sort on a flat surface. Euclid had no reason to generalize to that more abstract understanding of shortest distance and that concept of ‘straight’, not ‘parallelism’ is what’s most important.

In a roughly similar way, Hellenistic metaphysics assumes that any existing entity has to have some underlying substance at least analogically similar to creaturely substance, the material stuff of this universe. This is because substance is considered primary, the real point of those seemingly silly proposals that all stuff is made from water or air or fire or earth or perhaps some combination of those four. In the ancient Greek view, and this is natural without revelation, substance is necessary and primary. That assumption of the primacy of substance was unconscious just because they had no reason to believe there were any alternatives to that assumption. All that they knew was made of substance or was the result of relationships between entities made of substance. Modern sciences, especially physics, have given us serious reason to raise relationships to the primary status. Substance is necessary for creatures to exist but some sort of relationship, primary God’s love, brings about some act-of-existence which precedes that substance.

Despite the claim of St. John the Evangelist that love creates and shapes and sustains stuff, it was not until modern times that quantum mechanics forced thinkers of the West to explore in rational, non-mystical terms the possibility that relationships are primary and substantial being is brought into existence by relational acts. Even our theology can be enriched, and complexified, by learning from such fields of study as physics. After all, I’m arguing that we study manifested thoughts of God when we study subatomic particles or gravity.

Part III

The Mystery of Human Feeling

8 Parts of Human Unity

8.1 Scales of Time Disrupt Human Unity

Scientists and philosophers are far more advanced in reliable theorizing about the human mind than they are about human feelings. Because of this, there is also a long way to go, at least in my opinion, before we can have a deeper understanding of the entirety of human being. Yet, it seems to me that we can do best by moving indirectly to the goal of understanding a man as a potential person, a true image of God—unified and coherent and complete. We will do best by discussing human nature in terms of mind and heart and hands.

Mind and heart and hands have all evolved over the eons in a way first proposed with some clarity by Charles Darwin. But do they operate over the same scales of time?

I've already claimed that thinking, feeling, and acting are all responses to created being, external to us but also our own selves. Those responses might be proper or improper, adequate or inadequate. Responses to created being outside ourselves can be responses to social structures or to things outside us or to greater realms of created being or more abstract realms of created being. As a rule which is often broken, our responses tend strongly to be proper because our human natures have been shaped over time or, more exact in some senses, our ancestors survived and reproduced successfully if they had the ability and inclination to respond properly to their environments. Those responses can be:

- **Acts** directed toward immediate results in the physically and morally ordered world.
- **Thoughts** directed often toward shaping our acting selves in the future on the basis of understanding what has happened or is happening

but sometimes used to censor acts which generally begin without our conscious awareness.

- **Feelings** directed toward family-line or species goals ¹ we might not see or, if seeing them, might not select on our own.

The human mind and heart and hands operate differently in these different realms of human time. In particular, hands are, in a sense, the most localized expression of our mortal being and hint of our more perfected and more complete being as members of the Body of Christ. Yet, even hands have strong connection to our selves as, so to speak, distributed over different realms of being, including different ranges of time.

8.2 Defining Feeling and Emotion

According to conventional usage, emotion and feeling overlap in meaning but aren't quite the same. In general, emotion is in the brain while feeling is more general, in the brain and the rest of the body as well. Yet, some scientists will use feeling in this sense but claim that feeling is the result not of true distribution over the body but rather a result of the brain modeling the body and interpreting, for example, a facial expression and body posture and brain-state as a general sadness.

Below, in Section 8.3, *Why Do We Have Emotions and Feelings?*, I'll review, in this context, a claim made by Jacob Neusner and discussed also in Chapter 1, *General Introduction*. That claim ties feeling and emotion into our formation human communities of various sorts.

For now, I'll give definitions for feeling and emotion from an older and perhaps more solid dictionary as collected in a popular open-source information system [29]. Then I'll point out why these definitions, and the concepts and categories they point toward, should be regarded as useful fictions, necessary to get started on the path to better ways of dealing with these ghostly aspects of human nature.

¹I write in a somewhat restricted mode as I'm trying to speak largely of 'natural men', but our nobler feelings, and some of our truly base feelings, are the result of communal processes and maybe sometimes are new feelings which become possible as our human communities evolve and develop to ever more complex and more complicated forms.

- Feeling**
1. The sense by which the mind, through certain nerves of the body, perceives external objects, or certain states of the body itself; that one of the five senses which resides in the general nerves of sensation distributed over the body, especially in its surface; the sense of touch; nervous sensibility to external objects. [1913 Webster]
 2. An act or state of perception by the sense above described; an act of apprehending any object whatever; an act or state of apprehending the state of the soul itself; consciousness. [1913 Webster]
 3. The capacity of the soul for emotional states; a high degree of susceptibility to emotions or states of the sensibility not dependent on the body; as, a man of feeling; a man destitute of feeling. [1913 Webster]
 4. Any state or condition of emotion; the exercise of the capacity for emotion; any mental state whatever; as, a right or a wrong feeling in the heart; our angry or kindly feelings; a feeling of pride or of humility. [1913 Webster]
 5. That quality of a work of art which embodies the mental emotion of the artist, and is calculated to affect similarly the spectator. –Fairholt.

Emotion A moving of the mind or soul; excitement of the feelings, whether pleasing or painful; disturbance or agitation of mind caused by a specific exciting cause and manifested by some sensible effect on the body. [1913 Webster]

Here is a short discussion of the difference:

Usage: Emotion, Feeling, Agitation. Feeling is the weaker term, and may be of the body or the mind. Emotion is of the mind alone, being the excited action of some inward susceptibility or feeling; as, an emotion of pity, terror, etc. Agitation may be bodily or mental, and usually arises in the latter case from a vehement struggle between contending desires or emotions. See Passion. “Agitations have but one character, viz., that of violence; emotions vary with the objects that awaken them. There are emotions either of tenderness or anger, either

gentle or strong, either painful or pleasing.” –Crabb. [1913
Webster]

What does this mean within the context of this discussion? Modern thinkers such as the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio have suggested that emotion and feeling are categories which don’t match up so well to the reality upon which they are imposed. (See *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* [5] for a good overview as well as some more technical discussions and some speculations which are different from mine.)

To be fair, ‘emotion’ and ‘feeling’ and other *a priori* categorical terms have done their job as we and our ancestors have learned to think. This doesn’t mean those categories came from some supernatural realm. It does mean that some early thinkers proposed some reasonable categories and over time, the assumptions of earlier thinkers were seen as beyond questioning.

Some human thinkers, most 20th century human beings to some extent, have now moved on to more direct, open, and honest responses to empirical reality. We should realize we are in an early stage of this process when it comes to many matters, including those involving many of the complex entities of this world, a lot of physical structures such as the earth’s atmosphere as well as human beings or other living creatures.

Wisdom, in this context isn’t just a fumbling substitute for perfect knowledge but the ever-changing results of a quest for a closer approximation to perfect knowledge.

8.3 Why Do We Have Emotions and Feelings?

I think it important to realize I’m not making a plea for a mystical attitude, though perhaps a plea for a re-understanding of mystic insights which bring them back into God’s Creation. The problem is to produce a wider, more inclusive, and more complete understanding of Creation so that we can see it as the setting for God’s story, the container of the other created entities which take parts in that story and also such an entity in its own right. With a proper setting in mind, we can begin to make sense of empirical knowledge about human nature in light of the moral purposefulness which we can see in Christian revelations. With a proper understanding of emotion and feeling, we can see them as unconscious thought, protected from our

conscious selves so that we can't override the long-range purposes of God or those of our genes for our short-term desires—Flannery O'Connor might see emotions and feelings from this slant as a component of “wise blood.” Our acting selves are somewhat separated from emotion and feeling and greatly separated from our thinking that we not be paralyzed in thought as the hungry bear closes in on us. Again, we are entities in a dynamic, fast-moving Creation.

In recent years, neuroscientists have found strong evidence that we start to act before we're consciously aware of our own actions. This is a problem to those who believe in free-will as conventionally understood. The popular science press on the Internet published a number of articles on this subject in and around 2008, discussing a new set of experiments which hadn't really introduced anything new but they did tighten up the acceptable results, making it a little more certain that we act, however defectively, as organisms and not as bodies under the control of an independent soul or free-will or whatever. It seems pretty clear that at least for those simple decisions which can be tested under laboratory conditions, such as decisions to move a finger, the regions of our brain associated with consciousness don't become active until the decision has been made by other brain regions and the action has started.

What good is consciousness when it doesn't control our actual physical actions? Some of the less rational sociobiologists had proposed many years ago that we're fooled by our 'selfish genes' into rationalizing our unconscious actions which are supposedly geared almost entirely to the reproduction of those 'selfish genes'. In *How Brains Make Up Their Minds* [6], Walter J. Freeman provides the rational proposal that our consciousness can act as a censor upon our actions, being able to stop actions started by our unconscious selves. In addition, and in line with the Thomistic understanding of 'intentionality' as a movement toward a selected goal—part of the organism's growth or development, I would say our conscious selves play a major role in shaping our future selves, that is, our future actions. We can evaluate our own actions in context and work to change the way we act in a similar context in the future. As a simple example: a young father might work to change the way he speaks when he's with his young children. I'm not writing only about eliminating obscenities but rather about the need to speak to young children in a way that guides and nurtures their development, including their moral development.

Much like modern neuroscientists, I would propose that emotion or feel-

ing or whatever terms you would prefer are about goal-setting, for survival and reproduction and—in an overlapping way—for the foundation and nurturing of morally ordered human communities. The conscious mind can, sometimes, censor the motion control regions of our brains and, sometimes, also the emotions which drive us to, for example, have children when it makes no economic sense and might harm our careers. As E.O. Wilson has pointed out [32], our unconscious biological urges have evolved for good reasons and are often wiser than our conscious thinking selves.

Flannery O'Connor, one of the most under-appreciated thinkers in the modern Catholic Church, has written of evil and ugliness often being the result of good under construction. This is a good description of the development of the individual human being and the communal human being, also a good description of the evolution of the human race. This is 'Thomistic intention': to move or grow, often slowly, toward a selected goal rather than responding immediately to desires.

Emotions and feelings can be described as unconscious thoughts about matters which are beyond our immediate or short-term concerns. Properly formed emotions and feelings lead us to do our duty to ancestors and descendants, family and nation, God and church—even at great sacrifice. It's probably best to realize these emotions and feelings, even in a natural and undisciplined form, led us and our ancestors to simply have children and to fulfill our communal responsibilities, where the community is family group or hunting band or tribe at the largest.

In *General Introduction 1*, I quoted Jacob Neusner from his collection of essays *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity* [21]:

The doctrine of emotions in the view of the sages who created Judaism remained always the same. The reason derives from the social realities that give meaning to emotion and definition to the possibilities of feeling. If we begin with feeling, we end up in society. [page 51]

In this way of thought, emotions are produced by ties or relationships and then help to strengthen and shape those ties, shaping them to what might be called a communal heart but also helping to give birth to a communal mind, an intellect. In *The House of Intellect* [3], Jacques Barzun gave us a powerful insight which actually covers our communal feelings and our communal ways of behaving:

Intellect is the capitalized and communal form of live intelligence; it is intelligence stored up and made into habits of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning and spurs to emotion—a shorthand and a wireless by which the mind can skip connectives, recognize ability, and communicate truth. Intellect is at once a body of common knowledge and the channels through which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly, without the effort of redemonstration, on the matter in hand. [page 4]

In his book, *Judaism in the Matrix of Christianity* [21], Neusner also told us:

In the language of theology of the Judaism of a later age the *Mensch* of the Yiddish language, the fully human person, must become the Israel-*Mensch*. And who is this? It is the Judaic human being harmonious in affection, action, and affirmation. Together these determine who is Israel, the Jewish nation—one by one and all together.

In the Western Protestant tradition of Edwards and Schleiermacher we take it for granted that emotions speak for the private individual, not the nation. In the tradition of philosophy from the Greeks onward, moreover, emotions speak not rationally but irrationally. This other view, that of the ancient sages (a view that is also gaining currency in contemporary philosophy and psychology), sees the matter differently. It regards emotions as artifacts of culture and conceives that emotions lay down judgments. They therefore emerge as rational, public, and social, speaking not only for the individual but also to him or her. Feelings, too, define modes of symbolic behavior, as noted. When we examine the doctrine of emotions in the canonical writings of formative Judaism, we enter a world to which it is self-evident that feeling is subject to law and emotion is a matter of lesson and tradition. [page 51]

And Rabbi Neusner denied, as I do, that we are truly or inherently fragmented:

[T]he heart belongs, together with the mind, to the human being's powers to form reasoned viewpoints. Coming from the sages, intellectuals to their core, such an opinion surely coheres with the context and circumstance of those who held it. [page 56]

Our parts can work in unison, though we need the discipline of intellect and other aspects of communal life to teach us the ways of unity, to lead us at least a little ways down the road leading from human animal to human person. Yet, we can't forget that our parts can also engage in various undesirable activities, sometimes even waging war against each other or the unified self, however vaguely defined.

9 When Mind and Heart and Hands are Out of Balance

9.1 Pathological Examination of Mind and Heart and Hands

I'm going to enter the pathology laboratory, to examine what is diseased or deformed, to find clues as to what it means to be healthy. For that matter, we might find clues as to what it means to be. In fact, I will minimize my references to specific tests or experiments, to the gathering of empirical data, only because so much is still in the air. I'll mostly be making general statements, properly qualified, of a few interesting results as well as some general analyses to make my case. And my case will be: the stuff of the human being is flesh and blood which are shaped into mind and heart and hands. The foundation of our being, our stuff, is flesh and blood, but the relationships which we form and the narratives in which we participate are as real as that stuff.

Our human being is not made of only flesh and blood, not made of only the carbon and hydrogen and phosphate and other elements which make up that flesh and blood, not made of only the electrons and neutrons and protons which make up those elements. At each layer, there are particles of a different sort, photons and gluons and others which mediate relationships, which—roughly speaking—transmit electromagnetic force which bonds electrons to the nuclei to form atoms and strong nuclear force which bonds quarks to each other to form neutrons and protons.

If we go down another two levels or so, we reach the abstract forms of being which quantum mechanics describes by way of wavefunctions and there we actually come closer to some 'non-material' aspects of human being. If

we go sideways, we'll find streams of abstract being of other sorts, the abstract stuff from which the Creator shaped the relationships and narratives of this universe. I've published a number of essays describing created being in these terms: as a spectrum ranging from the thing-like being of our world to the abstract sorts of created being described by quantum mechanics and on to the most abstract of all created being, the truths manifested by God as the raw stuff of this Creation. This is a rather complex view I've developed over a number of writings. The interested reader should check out my writings as described in Chapter 18, *Other Writings by Loyd Fueston*.

I advocate using these three aspects of human being, mind and heart and hands, for the same reason I advocate using categories of specialized knowledge though either usage can hide a greater unity in being. We humans have minds which can, in principle, encapsulate what God has done in Creation. By way of our understandings, but also our feelings and our acts, we imitate what the Almighty has done and is doing in His freely accepted role as Creator of a highly particular Creation. These words cover up even more complexity, even more newness of viewpoint, than some would fear. The truer meaning of these words, of the concepts and system of knowledge and understanding of created being which they point toward, can't be easily summarized.

Let me move on to discuss some specific 'pathological' conditions and ways of seeing them in light of my proposed re-understanding of human being and of created being in general. I'll be using research results which have been printed in peer-reviewed publications and summarized on science news services on the Internet ¹, but we should be wary of the specifics of these studies. The results of such studies of the states of the human mind or heart often cannot be replicated for reasons which don't typically reflect badly on the original researchers. Yet, having read widely in accessible works of highly regarded brain-scientists and evolutionary thinkers and experts in other field, having reviewed on a sporadic basis the news reports in these fields in hard-copy and on the Internet, I think these results lie well within the boundaries of empirical research on the human being.

¹I've checked that the articles are still available as of January, 2013. I changed one reference to point to a new location and the others seem to be still up. Yet, the world's a changing place and some of the articles might disappear some day. I don't think the comments I make will be more difficult to understand. In any case, what matters is the experiments and scientists and institutions to which the article refers. Those provide somewhat permanent reference points.

9.2 Passions Can Drive Us Forward

Passions are pedagogically useful because they are extreme versions of the emotions which drive us forward. More importantly, they can be good if used and nurtured properly. As a creative author, I've experienced the frenzy coming from a passion to get an idea or a story down on paper; the result is sometimes powerful though always needing a lot of editing to provide more form to the raw stuff. That itself is enough to convince me that passion can get out of control and can be used to drive ourselves toward a state of moral disorder. It's pretty common for biologically healthy men and women to end up in an unbalanced state because of a sexual passion.

I'll deal with the issue by recommending the moral insights in a novel whose protagonist is a man sexually attracted to pre-adolescent girls. At the same time, I'll claim one of the most praised 'Christian' movies of recent decades was morally disordered in its view of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita* was about a man who was drawn to a young girl, who married and then murdered the girl's mother, and then entered a life on the run with the girl who eventually left him and settled down in a conventional relationship when she was a young adult.

Many modern Christians, and others, can't understand why a distinguished man of letters, Vladimir Nabokov, would have written a novel about a man attracted to girls just before adolescence or perhaps just entering that ripening of sexual nature. The answer is as clear as the glorification of Mel Gibson's gory movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. We of the post-Enlightenment are a numbed people who need extremes to feel even the normal pleasures of human biological nature. Nabokov saw this and depicted this situation though himself disgusted by the sorts of perverse desires he sometimes depicted. Nabokov was quite clearly a man of civilized thoughts and feelings who was somewhat horrified by the predominance of decadent barbarian children in the modern West ².

Nabokov was right. We modern men are so numbed in our minds and souls and moral characters and—necessarily—even our glands that only

²Albert Jay Nock wrote somewhere that he was speaking to a European friend who had just finished a stay in the United States of several years. The friend spoke well of Americans but said they are the first people in history to pass directly from a state of barbarism to a state of decadence without passing through a state of civilization in between. I think we became decadent without giving up the general state of barbarism though we might have given up some of the warrior virtues of the barbaric state.

perverse forms of love can reach the strong levels once felt in more normal forms by our ancestors, including novelists and poets and philosophers and shoe-makers and founders of evolutionary biology. At best, we are lukewarm inside of our bodies and in our minds. We find it hard to love God in the way of St. John the Evangelist or women in the way of Bobbie Burns or an established, older man in the way of Emma as depicted by Jane Austen. In general, the quiet but strong passions of the Victorian Age or any morally well-ordered age are nearly impossible for us to even perceive in the pages of a great novel or in the memories some of us have of those born in the 1800s. I probably shouldn't even imply that the promiscuous Bobbie Burns was morally ordered and he wasn't, except that he truly and passionately loved many a woman and they seemed to love him. His passions were directed in biologically plausible ways, though a bit disordered. In Flannery O'Connor's terms, Bobbie Burns had wise blood but also an infection that threw him into a feverish state.

Mel Gibson, in *The Passion of the Christ*, appears to have explored a view similar to that of Nabokov: we men of the 20th and 21st centuries need grotesquely intensified images or thoughts to feel the passion which a Danté or a St. John of the Cross could feel with more normal erotic images and holy thoughts. There is an important distinction between Nabokov and Gibson: Nabokov was a civilized man trying to make some sense of a situation which horrified him but Gibson was barbarian child who gloried in this return to bloody and horrifying spectacles and rituals. Odd it might seem that such barbarian children feel empty inside, hot in their poorly focused desires but lukewarm toward what lies outside of them. Odd it might seem that they can't appreciate simple pleasures and basic sexual desires so well as can those of ages well-ordered to the brink of outright repression. Is it the case that moral order increases the strength and maintains the proper focus of our normal animal desires? Or is it the case that we modern men are numbed because of the sheer complexity and fast pace of our lives? Or is something else going on?

I can only agree with Nabokov's artful and highly intellectual presentation, Gibson's childish and unconscious presentation, of our modern selves as being creatures needing perversions to reach levels of passion which our peasant ancestors met in simple encounters on the marriage bed or in the Sunday morning Mass or weekday angelus at dawn and noon and sunset.

This raises the question: why should it be good that our emotions and feelings can rise to levels where they can overcome our minds and hands,

where we speak of passions? The answer is pretty straightforward. If emotions and feelings motivate us, point us at proper goals of certain sorts, then we need stronger emotions and feelings when the path to those goals is more difficult, when we'll have to pay a higher price to, for example, father or bear children and raise them properly. Bobbie Burns and the women who bore the children he fathered outside of his marriage lived at a time when most rural Scots were terribly impoverished. Impoverished human beings can act in desperate ways and they might not have the options for the settled, orderly lives which make the formation of strong, sexually disciplined families more likely.

Passions can lead a man and woman to make a baby when worldly considerations would indicate a greater focus on short-term issues, perhaps that new car or a new wide-screen television is needed and a baby seems to be a luxury. With our upbringing as genial human beings valuing material prosperity, with our bypassing of healthier and more biologically plausible forms of passion, we tend to choose that car or television or the move for the sake of our career rather than that baby. Then again, having various technologies to control births, we can have the car and plenty of sexual activity. We can even time our passions to match up with our work schedules or our vacations in the Caribbean.

I think the moral disorder of a Bobbie Burns, or a 13 year-old pregnant girl in the inner-city, to be preferable to the self-serving moral cowardice into which we of the modern West have been indoctrinated.

9.3 Human Problems Which Hint of Unity

In this section, I'm suggesting a speculative framework for understanding certain types of fragmentation of the human being and not any cures for these serious disorders of the human being. Mostly, I'm pursuing my goal of understanding the human being as a defective unity of mind and heart and hands. Much of the framework was implied in the explanation of Thomistic intentionality in *How Brains Make Up Their Minds* [6] by Walter J. Freeman. This view sees intentionality as an organic goal-directed movement and growth which occurs as the organism responds to its own body and to its environments, a teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. Fragmentation will occur as a human being kind of intends without a clear goal for his entire being; we fragment if we try to hold on to our Christian

beliefs while living fully in increasingly non-Christian or even anti-Christian public squares. This fragmentation can intensify as a result of genetic problems or inability to deal with an incoherent social environment or a variety of other possible problems.

I'm exploring the possibility that such problems as OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder), bipolar disease (used to be manic depression), and maybe even schizophrenia are due to not being able to properly orient ourselves in our environments, not being able to move about in a coordinated manner, not being able to make flesh-and-blood contact or even just not being able to establish eye contact with our fellow-creatures, and so forth. This isn't to deny that something can be wrong inside our brains, but it is to raise the possibility that psychiatric and mood disorders can be caused by problems in the neuro-muscular or skeletal systems of our bodies and also to raise the possibility that they can be caused by simple problems of coordinating our perceptive or locomotive efforts. I believe these psychiatric disorder can also be caused, or at least influenced, by delusory expectations about our own bodies or what lies around us. These delusory expectations can arise from our culture or from our upbringing.

This sort of a view of cognitive and emotional and social problems is entirely consistent with, perhaps a necessary conclusion drawn from, my claim that men are physical creatures whose immaterial components arise from their relationships within Creation, including their relationships with God in His freely-chosen and self-constrained role as Creator.

A mouthful and one easily distorted into literalistic forms.

Let me qualify away one potential distortion. Created being lies on a spectrum from highly abstract forms to the concrete forms of being in this universe. An easy way to enter into this way of thinking is to contemplate my analogical claim that thing-like being is frozen soul-stuff, where the soul-stuff lies close to that raw stuff of created being, that is, the truths manifested by God as the foundational being of Creation.

I think we do little good by talking or acting as if there were some sort of soul or mind or psyche hiding inside of that human being, whether he is as well-balanced as can be or whether he is deeply disturbed. We would do far better in understanding our own possibilities and also the troubles of disturbed human beings if we were to think of our human selves as fundamentally physical creatures which gain immaterial aspects by forming relationships with our fellow human beings, other creatures, our physical environments, the narratives in which we live, and—last but certainly not

least—with the Creator who is telling these stories including the larger-scale story which is the universe as it moves toward the fulfillment of God’s purposes.

Another mouthful.

Let me get to some specific examples and remember my titles poke fun at all of us, not at those who suffer from these particular problems. Do not ask who is confused about his relationship to reality, for it is you and I and all of us. By faith, Christians believe we can move toward being images of our Creator. In fact, the world and our knowledge of it moves so that it is always one step ahead of us. We’re always confused puppies, especially if we’re brave enough to explore unknown realms of God’s Creation. We’re also confused puppies if we happen to live in an age when old understandings of Creation have been rendered incomplete or untrue. To those who are brave explorers, this can all be great fun, but the many within or outside of Christ’s flock are dependent upon those explorers to do their job and to use their discoveries to make better sense of Creation. But the many are inclined strongly to hold onto the older and implausible views even as they see Christian civilization crumble, even as they see their children leave their faith behind because they sense the contradictions between the reality they learn about in school and in movies and on televised documentaries and what they are being told in homilies and in CCD and in other sorts of Sunday School, in books labeled as Christian and in entertainment also labeled as Christian. Fragmentation has become us.

I’m washing my hands for the fifteenth time without a break; I must be obsessed with germs.

In an article, *OCD: Compulsions Lead to Obsessions, Not the Other Way Around* which can be found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/05/110523101915.htm>, we learn that there is scientific evidence that “the behaviours themselves (the compulsions) might be the precursors to the disorder, and that obsessions may simply be the brain’s way of justifying these behaviours.” Other groups of scientists may well present counter-evidence, but I’ll take this quite plausible result as being true for now. Given my understanding of the human mind as being certain sorts of relationships we establish starting with our own selves and body parts. . .

We can stop there for now. When we suffer from OCD, something has

been disrupted in our shaping of the mind which is capable of forming the higher and more complex habits of a human being, and most likely a few other social mammals as well. We need habits. In fact, most of our behavior, including that which is labeled ‘moral’, is made up of habits. The evidence is pretty good that, in many cases, our bodies start moving before there is any activity in the regions of our brain associated with abstract reasoning, planning, and other faculties related to any human aspect which might be plausibly labeled free-will or freedom in general.

We form habits and my claim is that we become morally healthy human beings when we form habits and inclinations so that our bodies respond properly when, say, we hear the scream of a child in danger. We fool ourselves when we think we can make the right decision when courage or resistance to temptation is needed. There is no time and we’re very likely to freeze if we try to evaluate each situation, balancing moral demands with prudential considerations. Even in lesser situations, we have not the energy to be constantly making a conscious decision to open the door for a woman with a cane or to go back a few steps to pick up a fallen object for another woman on a walker. How about getting behind the wheel of a car after having that one drink too many? With five beers in you, you’re probably not going to be very coherent in your moral reasoning. Should we cheat a little on that light that’s already been yellow for a couple of seconds? You have a very small fraction of a second to make that decision—those higher regions of the brain don’t work so quickly.

In George Patton’s memoirs of World War II, *War as I Knew It*[14], he spoke of soldiers drowning in the invasion of Sicily because the U.S. Navy boat operators dropped the soldiers loaded with heavy backpacks and ammunition belts in deep water. Those boat operators had panicked when bullets start flying. Patton didn’t blame the operators because he said they behaved the way he’d expect from sane men not trained to function under battlefield conditions. He blamed the Navy commanders for not providing proper training.

Habits. Those boat operators needed to have been accustomed to the rather disturbing situation of men firing at them to try to kill them or sink their boats. They needed the habits of boat operators capable of steering into shallow water during a beach invasion. They didn’t have those habits, though it’s likely they would have done their duty if they’d had the time to think about what was really going on, their relative safety behind the steel walls of beach landing craft and the dangers to the soldiers who, at best,

were to be coming off onto beach sands while directly exposed to enemy fire.

Forming habits is something we do often and well. After all, we're descended from creatures which survived and reproduced successfully because of—amongst other reasons—good, or at least adequate, habit-formation. When it comes to habit-formation, the difference between human beings and other higher animals, such as bears, is that human beings can take conscious control of the process, guiding it toward moral purposes and then to prudential purposes as a secondary matter.

We shape ourselves by responding to our own bodies and our immediate environment. This shaping results in habits of various sorts, such as those of cleanliness. If something goes wrong, a brain-circuit is set up in our motion control systems and signals continue to flow. We stand at the bathroom sink and wash our hands over and over and over again. Our higher brain regions come into play, justifying this strange behavior by generating a fear of germs or dirt. What should happen is that our higher brain regions should come into play to censor our behavior and cut off the handwashing at a reasonable point. Maybe the victims of these compulsions could have been taught to sing the chorus to *Happy Birthday* three times as they washed their hands. If they were to have a better understanding of the way that human beings form habits, they might be able to better deal with both the wrongly formed habits and the self-justifying obsessions. This would be an example of conscious reasoning providing constraints, discipline, to the forces of biological regulation, most of which appear to us as emotions or feelings.

My tummy bothers me, for the tenth day in a row, and I'm grumpy. I'm settling into this rotten mood.

There are two recent studies related to this link between stomach troubles and anxiety or depression. First, in *Gut Bacteria Linked to Behavior: That Anxiety May Be in Your Gut, Not in Your Head* found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/05/110517110315.htm>, we learn that “[R]esearchers at McMaster University have conclusive evidence that bacteria residing in the gut influence brain chemistry and behaviour.”

This reinforces the point that we are physical creatures. In fact, those who are old enough might have known some psychiatric patients on old-

fashioned anti-depressants. Those medicines were chemical sledge-hammers which dramatically altered the balance of certain brain chemicals and it turned out that those chemicals were also used for other tasks in the human body. For example, they helped to neutralize poisons in some of the foods we eat. Patients on those old-fashioned anti-depressants couldn't eat aged cheeses and certain other foods unless they wished to risk death.

Can we respond to our bodies, to our friends, to the world, in a friendly manner when bacteria in our stomachs are perhaps causing us constant upset or perhaps putting bad chemicals into our bloodstreams?

So, it shouldn't surprise us to also learn that *Digestive Problems Early in Life May Increase Risk for Depression, Study Suggests*. The article, found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/05/110512171517.htm>, tells us:

Depression and anxiety may result from short-term digestive irritation early in life, according to a study of laboratory rats by researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine. The findings suggest that some human psychological conditions may be the result, rather than the cause, of gastrointestinal disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome.

When we're constantly struggling against a digestive system which is not functioning quite right, we feel bad in a persistent way and we're using a lot of energy. We might be thrown directly into a blackish mood or perhaps fall into one due to exhaustion. There are forms of exhaustion which are cleansing—such as that caused by serious physical activity after a long winter, but being constantly tired certainly leaves me feeling rotten. Let it last a year or more, and the rotten feeling might well have settled in.

In my case, I seem to fall into blackish moods, paranoia, when I'm suffering a problem, allergies or a sinus infection, which would be pumping up my histamine levels. Histamines can have a powerful effect on the brain, and the relationship to paranoid moods is certainly plausible. In addition, a constantly enraged immune system drains a lot of energy. Something common to allergies and sinus infections and colds puts me into those blackish moods, but I know the patterns even if I'm not sure of the exact cause. I adjust as well as I can for that pattern in my mood and that makes my life easier and perhaps eliminates some unpleasantness for those around me.

We're physical creatures, but we're called to higher moral states. This means we need to be aware of these various unbalanced states, in our own selves and in others around us, that we might provide proper moral guidance, to our own selves and to others. Once we become aware of our physical natures and the ways in which we form our immaterial aspects, mind-like or soul-like aspects, we become at least a little more responsible for responding properly to our selves and to other creatures, to the world and to its Creator. We become at least a little more adult-like.

Know yourself if you would be a morally responsible creature. That means you should know your digestive system and your . . . posture?

I can't position my body correctly and I'm out of sorts.

Because of a more complex situation, I'm going to provide a longer quote from this article, *Bipolar Disorder and Postural Control: Mind-Body Connection Suggests New Directions for Treatment, Research* found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/05/110524111349.htm>:

A new study by motor control and psychology researchers at Indiana University suggests that postural control problems may be a core feature of bipolar disorder, not just a random symptom, and can provide insights both into areas of the brain affected by the psychiatric disorder and new potential targets for treatment.

Problems with balance, postural control and other motor control issues are frequently experienced by people with mood and psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, and neurological disorders such as Huntington's and Parkinson's disease, but research into the connections is scant.

If problems with postural control—maintaining balance while holding oneself upright—are a core component of bipolar disorder, as the study indicates, the researchers say it is possible that the motor abnormalities could appear before other symptoms, signaling an increased risk for the disorder.

It raises the question of whether therapies that improve motor symptoms may also help mood disorders, said Amanda R. Bolbecker, lead author of the study “Postural control in bipolar

disorder: Increased sway area and decreased dynamical complexity,” published last week in the Public Library of Science ONE.

I included the last two short paragraphs so that the scientists who did the study and the writers at the *Science Daily* website not be blamed for a couple of speculations I’ll be making. After all, there is greater uncertainty in this case as to whether there is a simple cause-and-effect relationship. That’s a signal to be cautious in drawing conclusions, but I’ll move forward anyway because my goal isn’t to ‘explain’ bipolar disorder but rather to support my claim that we are physical creatures which form complex networks of relationships even with our own bodies.

If a man or woman, boy or girl, has a body that won’t hold a proper posture, would we expect them to have healthy attitudes? Wouldn’t they be more or less constantly tired, just as if they were suffering constant stomach problems? They’re responding to a world that’s not quite oriented properly, even if it’s their own bodies that are actually mis-positioned. They respond but the world’s not quite positioned right when they reach out to grab something or even to move toward a loved one.

And finally do the pressures build up and Lord Byron, who had a club-foot which would have disrupted his posture, is writing poetry at a frantic pace before setting out on near-suicidal adventures. And then the painful crash would come. But, his case is complicated by the regularity of the depression and the headaches which came on as winter approached and also by the schizophrenic condition of some relatives on his father’s side and the known genetic tendency of the males of his mother’s clan—the Gordons of the Scottish highlands—to bipolar behavior ³.

A human being is a complicated story even in his clinically diagnosed problems—which may involve relationships not easily investigated or even noticed by the clinician.

³I’m descended from a lesser line of the Gordons. There is no bipolar tendencies in my family-line but there is a tendency toward one or both of depression or alcoholism. I think that to be a common tendency.

The Chemicals of Love: An Exaggeration Which Speaks Truth

During the early months of 2011, the brain-scientist and philosopher Patricia Churchland was giving some lectures on a specific and partial answer to the question: What can neuroscience tell us about morality? The lectures are discussed at: <http://danapress.typepad.com/weblog/2011/03/what-neuroscience-can-tell-us-about-morality.html>.

Her main point according to the article is hardly a surprise to those who've been keeping up at all with developments in the brain sciences. Oxytocin, which I've seen referred to as the 'maternal hormone', and vasopressin increase sociability and apparently do this by decreasing fear levels and increasing trust levels. Research psychologists tune up tests which look for links between brain-states and hormone levels by using dogs from certain breeds. There is a certain scale where dogs, not surprisingly, used as guards—such as German Shepherds—are the most fearful especially about new things put in their pens. Fear leads to aggressiveness, at least in animals with the physical capabilities of effective attack. At the other end of the scale, they use hunting dogs, especially retrievers which have been bred to be fearless and highly sociable. Retrievers have been bred to be fearless so that they'll go charging into brush or jump into waters they don't know. They've been bred to be sociable for a variety of reasons including the fact that hunting expeditions often involve the sharing of a blind or other quarters by dogs and human beings who've not met or not seen each other for a year. It might well be that the same physical state, genetic or otherwise, creates the fearlessness and the sociability.

I know from having owned a Golden Retriever that they can be full of so much of some happy-juice or fearlessness-juice that a member of that breed often acts as if stupid—though a member of one of the very smartest of breeds. My Golden Retriever would repeatedly go right up to dogs which had attacked him and try to make friends and he could repulse the other dog only because he was so big and strong for a Golden. It took multiple attacks before he'd counter-attack. On the other hand, dogs from one of the 'guard' breeds could turn out to be nasty toward most creatures even when raised as pets in loving families. I don't believe genes are the only key to this because it apparently takes only about 10-20 generations of deliberate selection to produce a pet-like family line from wild canines of various sorts. How many more to produce a Golden Retriever or other

peaceful and fearless line? I don't know but they only started breeding retrievers and other hunting breeds as helpers in 'gun' hunting about the middle of the 19th century and it didn't take long in evolutionary terms to produce dogs which would not run from gunfire; in fact, they will try to go out into a search pattern if not trained to wait for a signal. There's more going on here, maybe the mother's body activating particular possibilities in the puppies and maybe other factors not yet discovered. Yet, those other factors could be labeled as 'somatic', transmissible at least for some number of generations.

It's no different with human beings. Our race has many behavioral tendencies, some of which will contribute to peacefulness and others to aggression and still others to mostly unrelated character traits. Not all of these tendencies are found in all family lines to the same extent—a very complex issue. I know families where the members are generally much more pleasant and gentle than most human beings. I also know families whose members tend to be aggressive, sometimes to good and moral purposes and sometimes just to satisfy their own desires. Sons do tend to be like their fathers, though I've read of dog-breeders claiming members of that species tend even more strongly to be like their maternal grand-sires.

A fascinating line of research and, for now, we can only wonder if we have even identified many of the important questions or if we're set to be as surprised as Darwin himself was by that rapid emergence of those complex behaviors in hunting dogs which we could call 'gun instincts', that is, the tendency of even my pet Golden to move forward and start a weaving, searching movement when he heard guns fired nearby. He was afraid of some loud sounds, but he would show no fear when honor guards fired during parades or various ceremonies. That wasn't because of any experiences with me—I don't hunt and I've fired guns a few times in my life and only at firing ranges.

A sociable and largely fearless creature can, of course, fear potential predators greatly, and other events or things. Even relatively fearless dogs are said to have some strong instinctive fear of bears. I've read that in the days when dogs were used to distract, perhaps more accurately—torment, bears while the hunter was getting there and setting up for a shot, they had to undergo very demanding testing to select those most willing to follow a bear's track and there would be much training beyond that. Dogs, naturally enough, will be inclined to go the other way when they know a bear's around.

It's quite interesting that fearlessness, and trust, seem to be the foundations of sociability though a well-ordered human community will also contain a number of fearful men and women. There's a certain quality of fear which leads to violent reaction, on the part of a Rottweiler—bred for guard duty—or on the part of a soldier who's forced to live under constant fear for his own life or fear for the lives of the others in his unit.

I've maintained that we're embodied creatures. We modern men are coming to understand the complexity of relationships between many aspects of human nature, including between hormonal flows or brain events and personality traits. We're made peaceful by the presence of proper flows of oxytocin, to simplify more than a bit.

We should courageously and faithfully respond to God's Creation, seeking to understand what the Almighty has done in His acts as Creator—even when it leads to difficult questions. I might say we need good flows of oxytocin to have so good a level of trust and courage.

As Pope Benedict XVI said during a speech on 2008/06/07, “Modernity is not simply a historically-datable cultural phenomenon; in reality it requires a new focus, a more exact understanding of the nature of man.” If our virtues are tied to our physical nature, then we should understand ourselves in the best available way, build our moral philosophies and moral theologies accordingly.

Blooming, Buzzing Confusion

I've made the claim that modern men have some schizophrenic traits. In my first explorations of this idea, I was following the insights in *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* [28], by Louis Sass, a clinical psychologist who is also quite knowledgeable in the fields of literature and art and history and more. This book is a multi-disciplinary discussion of two parallel phenomena, modern styles of thinking and art on the one hand and schizophrenia on the other hand.

Yes, we modern human beings are all schizophrenics, in a manner of speaking, though most of us have lost contact with reality in its wider and more abstract respects, including its narrative aspects in this world, without being aware that something is wrong. Early in the process of developing an American character, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Sr., and perhaps others believed that Americans are morally insane, in rebellion against a world that doesn't quite meet American approval—though

most of us are in a cowardly or even unconscious sort of rebellion.

I could restate my major goal of my philosophical and theological efforts in this way: I'm trying to restore sanity to modern human beings, especially Christians, by turning their attention to God's Creation and by teaching them they should be responding to God's Creation, actively responding to reality and not to some self-serving understanding of reality. But let me turn to a discussion of schizophrenia as a specific clinical disease with a group of symptoms which leave the patient in a terrible state, though sometimes with a self-awareness of his or her state of absolute mess and sometimes even a humorous appreciation of the 'craziness' of his delusions.

If we read Professor Sass' book and pay attention to the stories told by some of the more interesting cases, we learn of someone who was apparently insane in an obvious way though given to a certain poetical way of speech (the daughter of James Joyce), and we learn of someone who had a grand understanding of the cosmos in which he was some sort of central figure wired to each part of this universe and controlled by all those parts—or maybe he controlled the universe, and we get more general summaries of those who simply constructed nonsensical narratives to make sense of their lives. I've spoken to some of those sorts of disturbed human beings, some are capable of living partially on their own, one might be walking past your house as you read this. One I used to talk to occasionally produced a narrative stream which made sense paragraph by paragraph but was eerie and nonsensical as the paragraphs piled up. She would sometimes reach a point where she was herself confused and not sure how to go on with her story which had the feel but not the formal and literary coherence of the more talented of modernist writers, such as James Joyce.

The other point I'd like to raise from *Madness and Modernism* [28] is the possibility, perhaps likelihood, that schizophrenia, as currently defined, developed in the industrial age, but I'd also like to note a seemingly conflicting claim by Julian Jaynes that ancient man was schizophrenic and experienced life as a narrative guided by voices in his head. See the Wikipedia article on Professor Jaynes, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Jaynes, for a discussion that seems pretty good to me and remember that Professor Jaynes is speaking about an age when human beings were being forced to live in radically new ways as human communities grew in size and complexity. This implies to me that schizophrenia is a disorder found in those who have trouble responding to complex social patterns, or perhaps to the ongoing development of complexity in social patterns. Those human be-

ings are maybe dependent upon rigidly practiced habits learned from their communities. When those learned habits are inadequate during periods of rapid change—schizophrenia becomes common. Maybe. Such a speculation has the great advantage of being useful in understanding schizophrenia as a clinical disease and also as an extreme example of the breakdown in the modern mind, in its individual and communal manifestations.

Professor Jaynes didn't put his analysis in narrative terms, to my recollection of reading his major work on the subject 20 years ago, but it was clear the voices provided purpose and moral guidance—they were perceived as gods such as the ones which were some sort of manifest idealizations of human emotions and virtues in the *Iliad*. In fact, Jaynes thought the voices would appear as volition, the decision-maker for befuddled creatures which had not yet learned to integrate higher self-awareness and various sorts of abstract reasoning into their 'core selves' (my term). This can lead to my criticism of the common view of free-will which sees our moral freedom as being exercised by an agent which can then direct us. But who directs this free-will? Is it coincidence that free-will has been glorified in a modern age where it can be claimed that human styles of thinking and feeling and acting are schizophrenic? Against this sort of a fundamentally schizophrenic understanding of moral freedom, I would suggest that we have the real but limited moral freedom of organisms thinking and feeling and acting in specific contexts.

We respond to what lies inside of us and outside of us by trying to create a narrative of our own lives and, usually, at least an implicit narrative that corresponds to what I call a 'world', an entity which—in my highly abstract way of thought—is unified, coherent, and complete. It is the universe, or some part of it, brought to moral order.

If the process of creating these narratives fails? It would certainly be plausible to get the sort of confusion and disturbance we read about in the *Iliad* or in the analyses of the American separation from reality we find in the writings of Tocqueville, Hawthorne, Melville, Henry James, Sr., and more recently Flannery O'Connor, Ray Bradbury, and Graham Greene (in at least the one novel—*The Quiet American*). But it seems to be a regularly recurring element, if often in the background, of serious American fiction or serious fiction containing American characters. It's a primary element of my novels.

Invasion of the Body-Snatchers

Nearly ten years ago, I wrote the first version of a dark comedy, *A Man for Every Purpose* [7]. in which the protagonist, a formerly respectable professor of philosophy, is in a rather confused state of mind. I'll ruin part of the surprise by saying that some of the confusion of the protagonist's thought might have come from alien genes introduced into his body by a virus that nearly killed him. Since I wrote that book, partly a matter of pure speculation on my part, scientists have gathered information that indicates the possibility that an invading organism can alter us, our genes or at least the expression of those genes. For example, our personalities or manifested intelligence levels can be changed.

There is no magic that will exclude from our bodies chemicals from our environment or genes from another species. Our environments leak into us and we leak out into our environments. We often alter our own chemical balances on purposes, using alcohol or far more dangerous drugs. Sometimes, we can cause permanent changes by excessive use of various substances or by exposure to workplace chemicals or whatever.

I'm hardly surprised to read this article, *Toxoplasma - the brain parasite that influences human culture* It can be found at <https://blogs.discovermagazine.com/notrocketscience/2008/10/05/toxoplasma-the-brain-parasite/#.UUon5aqswRI>, on Ed Yong's fine science education blog. (His blog, now named *Phenomena: Not Exactly Rocket Science*, has moved to <http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com/blog/not-exactly-rocket-science/>. It has moved twice and some of his articles are relocated. A good search engine will find any articles from Ed Yong whose writings will likely be kept alive somewhere.) We learn from this science writer that:

In rare cases, *T. gondii* infection causes a disease called toxoplasmosis that produces mild flu-like symptoms and only really threatens fetuses and those with weak immune systems. But in most instances, the parasite acts more subtly.

Carriers tend to show long-term personality changes that are small but statistically significant. Women tend to be more intelligent, affectionate, social and more likely to stick to rules. Men on the other hand tend to be less intelligent, but are more loyal, frugal and mild-tempered. The one trait that carriers of

both genders share is a higher level of neuroticism—they are more prone to guilt, self-doubt and insecurity.

The entire article is worth reading if only for its intelligent discussion of the problems with too simple or literal an interpretation of these results or results of similar sorts of studies.

Yet, it's likely that we are altered, for good or bad by various living entities or non-living substances that enter our body. Parasites, in particular, can spew out various products, some of which change the metabolism or behavior of its host. This particular parasite reduces fear in its host for one cycle of its life spent in rodents so that they're more likely to be captured and eaten by the host species, cat, for the next cycle of its life. As Yong explains, human beings are a dead-end in the reproductive cycle of *T.gondii*, but the various chemicals it spews out to change the brains or hormonal flows of rodents affect us in similar ways to how they affect rodents. Men infected by this parasite tend to be mild-tempered. This may be a sign of a lowering of fear levels which is the effect upon rodents.

I've read that there is a good possibility that the gene for feline leukemia is a fragment of a gene for a growth hormone in an ancestor of the baboon. It's most likely it was transported from one species to another by a virus or retrovirus. And that's how I made matters work in that novel I referred to above. The protagonist emerged from a blood-fever disease with some mental peculiarities including an occasional desire to enter stagnant bodies of water and feast on pond-scum. Somehow, he had acquired genes from some species of aquatic worm. Maybe. Or maybe he had a vivid imagination affected by his ongoing studies in the fields of genetics and evolutionary biology.

I'm not surprised that *Toxoplasma* might change the personalities of those human beings it infects. If so, it would have an effect upon cultures. Since *Toxoplasma* infections are far more common in tropical regions, then we might have cultural differences which come not from human DNA or from human interaction with physical environments but rather from a difference in infections by region and maybe by level of economic development. The chemicals in the products we handle in the developed West, the heavy metals found in the dust on our roads (such as platinum from catalytic converters), the various hormones in our meats and dairy products, and certainly the constant flow of certain hormones in response to hectic lives, are likely to have some effects upon us.

This is a bothersome matter to those who define the human self in terms that imply it's sealed off from what's around it. To me, it's just another complicating aspect of our world and one which is amusing in a somewhat darkish way. And I don't necessarily think there to be any deeper meaning, other than the impossibility of truly walling ourselves off from Creation or even much walling ourselves off from this universe during our mortal existence.

Once upon a time, a transcendentalist princess announced with the most generous of motives, "I accept the world," only to be asked by Sir Thomas, a champion of a certain hard-headedness, "Ye gads, what choice have you?" [My memories of a reported exchange involving Margaret Fuller, as a young woman, and Thomas Carlyle as a middle-aged and somewhat wise skeptic.]

Overview of Human Problems Which Hint of Unity

We shape ourselves in how we respond to our own bodies and to what lies outside of our selves. Most of all, when we speak of final purposes, we shape ourselves in how we respond to our Maker, or refuse to respond to Him.

When something goes wrong, we should remember that there is no isolated human soul or mind or consciousness which is diseased or disturbed but rather a system, in a manner of speaking, which is an organism failing to shape itself in an appropriate manner as it responds or fails to respond to its own bodily parts and to what lies outside of it. What's wrong probably can't be located in any one entity but rather in the relationships which the organism is failing to properly establish, though there certainly will be specific problems in the state of the human being and/or the state of his environments, especially social and cultural environments. We are human beings and ascend to the status of a human person, unified and coherent and complete in our human nature, by becoming more perfect human creatures, or human organisms, not by any sort of supernatural process by which spirit overcomes or replaces or even perfects our material bodies.

The supernatural exists in the Creator's acts-of-being but some of those are seen in His effects on even the most concrete and thing-like of creatures and others are seen by looking into created being and moving, by way of understanding and feeling and doing, toward the original act-of-being, the manifestation of the truths which the Almighty chose that He might tell the story of His Son becoming Incarnate, living as a man and suffering and dying and being raised from the dead. That most important of stories is extended

into the ongoing story which is the development of the Body of Christ, the Body whose members and organs are the individual and communal human beings who will be the companions of Jesus Christ for time without end.

The point, which I've made in various ways in various writings, is that a Christian or Jew or anyone else who believes in a God who has created all that is not Him, cannot separate his beliefs about any realm of Creation from his belief in God and His beliefs about God. This is most especially true about human being, those animals He created to receive the offer of personal friendship with God.

We shape ourselves to ever-enlarging regions of Creation, coming to encapsulate some body of the thoughts God manifested as created being. This process is partly directed by our very disunity, as noted—our feelings and emotions force us to act in ways imprudent to our individual selves and often repugnant to mind and hands. This process of shaping ourselves to God's manifested thoughts is then driven along by the ensuing conflicts between mind and heart and hands. I see no evidence in history that even the greatest of thinkers or the greatest of saints found an easier or smoother path to some sort of truth, ultimately a state of truthfulness which is our friendship with our Maker.

10 Rationality Freed from Feeling

I want to address the claim I've advanced if only implicitly that reason by itself isn't very reasonable. It's downright dysfunctional, as Antonio Damasio told us in *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* [5]. This claim has been advanced by various neuroscientists, anthropologists, social-scientists, novelists, philosophers, and others over the centuries but, more recently, has been strongly supported by empirical research.

Let me state my version of this claim in a clear form: a human being is a unity; a human being is coherent in the various aspects of his nature; a human being is complete in the type of creature he is. To be sure, this unity and coherence and completeness is more of a hint than a reality in this mortal realm. In fact, human nature can only be unified and be rendered coherent and be made complete when those human beings chosen by God become true members of the Body of Christ. I get ahead of myself, as is necessary to some extent when we try to understand an entity by way of understanding some of its aspects. We must treat human beings as made up of conflicting parts rather than as truly unified and coherent and complete. The same is true of all forms of created being; we human beings need to fragment our study of being for practical reasons, as I explain in *Four Kinds of Knowledge* [11].

One problem is that reason isn't so good at the long-term view as we might think. Reason ¹, after all, will be biased to think itself capable of understanding all that is well-ordered. Well-ordered is larger than what is reasonable, because it can include moral narratives which are not built up by the reasoning processes of logic or mathematics or any other science.

¹Some might find it easier to follow this line of discourse if they think of 'reason' as being 'conscious reason'.

Well-ordered is the state of being in this dynamic world which I claim to be a story told by God and it can be the working matter for engineers and carpenters, it can be depicted by artists and musicians, and it can be studied by scientists including historians and anthropologists.

There is much involved here. A Christian understanding of E.O. Wilson's correction of philosophy's irrational faith in human rationality can cover much ground and would require a small industry of critics to fully develop. I will repeat a quotation from Wilson's *Sociobiology: The Abridged Edition* [32] which I had included in Section 4.1, *An Overview of Human Nature*:

Camus said that the only serious philosophical question is suicide. That is wrong even in the strict sense intended. The biologist, who is concerned with questions of physiology and evolutionary history, realizes that self-knowledge is constrained and shaped by the emotional control centers in the hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain. These centers flood our consciousness with all the emotions—hate, love, guilt, fear, and others—that are consulted by ethical philosophers who wish to intuit the standards of good and evil. What, we are then compelled to ask, made the hypothalamus and limbic system? They evolved by natural selection. That simple biological statement must be pursued to explain ethics and ethical philosophers, if not epistemology and epistemologists, at all depths. [page 3]

The above wisdom is developed further in the following quote from the same source:

Self-existence, or the suicide that terminates it, is not the central question of philosophy. The hypothalamus-limbic complex automatically denies such logical reduction by countering it with feelings of guilt and altruism. In this one way the philosopher's own emotional centers are wiser than his solipsist consciousness, "knowing" that in evolutionary time the individual organism counts for almost nothing. In a Darwinist sense, the organism does not live for itself. Its primary function is not even to reproduce other organisms; it reproduces genes, and it serves as their temporary carrier. [page 3]

As I'll be discussing in Part V, *Communal Men and the Body of Christ*, the human organism also doesn't live for itself in a world of human communities, the ultimate community being the Body of Christ.

We of the West have glorified individualistic, conscious reason at the expense of other modes of thinking, including much of what we call feeling or emotion. And we decayed into a rationalistic people who don't bother to maintain or nurture Christian Civilization because such efforts have no short-term payoffs, the only sort which can be considered in our ways of thinking, our individualistic, conscious reason. Even those who seem truly pious seem not to see that, for one important example, Christianity in its stronger period produced the masses and chorals of Bach and Palestrina and Mozart and not sentimental pap. Smart and creative men, the type who might find better pathways, haven't exactly been encouraged to become Christian theologians and philosophers in recent years—they could have better and more prosperous and more interesting lives as physicists or investment bankers or military strategists. Nowadays, this problem has popped up in other fields; our exploration of the world, our design and construction of infrastructure, our diplomacy and military strategy, have been deformed to target, though no longer reliably produce, short-term results.

We no longer even reproduce our family-lines. I'll make this up-close and personal. Before I set out on this quixotic quest to help build the foundations of a new Christian civilization, I had walked away from a career in science or engineering to work in the insurance industry. Not very interesting to me and, as a consequence, I performed poorly and destroyed my own career. Even when it seemed I would lead a materially prosperous life, I walked away from some tentative relationships with good women, relationships which might have produced the family life which can motivate a man to work in a career which bores him deeply. At the time, I was already becoming aware of the reason for such a deformation of my personal life: I was not interested in a long-term relationship without children and I didn't want to bring children into this Western world which hasn't been a good human community for me, though I enjoyed many friendships and other parts of my life. I feared that if I had achieved the goal of nearly all potential parents—to bring children into the world who at least somewhat resemble us—those children would end up as unhappy and dissatisfied as I was.

The sad thing is that I now know that, if my enthusiasm and interest in the world around me hadn't been killed by my education up to high

school, I could have been happy as a scientist or an physicist-type engineer. Moreover, it is possible to raise children to be better than the general state of decayed human civilization would seem to allow. Even more importantly, it's a form of rebellion against God to refuse to play a proper role in human society, as a parent or perhaps a childless relative active in helping parents or perhaps a celibate clergyman helping to make it possible to raise children properly—among other tasks. My choice to not seek a married life was my version of the Satanic, "I will not serve." As I moved toward life as a thinker and author, I found myself stuck in an impoverished rut. I quickly ran off my savings and have become dependent upon others for basic needs. Despite what St. Paul might have taught about the worker deserving his pay, neither the Catholic Church nor any other part of Western Civilization is at all inclined to support someone who doesn't tell them, "Yes, everything you need to know, you learned by eighth grade or much earlier and you can refresh your knowledge with *An Idiot's Guide to Life, the Universe, and Everything*." No. Years ago, Joseph Ratzinger, then Pope Benedict XVI, pointed out that Western Civilization had belonged to Christians who were so morally irresponsible as to fail to care for this great gift from many generations of hardworking Christians.

We of the West are so morally spineless that we allow our children to be shaped by our educational bureaucrats and the producers of mass entertainment to suit the needs of the gods of the marketplace. Our children exist to be exploited. This is a strange result in creatures with feelings and emotions which lead them to suffer or die for their children, but our glorification of reason has led us to a distorted idea of what is good for those children and what it is we should sacrifice for. We were not born to deal with human communities as complex as those of the modern world and we're not sufficiently mature in our moral characters to have taken on the responsibility of shaping ourselves to be capable of dealing with our duties in human communities so complex.

Part IV

Human Acts as Participating in the Story Which is Our World

11 What is Left to Say?

The first two parts of this book, Part I. *Making Peace with Empirical Reality*, and Part II, *The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God's Creation*, cover many of the general issues of the human creature as he evolves at the species level and develops at the individual and communal level. As a consequence, much was said that covered heart and hands as well as mind. In Part III, *The Mystery of Human Feeling*, I covered more that differentiated heart from mind and hands, in the process speaking about all three. It really is difficult to speak of mind or heart or hands in a way that doesn't involve all three aspects of what is a defectively unified creature, the human animal, with the potential to become a human person, unified and coherent and complete.

So what can I say about hands?

Plenty.

In speaking of the shaping of the human mind, I spoke also of the shaping of human feelings and human behavior. In speaking of the social aspects of human feelings, I spoke also of the social aspects of human thoughts and human behavior. Now, I'll speak of freedom, formation of relationships, and our entry into the various stories of this world, our own individual stories and the stories of our families and communities of worship, and the stories of the formation of the Body of Christ. I speak about the human mind and the human heart also sharing in freedom and participating in narratives.

There seems to be something going on that we mortal men can't quite catch. I say this because reality is, in the end, shaped by acts-of-being, by activities in less accurate terms. God does things and Creation comes into existence or is shaped or is moved.

Divine acts, human acts, acts by living beings in general, and even acts by material and non-living entities, are where the rubber meets the road. Thoughts and feelings are directed to shaping and directing the acting

creature. In God, there is no distinction as I've already pointed out: If God thinks, He also feels and acts; if God feels, He also thinks and acts; if God acts, He also thinks and feels. That is, of course, true of Jesus Christ who is true God as well as true man. Jesus Christ is also the primary member, the head, of the Body of Christ. When we mortal men become true members of that Body, we share in the perfected manhood and divinity of Jesus Christ. We share in a more unified form of being: what we shall be are creatures who think and feel and act at once and without division, not even a true division between those two forms of human being—individual and communal.

Even when we hear of scientific evidence that we often, perhaps always, move without prior conscious thought, without the immediate guidance of emotions and feelings, we shouldn't be worried so much as encouraged that this is a small, and often defective, sign of the unity which is to come to those who accept God's offer of friendship.

12 Can We Act with Freedom?

12.1 Is Freedom for Real?

Something strange happens in the minds of many men as they go about their work, whether that of research in particle physics or removing cancerous tumors or running a machine milling a component of a jet-engine or, maybe especially, in those who've studied the evolution and development of human beings, individuals and species and cultures. Having established mastery over some material entities or their relationships, at least by creating structured knowledge from messy data, some begin to see life, the universe, and everything as being too well-determined. Knowing some explicit, sometimes algorithmic, rules, they would see the world as rule-centered. Our tools, including our conceptual tools, can allow us to perform prodigies in exploring and analyzing parts or aspects of reality, but there is this odd tendency to use our new knowledge to constrain the entirety of reality to certain schematic ways of thought.

A logician thinks there is something called thoughts which are like the components of a child's erector set. A workman thinks that economic and political and moral ways of thought are constructed in the way he handles beams of iron and steel. A psychiatrist or a market-researcher might turn reality into a discussion of our own insides, consistent with the modern tendency to equate morality with feeling good about ourselves; perhaps when things go wrong, we know that immorality comes from feeling bad about ourselves, from low self-esteem.

Suddenly, the differing freedoms of human beings, badgers, and galaxies are all in doubt.

Obviously, I exaggerate, but there are some who do talk as if the above proper reductions tell us if freedom or absolute moral rules or God truly exists or truly doesn't. Such efforts often amount to little more than what

I'd call billiard-ball metaphysics, but there has been some serious thought devoted to the issue even from a reductionistic viewpoint. These efforts have an ancient tradition stretching back to at least the dawn of philosophical thought and probably back to the dawn of human contemplation of the most general sort. Some who are caught up in these exaggerations have had a disproportionate influence on modern thought. But the problem is with our attitudes even more than with our thoughts. It's also a problem with our actions more than with our thoughts. Some have trouble acting the roles of engineer or genetic researcher without the proper 9-to-5 materialistic ways of behaving entering into feelings and thoughts. Skeptical feelings and reductionistic acts lead naturally to non-believing thoughts. Draw out the relationships between feeling (heart), behavior (hands), and thoughts (mind), and you can see a small circle which can be a bi-directional flow of stresses which deform the human being.

Suddenly, the best of skilled scientists or workmen, those who are loving fathers or dedicated mothers, those who pray, those who give generously even to the unlikeable poor, begin to stand apart and to view things and men alike as being isolated entities which behave as stimuli would have it. Some react against this sort of a view, still having trouble giving up their god-like heights, and begin to raise other men to their mountaintop, seeing freedom inside of our human selves, in some sort of supernatural entity part of or at least attached to our human animal selves. Few there are who can truly see freedom as much a property of created being as is determinism because you can only have such a vision if you include the transcendental God acting in His freely chosen role of Creator of this very specific Creation.

This is strange to me just because the very effort that scientists and others took on to become highly-skilled experts and the effort they exert to do their work on an ongoing basis isn't forced, at least not fully. Their freedom, limited as it typically is for creatures of our sort, precedes the facts and knowledge and worldviews which lead them to claim the world is deterministic. At a gut-level, we're free before we're in chains. When we as infants chose that breast offered by our mother, we were forced to accept it by our need in a strong sense, but we choose in a way more free than not. Even when we were a hour-old and clueless about our real situation. We choose to suck and bite and struggle to make those things attached to us reach out to help us in that early choice.

I'll quote a prominent brain-scientist, Walter J. Freeman, from his book *How Brains Make Up Their Minds* [6]; in these words, he's advocating a

scientific approach to studying human beings which is at odds with the reductionistic approach:

Instead of postulating a universal law of causality and then having to deny the possibility of choice, we start with the premise that freedom of choice exists, and then we seek to explain causality as a property of brains. [page 5]

At the same time, we have to realize a proper reductionism might correspond to God's work of creating and shaping this world or might be necessary as a mortal creature goes about his daily life especially if he has the vocation of exploring Creation, or a significant part of Creation, to better understand what is.

Einstein once proposed that our understanding should be as simple as possible but no simpler. A possible paraphrase of Einstein, from the Christian viewpoint is: Our understanding of created being should be as simple as possible, but no simpler. In effect, we tie our understanding of the Creator and His purposes for Creation to our understanding of even the most mundane or most vulgar aspects or realms of Creation. In one of my essays, I asked, "Do those components of human understanding, feeling and thinking and doing, really respond to irreducible components or aspects of Creation?" I could ask in this specific context, "Can freedom of creatures be reduced purely to epiphenomena of fully determined physical systems?" and, along with Professor Freeman, would propose the simple answer, "No."

We should reduce reality to its various components and aspects but stop reducing when we reach components or aspects which cannot be used to fully explain or to 'reconstruct' each other. At that point in the process of analysis, it's time to look for explanations which include all those seemingly fundamental components and aspects. We might be wrong and the next few generations might busy themselves taking our fundamental components and aspects apart to find still smaller particles. First, we searched for atoms, a search which had lasted for centuries and went through such strange paths as alchemy, but did result in the deep knowledge summarized in modern periodic tables of the elements. Then, we explored subatomic particles and discovered electrons and protons and neutrons and then strange hints of particles which didn't fit into the simple scheme of things. Then we found out that there is a large zoo of particles out there and they seem to be broken pieces of more symmetric entities.

At the same time, I'd claim the plausible freedom possible to a creature in this world isn't the freedom which corresponds to the theories of modern political philosophers of one of the liberal schools nor to the zen-like freedom some have proposed based upon strange understandings of quantum physics. And, most certainly, our true freedom isn't that epiphenomenon of reductionistic materialists or excited computer theorists; we have a vague freedom to choose and the exercise of that freedom is involved in our earliest experiences. It matters not if this reality meets the standards of political philosophers seeking to avoid the bad choices which led to religious wars nor does it matter if it fits into the mathematical and logical misunderstandings of men who gave Vienna a bad name in some circles. What matters is that choice precedes any particular understanding of freedom and any particular fears of shackles. We choose and therefore we reach out for our mother's breast or our loved one's breast. We choose and therefore we walk by choice into the obscurity of the future. We choose and therefore we are moral creatures. Wolves and bears and elephants also choose within the context of a world perceived and understood in much simpler ways and they are simpler moral creatures but moral creatures nonetheless. Morality, however primitive, comes to exist with the freedom to choose and is a fundamental aspect of this world.

We can make choices. We can move left or right, we can plan to divide available resources between educating children and caring for the sick or elderly in such and such a proportion.

We lose our freedom when we don't consciously make choices or when we act in such a way as to take away our choices tomorrow.

We can see that freedom mostly as one in which we set the goal of being a certain sort of morally well-ordered person, we who are now human animals. To advance toward that goal, we begin to anticipate the forks in the road, to eliminate those which would lead us away from that goal even if they seem headed in the right direction. We might even be able to create our own choices, as individuals. We do play roles in creating choices as members of communities. To make it more explicit: as communal human beings, we lay out those paths ahead of us and form the moral characters which would choose and choose properly by some morally ordered understanding of the world and indeed of all that exists. We might well be diverted by either opportunities or problems from the roads we laid out yesterday, but even then we should be moving in the right general direction.

We know we can choose. This knowledge is primary. Scientific knowl-

edge as well as political and economic speculation, even regarding the most fundamental matters, comes after a number of generations of men making decisions of a certain sort, following the general intention directed toward the goal of understanding the world, of building an understanding of this world in its most interesting and dynamic form: a narrative. We enter that narrative consciously and by our choice. We choose to become certain sorts of human beings, persons in imitation of our Creator, We take on a role and are free when we successfully and gratefully enter into our roles with our hands and hearts and minds.

We choose to explore our world and from what we find, we notice that certain events lead to other certain events. As Professor Freeman wrote, "Instead of postulating a universal law of causality and then having to deny the possibility of choice, we start with the premise that freedom of choice exists, and then we seek to explain causality as a property of brains."

The enterprise of science itself is an exercise of freedom, of constant choosing. It can tell us that we are free, in some significant sense. Moreover, what it discovers about human beings and about this world can help us to refine our understandings of our freedom, letting us see our freedom to be larger or smaller than we might have thought, maybe even significantly different from what we might have thought. Even this must be set in the context of some greater understanding of what this world is, what created being is, what Creation is in its entirety and in what it contains. That greater understanding must include specific scientific understandings but can't be limited to such understandings.

Human freedom, just as much as the human mind, can only be understood if we understand created being in a deep way for human freedom and the human mind are closely linked reflections of created being, reflections of some large part of the thoughts God manifested as Creation. He chose with absolute freedom; we choose in imitation of our Maker, with far less but significant freedom. We shape our minds in response to what is in our own bodies and in response to what lies outside of us and so also do we learn to be free in a greater sense.

12.2 Freedom Isn't Satisfaction of Desires

In the modern world, we tend to think of freedom in terms of satisfying desires. To be sure, even many who live for that false sort of freedom

seem to realize that we then become no more than our desires or, more horribly, the thwarting of those desires—a terrible and humiliating state in either case. Hannibal the Cannibal is the most free of all modern men because he has become his desires and he has gained the power to satisfy them. Hannibal the Cannibal is the role-model for our politicians and our lawyers, our investment bankers and our corporate executives, our athletes and our entertainers. He may even be a role-model for some clergymen ¹.

Let me move in a different direction, starting with a quotation I've used before. In *Time and Free Will* [4], the philosopher Henri Bergson told us:

[W]e are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have that indefinable resemblance to it which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work. [page 172]

Here is what the brain-scientist and philosopher Walter J. Freeman says in *How Brains Make Up Their Minds* [6] about a different aspect of the same problem:

An intent is the directing of an action toward some future goal that is defined and chosen by the actor. [page 8]

Consistent with some other comments made by Freeman in his book, I'd propose the qualification that our goals and choices aren't necessarily made in a way that is fully conscious. I become aware of some aspects of my own true moral character only by a proper contemplation of what I've done and what I'm doing.

In Thomistic moral philosophy, 'intent' defines human morality and freedom. We don't freely will to be a good man or a good woman, we choose to struggle toward that state of goodness; our current idea of a 'good man' or 'good woman' is the goal and it might shift a little as we learn more about ourselves and about human nature. Our freedom, limited or great, works by way of intentions and heads toward the goal but doesn't work by way of goals as we take each step—at least not if we're wise about human development. We should realize that the very process of intending can be a bit

¹If so inclined and if you are pure from the corruptions of modern mass entertainment, you can learn about Hannibal the Cannibal by viewing the morally atrocious movie, *The Silence of the Lambs* or its equally abominable sequels.

vague if only because we don't see the goal clearly until we're well along the path. We can even make a variety of decisions unconsciously as a result of making one decision consciously: I've known those who've started an exercise program and stopped smoking or corrected their diet as an unexpected result. I've certainly deluded myself often about the goal of becoming a Christ-like man and I've also deluded myself about the nature of the path I have to travel. The forming of our moral intentions is a complex, ongoing process and not an action taken once and for all time even in those rare cases when the goal remains constant.

“[W]e are free when our acts spring from our whole personality. . . .”

So said Bergson but I'm not sure if he realized the full meaning of his own words. He was caught in the modern, liberal understanding of the human animal as being naturally a person, even a person from conception—a trivialization of the concept of 'person' and a superfluous term on top of 'human being' or 'human animal'. We're not born persons and there is good reason for a sensitive observer to fear that that most of us remain human animals to the grave and never become persons.

There are only Three Who are truly Persons, Who are truly unified and coherent and complete in their individual Persons and their single Nature. How could even Jesus of Nazareth have been truly free? After all, He was a true man. Doesn't that mean that He was also constrained in the ways in which even the best of us are constrained? Yes, but He was unique in a way that makes all the difference. The Son of God freely chose to take up the human nature named “Jesus” by Mary and Joseph, to be born a helpless baby in their care, to live as the adopted son of a carpenter, to become a carpenter Himself. He freely chose to be born a son of David and of Abraham. He freely chose to be Jewish, to follow the law of Moses and to worship His own Father each Sabbath. He freely chose to preach a mission of salvation, to save some and to cure some of their bodily ills. He freely chose to suffer, to be crucified, to die, to be resurrected.

Jesus of Nazareth was the only truly free man in history. His freedom was necessary for His perfect sinlessness. His freedom was necessary to allow union of man with God. His sinlessness would not have been perfect if Jesus Christ had been less than the Creator of His own world and His own human body, if He hadn't freely chosen to live that humble life.

This boils down to the deceptively simple claim that Jesus Christ was a divine Person united to a human animal, a human nature. The divine Person supplied all that was missing in His human nature—the Son of God

was of the nature of God as well as being a divine Person.

What about the rest of us?

We can choose the false freedom of a Hannibal the Cannibal by seeking to satisfy our desires rather than intending to move toward moral goals. More nobly, we can intend to reach the noble though constrained freedom of virtuous pagans. Or we can intend to reach the perfect freedom of a Christ-like person. The pagan disciplines himself to become a truly good man, human animal, while the Christian disciplines himself to imitate the Creator as He goes about His work of creating and shaping and sustaining created being. But we must remember that even in the world of the resurrected, the human members of the Body of Christ remain human animals, perfected and completed and in full communion with the rest of that Body, but human animals.

This process of imitating God clearly can work only if we struggle to understand Creation to the extent possible given our historical circumstances. God won't punish Aquinas for mistakes he made because he was born before the invention of the telescope but the Almighty won't be happy with those who turn away from a proper study of Creation. When we turn away from Creation, we turn away from the Creator and imagine we can ascend to direct communion with God in His transcendence.

When we try to respond to reality, we'll be free because we'll be moving along with the Creator in His perfect freedom. We'll be thinking along with Him in His perfect freedom. We'll be feeling along with Him in His perfect freedom. We'll be acting along with Him in His perfect freedom. We will have become true members of the Body of Christ as I will discuss in Part V, *Communal Men and the Pilgrim Body of Christ*.

12.3 Freedom as a Reaching Out into Creation

I've taken a position that relationships are primary rather than concrete stuff. Even the flesh-and-blood of our bodies are secondary forms of created being. God created this concrete world, this world of thing-like being, from some sort of abstract stuff hinted at in the work of physicists and then He shaped this concrete stuff into what He needed to tell His story, the story centered around the Son of God.

When God brought Creation into existence, He was acting with the full power of God.

When He began to shape the primary stuff, the Primordial Universe—which I claim to be manifested truths, He was working within the constraints of His own decision to bring a specific Creation into existence. We could say, analogically, that the Almighty was acting as a metaphysician in knowing the primary truths He'd manifested and a mathematician and physicist when He began to shape those truths to increasingly particular forms of being.

When He began to tell a story using this particular universe, the Almighty was acting as an author telling a tale of evolution and development of non-living and living entities interacting, forming relationships.

Our freedom, and our rights such as they are in reality, are brought into being by that story God is telling and aren't found in the thing-like stuff of bodies and our environments nor in realms of transcendental truths magically accessible to human minds. Our freedom and our rights involve relationships formed by human beings who are the result of a long and complex evolutionary process not yet over and are also the result of the evolution and development of human communities and also—of course—the result of development of that individual which is ideally dominated by complex, morally guided responses to the opportunities and problems of God's Creation.

Once again, I quote Henri Bergson from *Time and Free Will* [4]:

[W]e are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have that indefinable resemblance to it which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work. [page 172]

Here's an interesting statement made by Kenneth Minogue in *The Liberal Mind* [20]:

[I]n considering the circumstances in which free independence is possible, we must observe that it depends to a very large extent on an intellectual interest in how things are, in contrast to the desire to make things conform to a pre-established plan. [page 151]

In making peace with reality and responding to it in such a way that we develop that artistic personality alluded to by Bergson, we achieve freedom. If we are in a community of like-minded human beings, we might well establish strong relationships of the sort which mandate that we acknowledge strong rights on the part of others and others will acknowledge strong rights on our part.

In an essay on the German school of history, John Emerich Edward Dalberg, Lord Acton, referred to liberals as “promoters of secondary liberties” and I think he would have at least accepted for discussion my claim that freedom and an artistic personality are deeply connected, that is, my claim that this deep relationship between true art and a free life tells us where lies the primary liberties, those which conduce to a well-ordered human life, one in which the human being has become a person, forming relationships with the world which allow him to become a world of sorts, a morally purposeful narrative. Both world and person are unified, coherent, and complete in meaningful senses, being open to that which is still greater, that which encompasses them on a larger scale without compromising their existences as world or person.

Think of this in terms of fractals which “are typically self-similar patterns, where self-similar means they are ‘the same from near as from far’. Fractals may be exactly the same at every scale, or . . . they may be nearly the same at different scales. The definition of fractal goes beyond self-similarity per se to exclude trivial self-similarity and include the idea of a detailed pattern repeating itself.” (See the article at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractal>.) Under this way of thinking, an individual human beings is a smaller version of one or more human communities, similar to those communities in a sense much like that used by mathematicians, that is, the smaller entity is ‘shaped’ the same as the larger ² And that community is similar to the world, itself similar to the entirety of Creation.

A civilization is something like a work of art just as a human person is. A large community, even if prosperous in some ways isn’t a true civilization without having true unity, true coherence, and true completeness. A human being, in the same way, isn’t a human person if he has not those traits.

Having those traits, that human person is free even if he lives a life

²It’s important to always keep in mind that the meaning of ‘shaped’ isn’t different from the naive meaning but it is abstracted to a higher level as modern geometries aren’t different from Euclidean geometry so much as they are greater and more abstract in what they consider.

constricted in many ways by either his fellowmen or by the environmental or economic or political conditions during his lifetime. That human person is aware of his accomplishments, his talents and limitations, knows of the difficulties of his life in a way that affirms his traits of personhood—unity and coherence and completeness. If political or economic or technological conditions are adverse, he might have only a very constrained freedom, maybe hardly any at all outside of his own thoughts and private actions, but his freedom is truly that unlike the false freedom of those exploited consumers who think themselves free because they can watch dirty and mind-numbing movies.

In his important book, *The Liberal Mind* [20], Professor Minogue made a number of insightful comments and advanced some powerful and plausible claims. He told us:

One cannot organize a work of art; nor write poetry to rule. The man who sets out quite deliberately to maximize his own happiness is likely to fail. Whilst one may, perhaps, be able to create vast pools of technicians at will, one cannot create political stability or a nation of mystics. There are many things in the world which we cannot attain simply because we want them; and some are beyond our grasp precisely because we want them too much. [page 157]

It's interesting that a serious political philosopher saw freedom in art and used more conventional market-based examples as counter-examples. Should the major players in our political and economic marketplaces be more like artists than like Harvard MBAs? I suspect that's true. Freedom can't be planned, not even in such a noble but ill-fated effort as the writing of the United States Constitution. After all, as Professor Minogue also told us:

There are no means which serve the precise end of freedom, for freedom, like happiness, is not an end that can be pursued. [page 158]

As I've speculated before: true freedom is beyond the capacities of created natures and can be obtained only if God blesses us with a share of His own life. I've also speculated that we are saved as members of the Body of

Christ and that raises more complicated possibilities of the freedom-lovers, or at least freedom-toleraters, amongst us being capable of providing to their more timid or more closed-minded fellowmen what is needed for being part of that Body. This would mean that something of the sort could occur in this world but only by way of strong communities containing some significant percentage of freedom-lovers.

The liberal arguments for some sort of rights, both those of 19th century lovers of freedom and those of 20th century lovers of centralized and intrusive governments, break down for those arguments assume some sort of uniform human nature which has a desire for freedom and for human rights which demand much of all. The percentage of those who love freedom enough so that they dare to reach out into Creation and respond in faith and hope and love is probably pretty small, but that's all right. As St. Paul told us more than once, each of us is a human creature with gifts but not all gifts. If we are all to be free, we have to learn to depend upon those who show they can lead us to better understandings and better artistic renderings of created being of sorts. Those truer freedom-lovers have also to learn to depend upon those capable of planning and managing in appropriate activities as well as those with skills of pastoral leadership or teaching or building houses or caring for sick babies.

Human freedom isn't to be found in satisfaction of undisciplined desires and not in some illusory individualistic independence; human freedom is to be found "when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have that indefinable resemblance to it which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work." That happens when we are able to identify and accept our individual and communal roles in the Body of Christ and when we are able to properly develop our individual selves and our communal selves to play that role competently and maybe even with some excellence.

12.4 The Moral Obligation to Be Active

When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child and there will be no escape. [1 Thessalonians 5:3]

Our environments can switch rapidly from, say, a benign climate to

conditions which cause famine, starving some and weakening the sick so that minor diseases become fatal. New disease organisms can sweep through large regions of the earth, killing many. Human predators can gain an upper hand on peaceful communities, enslaving or impoverishing prosperous communities. Why do such changes occur?

One of the true lessons coming from modern empirical knowledge, mathematics and physics and biology and history, is that complex and unpredictable events occur whenever two independent systems interact. This occurs even if the two systems are themselves simple and fully determined. The standard example is two pendulums of different length (different periods of movement) which are tied together. The resulting motion will be fully determined and yet unpredictable to any existing human methods.

When we consider living creatures, the two independent systems which interact are the living creature (sometimes assumed falsely to be defined fully by its genes) and its environment. That living creature can be a human being trying to feed his children in a world suddenly short of work or a virus seeking to survive and prosper in its way. To reduce living creatures and their contexts to a simple creature/environment interaction is clearly a great oversimplification of the sort which is necessary for making basic points. After all, I was interacting with my own body and its damaged tendons when I typed the original version of this essay. In the few minutes prior to that, I had conversed with my sister and used her coffee-maker and microwave oven. While waiting for the coffee to brew, I had inspected her yard with its grass in some parts that is already dormant and the grass in other parts that needed at least one mowing before it entered winter sleep, and I had made tentative plans to mow and clean up in a couple of days. Over the course of that day, I interacted with various human social and economic systems and also with the system I could call New England weather—unpredictable largely because this region sits at the point of interaction of several continental and oceanic systems.

On that day, years ago, I was trying to figure out how to do some important reading and some equally important writing while meeting a commitment for several looming projects at my parish. My schedule for the next month was getting worse at least partly because there was a shortage of workers on the projects and those who were willing to help had uncertainties in their schedules. In addition, New England's weather could have forced me to mow the lawn and rake leaves at an inconvenient time. There were also some logistical and supply problems on the parish projects and some

odd jobs I was to do for friends. Each of these interacting ‘systems’ was pretty simple but we all know how complex a situation gets when such ‘simple’ systems interact. One change to a seemingly settled part of my schedule and I had to rethink my priorities and maybe scramble to meet the most important commitments.

Our everyday, boring schedule problems are often caused by interactions of independent systems. The concept is pretty easy but the details can be very complex at the level of organizing supply lines for an army or forecasting the path of a storm moving toward colliding fronts.

The interesting and important problems of evolutionary biology, including many that affect us directly, come mostly from the results of interacting systems. Our character traits and our body structures are sometimes the result of compromises or bad results forced by the interaction of our ancestors with their environments, including other human beings. For example, many of us have sinuses that don’t drain properly or sciatic nerve problems because the human body evolved from that of a crouching ape-like creature.

When we deal with human personality traits, we’re better off taking the Bible as a source of ‘wisdom’ and evolutionary biology, history, and other empirical disciplines as a source of ‘explanations’. The Bible can provide purposes and guide our direction while empirical knowledge can help us to develop strategies for dealing with, say, that small percentage of impulsively violent young men who are little trouble in a well-disciplined society but can be great trouble when they grow up without strong male guidance. One example of such a young man is Genghis Khan whose father and grandfather were strong leaders seeking to form a peaceful confederation of the Mongol tribes. A paranoid Chinese government instigated tribal war that resulted in the deaths of nearly all the leaders of the Mongol tribes including the men in the family of Genghis Khan.

So, let’s consider the complacency that can be called a form of laziness that kills our children and enslaves our grandchildren. Attaining security and comfort require a lot of energy—high-energy expenditures in bursts and the slow drain of energy which comes from constant vigilance. In many ways, we don’t exist either inside our own bodies or outside of them in our environments but rather on the boundaries of these systems. It’s tiring to be always pushed this way by our desire to soar over the trees and then pulled back by gravity—that Superman cape around our shoulders isn’t so much a help as we would like.

Even when we mature, if we mature, our moral goals, such as to serve

God and country and to care for our families, can be frustrated by economic factors or by stupidity or criminality of the leaders of our country. We discover we're on different paths from those of our loved ones and we fight through brush only to bang heads against a cliff-wall. Our dreams often exceed our capacities or our financial resources. And we try to relax from this constant effort as much as possible. Our social and physical environments often seem no more than struggles between order and disorder. Sometimes disorder dominates and sometimes order. We're finding now that disorder may be upon us some day soon in public health issues—our technological tricks are being matched by fungi that eat our crops and by retroviruses that chew up our immune systems. We seem to be running full speed to stay ahead of the approaching famine or plague and we only need to slow down for a second or to stumble and disorder will catch us and overwhelm us. Or so it seems for now.

Because of the bursts of high levels of energy expenditure and the constant drain from the need for vigilance, we have strong tendencies to relax when possible. In recent decades, we Americans took our chances for soft jobs with corporate or governmental benefits. Many of us left our neighborhoods and worship communities, entering the public marketplaces for most of our needs and pleasures and jobs. We allowed the banks and stockbrokers to turn our family assets and local businesses into fungible assets which were soon enough sold to corporations. We encouraged our government to enslave us by various sorts of benefits, leaving us vulnerable to impoverishment of various sorts when that government and those outside interests no longer share goals with us—our government is increasingly interested in overseas adventures and our corporations find cheaper labor in Asia and also find they can profit from morally corrupt goods and services. In my area, western Massachusetts, and probably in most of the United States, banks were opening and centralized hospitals were growing larger at the expense of community hospitals, circa 2007, as fast as manufacturing operations were moving overseas in the 1980s and 1990s and as fast as family farms were disappearing before that. And we reacted by turning on the TV after getting home from our jobs at the local branch of a nationwide retailer or the marketing office of a computer manufacturer that had all its factories in Taiwan.

We took it easy because the world seemed so peaceful and orderly to us living in the United States, so ready to offer us comfort and security. What we were really doing was emptying out the bank accounts created by the

hard, smart work of our ancestors and now we're taking reverse mortgages on all that we own. The next generations will pay the bills, either by living in relative poverty as other countries stop selling them hard goods on credit or by giving up their moral integrity if the United States uses its military power to become a full-fledged empire, stealing what its citizens can no longer produce or grow.

Again, St. Paul told us:

When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child and there will be no escape. [1 Thessalonians 5:3]

The disorder of this world can overwhelm even a morally well-ordered society, and wisdom recognizes this. Wisdom also recognizes that prosperous human societies will often destroy themselves by complacency. Peace and security leads to a softening of moral and intellectual fibers, and woe to the generations that live when disorder dominates, when peace and security are mere memories.

Man cannot abide in his pomp, he is like the beasts that perish. [Psalms 49:12 and repeated as verse 20]

In his prosperity, man becomes as stupid as a beast, no longer making the effort to anticipate the future and to prepare for it, no longer even seeing the need to make that effort when his favorite NFL team is coming on the tube or when her favorite store is having a sale down at a nearby mall, no longer making any effort to serve God or the children of God—not even children and grandchildren of the NFL fan or mall-shopper.

St. Paul provides the wisdom to put this human tendency in perspective for Christians anticipating our salvation, our rescue from our own frailties and from the struggle between order and disorder which is so much a part of God's story in this mortal existence. Empirical knowledge, including the historical sections of the Bible, gives us some understanding of why we are like this, that is, why such creatures as human beings would have emerged in God's story. The story of Jacob is that of a devious man who survived and prospered and left children who multiplied rapidly over the succeeding generations. This is pretty much the same story told by the more rational and hardheaded of sociobiologists. I sometimes wonder about the blindness

and rigidity of those Christians who are conversant with the Biblical view of human beings and then get upset when sociobiologists provide a very similar view in different language and a different intellectual context. We should be able to accept the serious scientific content of Richard Dawkins' work even as we filter out the philosophical and atheological babble.

Both the Bible and empirical knowledge can tell us what we need to do to play our role in this story, forming ourselves and our children into God-centered and morally well-ordered human beings who respond to our natural moral duties and to God's commands rather than responding to our environments in the way of stupid and lazy beasts. The number of hours we Americans work and the number of hours we spend in school are meaningless—we train ourselves and our children to 'learn' and to 'work' at the command of the gods of the marketplace, political and economic, and to the needs of those idols. Hardworking men and women can be the most complacent of all.

We need to find ways to remain constantly aware of possible futures. We need to find ways of recognizing those who make good watchmen and those who can lead us wisely according to the reports of those watchmen.

Most of all, we need to be active in shaping our own futures. How can a couch potato be considered to be free?

13 Playing a Role in Narratives

13.1 Why Do We Live and Act Only Forward in Time?

The BaBar Collaboration conducts experiments and analyzes the results at the BaBar detector at *SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory*—see <http://www6.slac.stanford.edu/>. Some of the physicists in the BaBar Collaboration have recently found direct evidence of asymmetric time-reversal in decays of the B-meson. In the overview article, *Viewpoint: Particle Decays Point to an Arrow of Time* found at <http://physics.aps.org/articles/v5/129>, we can read:

Time moves irrevocably in one direction. Things get old, decay, and fall apart, but they rarely ever reassemble and grow young. But at the particle level, time's arrow is not so clearly defined. Most collisions and other particle interactions look the same whether run forwards or backwards. Physicists have, however, identified a few reactions that appear to change when time is reversed, but the reasoning has assumed certain relations between fundamental symmetries of particle physics. The BaBar collaboration has now observed time-reversal violation directly and unambiguously in decays of B mesons. The measured asymmetry, reported in *Physical Review Letters* [footnote elided] is statistically significant and consistent with indirect observations.

Why is it that we could have at least some asymmetric time-reversal at the particle level but no evidence of any such time-reversal at the macroscopic level? Indeed, we have no evidence of complex thing-like being, as

such, engaging in any processes of time-reversal, though symmetric time-reversal is allowed by the mathematics. Even the rare elementary particle interactions which seem to have a short jog back in time move along with the general flow forward in time ¹; in any case, those movements back in time are ephemeral, quickly undone.

In a local sense, many of the most important, and certainly most readily quantifiable, of the physical events of our universe are well-described by the equations and reasoning procedures of Newtonian physics under most conditions and special relativity under the remaining conditions. Newtonian physics and special relativity are both symmetric in time, indifferent—so to speak—between movement ‘forward’ or ‘backward’ in time. Yet, we don’t see even more plausible reversals happening very often. Even a small rack of billiard balls isn’t going to reassemble so that they rest peacefully against each other at their starting point. Can such a forward bias in time be caused by the small amount of energy which is dissipated upon impact? Perhaps. Or perhaps something else is going on. Perhaps there are higher-order effects from the quantum wavefunctions of complex objects or groups of objects which keep them from returning to an initial starting point. Those higher-order effects might be hard to identify and to quantify. The forward bias in time doesn’t seem to be caused by huge transfers of energy even when huge transfers are involved in the underlying events.

Something is going on that we don’t yet understand. In fact, we don’t even have any insight into these regions of obscurity, any insight which could be subjected to the processes of contemplation which might lead to something we could call understanding. What we do know is that time moves forward, stories move in a certain direction, at the level of human beings and human communities and at the level of most entities we can directly observe.

We have to move forward optimistically, assuming that what we know to such extraordinary precision, such as particle interactions described as QED, is true, truly true, but we have to also realize that there are holes, complexities, and unknown regions beyond the frontier. Moreover, Newtonian and special relativity physics describe stuff subject to global interactions not so clearly subject to the laws, or more general rules, of the constituent stuff. Even QED describes the stuff of, say, semi-conductors

¹In purely physical terms, you could say that they are captured by the flow from lesser to greater entropy.

but doesn't tell us anything about the larger-scale events which occur when that stuff functions as the stuff of computers. When we generalize from our yet incomplete knowledge, we are making assumptions. When we do it well, we travel, we can hope with some sureness of foot, in that field of metaphysics considered at best a questionable human field of thought by advocates of some viewpoints such as 'scientific materialism'. It's disturbing when those advocates, including some very competent and insightful scientists, deny metaphysics by engaging unconsciously in a sloppy form of metaphysics.

In my various writings, on the narrative nature of this world, the universe as seen in light of God's purposes, I have speculated strongly that this is the level where the forward movement of time comes into play.

Complex entities in this universe move forward in time. That is the basic fact we experience and stars experience. To use a basic common-sense principle, similar to that which Walter J. Freeman applied to the issue of causality and freedom of choice, we can say:

Instead of postulating a law building up from the constituents of things to explain why we move forward in time, we start with the premise that we move forward in time, and then we seek to explain various properties of things and this universe as a result of our forward movement in time. [page 5]

We live in a world where a building can be reduced to brick and timbers and copper wires and PVC pipes but the properties of those components don't sum up to the properties of a building. In the simplest possible terms, many of the properties of the building come from the directed activities of carpentry and plumbing and pavement construction as well as the use of the building. Other properties come from the context of the hidden or visible utility systems and roadways and the various surrounding social and economic and political systems. Moreover, this process of construction, or even destruction, is obviously biased to move forward in time. In fact, we could say that knowledge of the building enables us to understand and explain brick and timbers and copper wires and PVC pipes.

I don't mean to return to any sort of design theology, only to point out there are a variety of realms and levels of created being not directly observable in the particle interactions as electromagnetic radiation separated from matter in the early millenia of the universe's expansion nor in those of the

sun's nuclear reactions and the resulting electromagnetic events. Some of those realms and levels of created being can only be known and explored by way of the abstractions of mathematics and by way of other abstract concepts corresponding to aspects and parts of our greater realms of Creation, including the concepts of narratives.

13.2 Narrative Plausibility as Approximation to Truth

It seems to be hard to say in what sense a truth can exist apart from a context, even a truth so seemingly clear as $1 + 1 = 2$ or “Two contradictory statements cannot both be true.” Think of it in terms of works such as Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica* which attempted to ground our ‘intuitions’ about arithmetic upon an elaborate formal apparatus. In order to build that apparatus a large amount of sophisticated mathematical thought is already assumed. This doesn't mean that such works are useless—they can be at least consistency checks—but it does mean such works don't provide a foundation for our belief that $1 + 1 = 2$. I think it was Wittgenstein, on his way out of his studies in mathematical logic, who pointed out that the apparatus of Whitehead and Russell used a system of indexing which assumed the very truths which were to be justified.

It seems more likely that our mathematical systems are the result of bootstrapping operations which started from simple observations of the nature of physical entities. One apple plus another apple gives two apples. Certain relationships between the sides of a pyramid and also between those sides and its height lead to structures that don't fall on your head so often. From there, progress was slow for centuries, accelerating and often producing dramatic jumps in more recent centuries, certainly with Leibniz and Newton. After some digestion of these major jumps, and perhaps at times when smaller jumps have accumulated, mathematicians have reformulated human understanding of what mathematics is and what formal truths are. This is not to deny the large amount of exploration which can be done on each plateau once a formal understanding has been accepted, but I'm not setting out to produce a serious work of the history of mathematical thought. I'm raising a very large claim:

Individual truths, as creatures can know them, are true only in context of the entirety of Creation, though our view of that entirety is necessarily time-bound and contingent.

Absolute truths have to be a plausible part of a narrative understanding of Creation; contingent truths might be set in the context of a part of Creation but still assume the entirety. Plato and Aristotle produced a narrative of sorts for higher pagan thought but they didn't do it in a self-conscious manner as did Augustine when he produced, in *The Confessions* and *The City of God*, a well-organized narrative for a system combining Christian theological beliefs and Neoplatonic metaphysics. St. Thomas Aquinas also produced pieces which he never put together into a true narrative. Putting aside issues of misunderstandings, it was Danté who produced that narrative, though in a far too explicit form.

If we follow these great pre-modern thinkers, updating to what we now know of Creation and cleaning up some of their errors of substance and presentation, we find that there is still the need for intellectual developmental processes which involve bootstrapping. We have to rebuild even those parts of the foundation which are in good shape to recover a truer understanding and to integrate it into the parts we'll be adding.

This book is part of an effort to produce a sketchy narrative of Creation. I'm a child of an age of some substantial historical awareness, an awareness that cuts across true (human) history, our understandings of the evolution of life, our understandings of the development of this expansionary phase of our universe, etc.

As our understandings of all these narratives have become more sophisticated, we've found ourselves facing a conundrum of sorts. Under my claim that truths are contextual, we can say the ancient Greeks could understand the elementary truths of arithmetic in light of arithmetic itself along with their understanding of geometry, physics, and some sort of Platonic-Aristotelian understanding of the human mind in light of their limited stock of empirical knowledge. We now know that arithmetic can be more truly understood as part of a whole that includes transfinite set theory, modern logic, quantum physics and all that, more modern understandings of the human mind, etc. We can now see the world as a far more complex story, more complex in its plot but also in its material stuff and its characters. Even simple truths are part of a not so simple whole.

I believe that Wittgenstein said something of this sort: the search for

the foundations of our universe may well reveal that the foundations are supported by the superstructure. This is in the same spirit as my claim but I'm claiming that the superstructure is largely a narrative, the story God is telling, a purposeful story in which purpose isn't something far out in the future but rather to be found in the actual processes of evolution and development.

13.3 Moral Narratives and Differing Scales of Time and Space

As matters currently stand in theories about physical reality and in philosophical analyses of those theories, there are no signs of homogeneity over the vast differences of scales in spacetime studied by scientists ². In general, created being at the quantum level (think of 'subatomic' levels of energy changes rather than small in terms of space) seems to be contained in created being at the macroscopic level but that larger-scale stuff has its own properties, not just the sum of its components' properties. There is also evidence that the universe might have its own nature apart from what it 'contains'. See my essay, *A Universe is More than it Contains* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=163>, for a discussion of the interesting fact that an expanding universe subject to general relativity has no global law of conservation of energy.

Symmetry-breaking is a useful metaphor and seemingly a straightforward truth in some cases. Symmetries have been broken so that one elegant entity becomes two or more entities of greater concreteness or particularity. Modern cosmological physics and particle physics have produced strong evidence that the electroweak force shattered into the electromagnetic force and the weak nuclear force. Symmetry-breaking might have been involved in many of the events which led to our universe being in its current state. Created being was probably strongly unified, at least in many of its aspects, when the universe was so dense that it took up less space than an atom takes in this current stage of expansion—being has frozen and has shattered in various ways that can be compared to a large body of water freezing and

²Of course, we do have the unity from our common-sense: the stars and human beings and subatomic particles are parts of the same universe and do interact and even contribute to the being of each other.

cracking or shattering in various places. In this way of thinking, the beginning of the current expansionary phase of the universe was largely a phase change, from an extremely hot, symmetric state to a relatively cool state of broken symmetry.

But I'm conjecturing that something stranger has occurred. This shattering of symmetry has split being along lines that we can't perceive directly, only with our minds. Space and time don't add up to form larger scales of spacetime, though, as I noted above, many assume or hope that the universe is just a gathering of macroscopic chunks of spacetime which are themselves somehow built up directly from the strange entities explored by subatomic physics. That is, the macroscopic realm of concrete being in this universe seems to be something more than, or different from, a mere assembly of large amounts of subatomic being.

At least as a speculative adventure, I'll take seriously the lack of evidence of homogeneity of spacetime, perhaps the very nature of matter and energy, across different scales. I'll claim:

There are cracks in created being, in a manner of speaking, and the very small, the medium-sized scale where we live, and the very large are somehow sewed together. (A bad way of speaking, but mathematicians do sometimes talk in such ways when putting together strange geometric structures or spaces.)

What does this mean? I don't know and I'll admit it might not prove to be literally true. Someone might come up with a brilliant theory which can tie together the 'quantum' realm, the macroscopic realm, and the cosmological realm as one homogeneous physical structure. Based upon the current state of our understanding of the physical world, I doubt this can happen. At the same time I do remain convinced that the universe is a coherent entity, in itself and as an assembly of other entities, just as a human being is a coherent entity while being composed of a variety of organs and materials, each of which can be understood separately in coherent terms though 'coming to life' only when part of the entire human organism. My claim that the universe seen in light of God's purposes forms a world, unified and coherent and complete, isn't dependent upon an absolutely imposed form of homogeneity or isotropism. The universe is made up of galaxies and black-holes and gas clouds and various sorts of dark matter and dark energy. It won't surprise me if we learn this universe is made up of multiple realms

of spacetime, multiple geometries holding in the various objects in the previous sentence and also their components and the larger-scale structures of which they form a part.

As I currently understand created being, a symmetry break occurred when the concrete stuff of this universe was shaped from a more abstract stuff, but the symmetry is different from any that would give a set of laws which would ‘shatter’ directly to Schrodinger’s equation in quantum mechanics and Einstein’s field equation in the general theory of relativity. More accurately, the symmetry-breaks which resulted in the quantum and cosmological realms are examples of a more general event, the particularization of abstract forms of being. I don’t see any reason to believe that this particularization had to occur in such a way that ‘dimensionality’, the nature or even number of spacetime, would have to be the same at all scales of this universe.

If we consider all that we know and all the open questions, we’re probably further from developing a theory of created being in its wholeness than Aristotle was from developing a valid theory of gravity. The best news in this field is the fact that we understand what is at issue, we have a variety of interesting and difficult questions, and we can make some intelligent statements about various aspects of this realm of created being—this realm which can be explored by empirical means or by various sorts of analyses allied with empirical investigation.

I’ll suggest here that we know not much more about the realms of being we can directly perceive than we do about the small and the large, as incomplete as our knowledge also is of those realms. What we do know is that the macroscopic realm is, in a manner of speaking, more intensely narrative, the cosmological realm is still strongly narrative, and the quantum realm seems to be something which would be to the liking of radical reductionistic materialists. The universe is itself a narrative and, seen as a world in light of God’s purposes, has a life-story, but it’s at the level of macroscopically observable entities, stars and galaxies as well as frogs and humans, that we see the emergence of some actual entities, and some plausible but as yet undiscovered entities, which are fully moral characters and not just things in a story.

How does this level of thing-like being, complete with living things, come into existence and maintain its existence? We readily admit the miraculous nature of life, but we err by not realizing how remarkable it is that this macroscopic level of narrative exists. If some disembodied intelligent

creature from another universe were to be told about quantum levels of reality and about what we might call the Einsteinian universe, would he be able to posit the existence of our macroscopic realm? Would he be able to hypothesize that such a macroscopic realm would give rise to self-aware creatures, evolving in family lines and developing during individual lifetimes and sometimes even being self-aware and morally purposeful?

This macroscopic realm might result largely from matter and energy surging up from the quantum realm into the spacetime structure of this universe, but—I remind the reader—something else seems to come in from more abstract realms of being, something which differentiates this scale of being in this universe. Moral stories don't come about by adding up quantum events nor do they take on only shapes dictated by gravity.

What we do know is very important: we human beings are the types of creatures made to live in a narrative, a morally purposeful realm of created being. We need to speculate about this situation rather than continuing to, for example, put one set of deterministic chemical events up against human feelings of freedom. Too many scientists and philosophers and theologians and others are like college sophomores who think that their success in their classwork means they truly understand the world in terms of calculus and chemistry and physics and American history and Metaphysics 101.

Part V

Communal Men and the Body of Christ

14 Introduction to Communal Men

This part of the book is a presentation of my understanding of salvation as an enfolding into the Body of Christ by which we remain our individual selves, perfected and completed as much as possible for such creatures as we are, but we'll also be fully the Body of Christ in the small and that Body will be each of us in the large, though mostly the Body will be Jesus Christ. We are saved as individual and communal human beings, as our own selves and as members of our families and as members of our nations and as members of our occupational groups and so forth, members, that is, of the Body of Christ. This can be readily compared to the Trinitarian doctrine where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three divine Persons but are one God. The saved will be a multitude of human persons but we'll be one Body of Christ.

15 Communities Are Real, Not Merely a Way of Speaking

15.1 Connecting to the Other

In the December, 2007 edition of *Brain in the News* published by *Dana Foundation* (see their website at <http://www.dana.org/>), there was a reprint of an article *I Feel Your Pain*, from <http://Salon.com/>. It seems that specific brain-cells have been found which respond to distress on the part of a nearby creature. True pain can be felt when we see others suffering.

Why not? The destruction by fire of cells on the tips of our fingers doesn't magically lead to pain felt in our brains or in parts of the nervous system between finger and brain. There is no magical, nor metaphysical, foundation to the processes of pain in our bodies. It's a result of biological selection processes which favored nervous systems which registered damage in such ways as to force the organism to react strongly. There is something real about pain but that reality is mediated by way of nervous system interactions more the result of tinkering than of design of the sort possible to modern engineers.

It seems quite reasonable that we would be made so that those brain-cells registering pain might well react to the pain of others, especially others who might be members of our communities. It's this simple: if we build drones or other robotic devices to monitor forests for fires, then any reaction tied to direct detection of a fire can also be activated if the robot sees another robot acting as if it detected a fire. In a human being, or another social animal, we can merely add a mapping 'module' in the brain to put ourselves in the place of another and that reaction is experienced as something akin to the pain we would feel if we were actually in that situation ourselves.

Tentatively, we can say that empathy is the response of certain brain-

cells to certain sorts of stimuli. That stimuli can be directly provided by the surrounding environment or it can be provided by signaling of various sorts.

Is that really empathy? Is that what ties us together during times of distress and trouble? Is that what motivates some to take in orphans and others to go off to serve in regions just hit by natural disasters? Is that what leads Joe to feel sorry for a man who just lost his beloved wife even when he's the jerk who cheated Joe out of a promotion? We seem to have a need for some sort of higher explanation, something that would raise our emotions—loves and hates—into a realm more pure than our world of flesh and blood, dirt and rocks. There's no reason to expect such an explanation exists. Though the entities of this concrete realm be shaped from more abstract stuff, neither concrete entities of this world nor their complex aspects are to be found in some realm of ethereal being and beings.

15.2 Communities Aren't Just Collections of Individuals

The radical individualist understanding of human beings implies that human communities will form when a lot of individuals gather or are placed in one spot if there are needs or desires which drive or pull those individuals to form economic or social or political contracts, using 'contract' in a loose way. This idea, however wrong in many ways, has a kernel of truth.

History, including that of the settlement of the Americas gives us strong evidence that, for example, Kansas City and Los Angeles became large and complex cities as human beings gathered though those individuals were from a variety of ethnic groups and spoke a variety of languages. Such processes of rapidly building human communities have produced more economic successes than political or cultural successes. Many of those successes, including American cities and some others around the world have turned into centers of social and political and cultural disorder. If there ever was truly a city on a hill in the United States, it can't be seen in 2013. There are only cities slouching toward Detroit, the inner-circle of American urban life. At that, such metropolitan disasters as Chicago and New York and Los Angeles still have something of the traits of Western Civilization, unlike our centrally planned suburbs and our towns become bedroom 'communities'

which resemble nothing so much as the lifeless towns and cities of 1960s TV situation comedies though now inhabited by families not so different from those in the background of the novel *Clockwork Orange*.

Communities are the result of processes described in brilliantly prescient but ultimately unsatisfying ways by Adam Smith and other Classical Liberal theorists of the *Invisible Hand*. Theories often precede disciplined empirical explorations and analyses; in fact, those preliminary theories often make that fact-gathering work possible. Smith probably gave us as much theory as was needed for empirical scientists to get to work, and empirical researchers have done a lot of work, having a good enough framework of theory to structure studies and to form better theories which might be much different from the starting places. The theories are still quite weak, the greater understandings are exquisitely bad, partly because no one outside of the field of sociobiology is trying to honestly deal with the very inconvenient results of that empirical research into human nature and how we got to be this way.

Back in 2007, Professor Robert Putnam of Harvard published a study which indicated there are some serious problems with diversity inside a human community, some of those problems being serious enough to deeply damage communities by destroying the existing moral and social bonds of each of the diverse peoples living in so-called multicultural communities. The author had largely completed the study years before and held back the results because they are disturbing to liberals of all sorts, advocates of big government and advocates of radically free markets alike.

Here is a short summary from a newspaper article:

It has become increasingly popular to speak of racial and ethnic diversity as a civic strength. From multicultural festivals to pronouncements from political leaders, the message is the same: our differences make us stronger.

But a massive new study, based on detailed interviews of nearly 30,000 people across America, has concluded just the opposite. Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam—famous for *Bowling Alone*, his 2000 book on declining civic engagement—has found that the greater the diversity in a community, the fewer people vote and the less they volunteer, the less they give to charity and work on community projects. In the most diverse communities, neighbors trust one another about half as much as they do in

the most homogeneous settings. The study, the largest ever on civic engagement in America, found that virtually all measures of civic health are lower in more diverse settings.

“The extent of the effect is shocking,” says Scott Page, a University of Michigan political scientist.

[Michael Jonas, *Boston Globe*, as published in *International Herald Tribune* on August 5, 2007]

I would suggest that everyone thinking about these matters consider the desirability of a social model corresponding to both the traditional ways that the insurance industry handled risk and also the Catholic principle of distributivism in economic and political systems. The general principle is that everything is localized as much as possible. Acting on such a principle would protect local customs, ways of doing business, where ‘local’ covers ethnic and cultural and religious communities and minimizes various sorts of transaction costs, only some of which can be quantified in financial terms. It would protect these more local or more focused communities so that the members may reasonably expect certain customary responses and ways of behavior during casual transactions in the store or during negotiations for the sale of a house or during dating or during the public debates in which more voices should be heard. A localist bias would also make it more likely that the higher-level communities form by way of voluntary interaction of individuals and healthy lower-level communities.

It would seem to me that feelings of distrust are increased when you have to expend energy and invest attention in a high percentage of your social interactions of various types. Once you start developing habits of closely examining body movements and facial expressions, vocal inflections and choice of words, you’re going to be keyed up to enter most of your social interactions as if facing someone who is a predator.

Let me choose a concrete example. We enter a retail store with expectations about the behavior of the clerks and cashiers. When I was growing up, prices were pretty much set in most retail stores in the U.S., most certainly in my hometown. The local grocers, residents of the town, set prices so they could support their family at a decent level. Every one knew those grocers worked long hours and were not making a killing off their trade—though some will always nurture suspicions against all the evidence. The local residents did business with those local grocers rather than running

from store to store or town to town in an effort to save money. Generally, all the stores in town did have similar prices.

Coming from a set-price culture, I found it exciting the first time I went to Tijuana where the natives and the 'with-it' Americans ignored price tags or took them as the starting point for downward negotiations. When merchants and customers have different attitudes about price negotiations, there is plenty of room for one to think the other is trying to cheat, even when all participants are honest. Our fellow human beings see our habits and customs and not the underlying virtues or vices. To be seen immediately as honest, we must show the signs of honesty which a particular man or woman expects and those signs are specific to a culture.

We should maybe give up our all-or-nothing attitude toward the public square and realize that it can be hard to interact fully even with members of morally well-ordered communities to the extent that their ways of doing business and socializing are different from ours. We should maybe have networks of public squares with each ethnic or cultural or religious community having their own squares. Most of human life could then be lived in those local squares where values and behaviors and even conventions of dress and food are shared. Younger children and perhaps timid teenagers or even adults would not often stray past those public squares in which we know each other personally and there is a valid expectation that a particular set of conventions would be obeyed rigorously. In addition to those local public areas, there could be some common political and commercial public squares connecting the more particular public spaces. Few would have a need or desire to enter those most common squares, mostly the leaders of the various communities and perhaps assistants and apprentices to those leaders.

Modern empirical knowledge indicates strongly we live in a world in which evolutionary and developmental processes dominate and few, if any entities, come to existence in their final state, few enough ever reach any state which could be seen as 'final'. The specific conversations and acts of God recorded in the Bible also show that He is a story-teller, even a coach for His characters. Our communities are also stories, narratives which develop and sometimes in unexpected ways. Our communities are not objects to be manipulated by government officials or do-gooders from Christian agencies who push immigrants, aliens, into communities of peoples of a different sort.

Intelligent design doesn't explain the human eye, nor does it explain the miracle which is a thriving human community, ancient Jerusalem or New

York City in the early 1900s or the ethnic neighborhoods in the town where I grew up.

The erector-set paradigm of engineering design is breaking down even when applied to our increasingly complex technology, but that paradigm was never fully accepted by the best of engineers nor by talented tinkers such as Henry Ford who was aware of the need to explore and experiment with the physical world and also aware in his eccentric way of the social effects of not only automobiles and roads but also of the factory system. And, unlike too many of our modern social thinkers and doers, Ford knew some of those effects could be undesirable, even downright destructive of rich and worthwhile ways of life.

It's perhaps more interesting to consider the social aspects of the construction of a bridge. The best bridge in the world can destroy nearby communities, perhaps because of a conscious concern on the part of designers with larger communities even at the expense of smaller and more local communities, perhaps because engineers haven't always been aware of the consequences of building ramps and entrances in established residential neighborhoods or in commercial neighborhoods frequented by those who would find repugnant even occasional visits to regions dominated by masses of concrete and steel. In general, those sorts of depopulated areas tend to also be crime-ridden or at least frequented by those who are down and out. If bridge construction projects can be so destructive of human communities, then imagine what havoc can be wreaked when such limited engineering design techniques are applied directly to human communities.

We should act in ways consistent with the underlying processes of our world. This world is one of developmental processes where each entity has to respond properly to what its environment offers it, or throws at it. The world operates in the way of a developing story and nearly all entities in this world also develop or evolve as if characters in a narrative rather than being blocks of steel to be ground into a few standard shapes by milling machines. We should operate according to reality as best described by our historians and physicists and many others.

We don't know where the world is heading. We don't even know what will happen to our families or countries, though we who are Christians are bound to believe that the end result will be the incorporation of those who belong to Christ into the Body of Christ without loss of their particular selves. In fact, that particularity will be enhanced so that we can be truly Christ-like in our individual human being as well as in our communal hu-

man being. Particular human beings are unique and play particular roles in human communities. We don't fill the same role in this mortal realm and we won't fill the same role in the Body of Christ. Not every human being is suited for life as a rocket engineer at NASA and not every human community is suited to be a part of a high-tech society that sends rockets to the moon. Moreover, some human beings capable of living such a life, some communities capable of so forming themselves, have no desire to do so.

A human community is a very complex entity. We should fear those who try to control the development of such an entity because they will deform it, just as if a child were to be fitted at birth with a brace to straighten the natural and necessary curve in his spine or to force his skull into the shape found in a different ethnic group.

15.3 The Many Can Be One While Remaining Each Itself.

Let me state a certain political position as:

The United States of America are but Massachusetts is.

This is a grammatical statement of the classic States' Rights doctrine—see http://en.wikipedia.com/wiki/States_rights for a discussion. This doctrine was at issue in many of the political debates and struggles in the years leading up to the American war between the states. It was, in fact, a matter of contention in the discussions of a possible federation between the North American colonies. The question I'm raising is the one implied by the title of this essay: if several or many entities join together in some sense, can they become truly one in some sense and—if so—what is that sense?

For a few years now, I've been asking this question in various writings about the most important of all corporations, that of the brethren of Christ into the Body of Christ. I discussed the reality of communities in Chapter 15, *Communities Are Real, Not Merely a Way of Speaking*. Jesus Christ is inherently and naturally the Head of His Body, but the rest of us can become members only by the completing and perfecting processes of grace

acting upon us. That grace completes and perfects not only us as individuals but also as communal human beings, as members of the communities which will also be enfolded into the Body of Christ. Not only are we saved by being incorporated into the Body of Christ as individuals; we are also saved by being incorporated as members of smaller-scale communities. This is a very complex situation, corresponding to some sorts of systems being studied by modern scientists. If I'm right that we need to follow the theorists of complex systems in this matter, then it will take time and hard work to come up with a plausible description of human communities, especially the Body of Christ.

So it is that I can write:

The Body of Christ is. And the Body of Christ are.

Not only is it true that the Body of Christ are each of its individual members but also the Body of Christ are the various communities which survive into the world of the resurrected, each community corresponding to true needs and valid desires of human beings. We aren't going to be saved into the Body of Christ as mutilated creatures but as perfected and completed creatures.

For good reasons, we Christians always use the singular for God even when speaking of the Almighty in a sense where we are concentrating on the divine community of three Persons, though my version of English grammar would allow at least the experimental claim that God is and He also are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Americans seem too well disposed to see unity in corporate collectives. We say, "General Motors is..." while the British and most others say, "General Motors are..." Let's call the whole thing an unresolvable disagreement because General Motors is and it also are. If all of its employees and divisions were **only** a part of the whole and had no needs or plans of their own, then the only possible form of being is 'is'. In the case of these entities in the mortal realm, we usually need to make a decision on 'is' or 'are' and we should realize that **only** 'is' or **only** 'are' forces us toward some sort of fragmentation or homogenization.

I ask again: "If several or many entities join together in some sense, can they become truly one in some sense and—if so—what is that sense?"

There are known evolutionary and developmental processes by which groups of individuals act together and, by those acts, form a corporate body

with at least some of the traits of a true individual. Cells come together to form various sorts of organisms, ranging from jellyfish which are barely more than well-organized colonies to human beings made of so many cells subordinate to various organs themselves subordinate to the entire human organism. Yes, those cells retain some of the characteristics of individuals, but they are mostly servants of the organism. The situation becomes more complex when we realize that many of the bacteria in our body are part of a complex ecological system which can be perhaps regarded as our greater biological self. After all, recent research indicates the various little critters in our guts and other parts of our bodies are the ones expected in our family lines. I don't know of any tight explanations of how this happens but those little critters not only exploit us but also serve us by helping us in digestion and other metabolic activities and also by occupying niches which might otherwise be occupied by bacteria decidedly less friendly to us. So it is that we can fear that "a human being are a symbiosis of human organism and various microorganisms with far greater independence than a heart or liver cell."

Let me speculate:

1. Sometimes, the several or the many can become one while retaining their own individuality.
2. Sometimes, the many can become one and lose their own individuality.
3. Sometimes, the many can become one and their individuality takes on an ambiguous status.
4. Often, we speak of the many as one but they are one only in a nominalistic sense.

I'm not at all confident that I have firm criteria for slotting particular entities in any of the above categories. I'm also not confident that I understand what happens when an individual, of perhaps defective unity, begins to fragment. That it breaks into free-standing entities and no longer exists as an corporate entity with its own individual self does not mean it was never such a unified corporate entity. I tentatively accept Ian Hacking's explanation (see *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* [15]) of the multiple personality phenomena as being learned behaviors in which the original individual walls off unpleasant memories

and that process takes on a life of its own and creates entities of some sort which live in those various ghettos in the memory. But I don't know what that means because I've come to realize that I can't define how an organism comes to be a true unity when an organism seems to be a conglomerate of a sort which evolved in a largely ad-hoc way. I don't doubt there is a true definition or a substantial understanding, but I don't pretend to have such. I do know that these phenomena of many merging into the one or merely joining some group is for real. Those phenomena present themselves as fully real and we accept them as real in a naive way though few of us see the implications for Trinitarian theology or the formation of the Body of Christ and, more mundanely, our understanding of even simple communities or ecosystems.

We should be careful to provide good definitions for those entities, objects, processes, and relationships which are important to our understanding of ourselves and our world. We often literally don't know what we're talking about. We Christians tend strongly to be willfully obscure, pushing off God's self-revelations as mysteries of a magical sort when there seem to be always ways of speaking of God as He has revealed Himself in terms of entities and objects and processes and relationships found in His Creation. After all, Creation is a manifestation of certain thoughts of God. I think it likely that God would have manifested in Creation any aspects of His transcendental being which He thought important to our relationships to Him.

Should we be surprised to see that there is a good set of examples and counter-examples for discussing God's Triune nature: He who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit in one God? Augustine found one I don't accept but it's plausible and started us off on finding better ways of discussing the truths expressed at the Council of Nicaea, better ways than the Fathers of Nicaea themselves came up with. From the article titled *Augustine of Hippo/On The Trinity* and found at http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo/On_The_Trinity, we learn:

Augustine gave classic expression to the psychological analogy of the Trinity in which the unity of essence is likened to the rational part of the human soul, composed as it is of "the mind, and the knowledge by which it knows itself, and the love by which it loves itself." [*The Trinity* by St. Augustine of Hippo]

I think we can do better than Augustine was able to do circa 400AD. I think we can discuss even the greatest and most transcendental truths in terms of God's Creation, including even the most concrete and empirical aspects of this world of rocks and dirt, rattlesnakes and elephants, daffodils and redwood trees. We merely have to have the faith and courage and willingness to respond creatively to Creation. In current terms, this means we have to be willing to draw upon the those mountains of partially digested information about this world and the abstract realms upon which it draws. We need to realize that analogies to the greatest theological truths can be drawn even from evolutionary biology and even from that bloody record of villainy and deceit and treachery we know as human history. I've even claimed that our currently unlovable governments are failed forms of some entities which are an important part of the Body of Christ.

15.4 What is Politics?

I've read Kenneth Minogue's *The Liberal Mind* [20] several times, gaining new insights into the modern political condition with each reading. Some of those insights are useful in my effort to enrich and expand our understanding of the Body of Christ as it forms in this mortal realm.

Professor Minogue writes:

Now what makes liberal individualism so plausible is that the individual is the only self-conscious entity whose limits appear to correspond to a physiological creature; and also that the thoughts and feelings which constitute institutions such as states or churches must be physically located in the minds of human beings.

...

Yet if we wish to learn about the military behavior of soldiers, we must study military activities, not psychology. And similarly, if we wish to understand politicians, we must attempt to understand the activity of politics, not discover whether politicians are nice or nasty men. [page 50]

For this chapter, the first part of the quote is most relevant. I put in the second part because it supports my contention that communities are

real and not just nominal entities—see Section 15.2, *Communities Aren't Just Collections of Individuals*, and Section 15.3, *The Many Can Be One While Remaining Each Itself*. In fact, any who've been reading my writings over the previous few years would realize that the question of the reality of entities defined by relationships has been partly addressed in my past efforts—relationships are primary over concrete entities. In a sense, human communities exist first and shape the individuals. That sense is that human being as we know it is complete only when it is communal as well as individual. Communal relationships have to work with our individual stuff, but, within those tight constraints, they shape that stuff to the nature of that community. In a very unusual program of self-formation of virtue, George Washington modeled his moral character after that of an idealized characterization of Cato the Elder, but a Colonial Virginian man of almost perfect public honor was still a far different creature than a man of almost perfect public honor in the (then-dying) Roman Republic.

In any case, I want to quote Professor Minogue again before moving on:

A social institution is a self-conscious grouping of interests. But we are not always self-conscious, and the study of institutions is far from exhausting political and social life. For in philosophizing we are confronted with another kind of evidence which in liberal individualism must be explained away, but which for other philosophers is itself a starting point. As examples of this evidence we may take a philosopher absorbed in a problem, an artist in a picture, or a soldier engaged in an attack. None of these people is self-conscious, and the behavior of each can only be explained if one understands the relevant activity. . . . But what is false in liberalism is the doctrine that these moments, times of concern with self-preservation and comparative status, rather than the times of self-forgetful absorption in activity, are the yardstick of reality. [page 51]

It might be that part of our difficulties in understanding the relationships of individuals to communities, institutions, etc. is that most people feel most alive when most self-conscious, not when losing themselves in a difficult and interesting task. They feel most alive when they are experiencing the pleasures of good food or music at a rock concert rather than while they're growing food in an intensive garden or playing a recorder. It would be in

those two latter activities that we would most resemble those activities we pretend to admire in da Vinci and the DiMaggio brothers and other high achievers.

The ability and willingness to put all of yourself into a worthwhile task outside of yourself, building a clock from scratch or solving an important problem in astrophysics or worshiping God, is a necessary part of becoming God-like, even a necessary part of sharing the life of God. To drive the point home, without being judgmental toward individuals, I sometimes get the impression in my own praying and in observing others praying that even the best of us will sometimes soak in our own holy and self-righteous juices and call it prayer. Prayer is getting lost in our conversation in which we learn to talk along with God. Along with. Not to and not even with in the face-to-face sense.

In early 2011, there was an interesting article published on the Internet, *Psychologists Ask How Well—Or Badly—We Remember Together*. In this article, found at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/04/110427171642.htm>, we can read:

Several years ago, Suparna Rajaram noticed a strange sort of contagion in a couple she was close to. One partner acquired dementia—and the other lost the nourishing pleasures of joint reminiscence. “When the other person cannot validate shared memories,” said Rajaram, “they are both robbed of the past.”

...

Some findings in the field of collaborative memory research have been counter intuitive. For one, collaboration can hurt memory. Some studies have compared the recall of items on lists by “collaborative groups,” or those who study together, and “nominal groups,” in which individuals work alone and the results are collated. The collaborative groups remembered more items than any single person would have done alone. But they also remembered fewer than the nominal groups did by totaling the efforts of its solitary workers. In other words, the collaborators’ whole was less than the sum of its parts.

This so-called “collaborative inhibition” affects recall for all sorts of things, from word pairs to emotionally laden events;

it affects strangers or spouses, children or adults. It is, in scientific lingo, “robust.”

...

“If a small group can reshape memories, we see how individuals come to hold certain viewpoints or perspectives,” she says. “That can serve as a model for how collective identities and histories are shaped.”

This “collaborative inhibition” might be a large part of what’s happening when human beings form into mindless or amoral herds. Alexis Tocqueville noted back in the 1830s that Americans have an odd inclination to ignore the most blunt and most obvious of facts when it conflicts with the mainstream view of things. Yet, we can be feisty as individuals. Maybe we need to be by ourselves to be able to fairly evaluate the moral implications of our actions as communities?

Let me turn to another quote from Minogue’s *The Liberal Mind* [20]:

A tradition in this [second and better] sense is a knowledge of how to go about tasks, one which can only be transmitted by imitation, and which cannot be written down and summarized. In this sense of tradition, it is development rather than repetition which is the central idea. And what leads such traditions into decadence is precisely the conscious operations of reason. For reason fragments a tradition into a set of policies, ends and means, and works in terms of principles, which are to traditions just what dogmas are to ideologies—distorting fixed points outside the range of criticism. [page 55]

Development, rather than planning, is crucial and so are operations which might not even be conscious, but I’m going to tie matters together by saying that politics is the art of human community-guiding, not the art of community-building nor even that of community-governing. Obviously, that’s not how politics is currently practiced but I’m claiming there is an evolutionary trend shaping some aspects of human communal being and that the very relationships themselves are evolving as the ways in which the workings of DNA have evolved to some very complex workings indeed.

A true politician has the skills needed to help a community to survive and prosper and also the skills to tell the stories, or help others to tell the

stories, which give meaning to the past and the dreams which give a true purpose to the future of that community. That community will come together and become self-sustaining only if the founder avoids the temptation to imprint his own personality too strongly and if he is flexible enough to respond to changing conditions but also to the needs and desires of members, which needs and desires might be in addition to or different from his own. That variety of needs and desires aren't just a burden but rather a promise of greater flexibility in responding to future opportunities and problems. This flexibility will come about partly as the various memories behind those needs and desires are integrated somehow into a community memory bank.

So it is that I'm proposing that we come together to form human communities partly because of the gaps in our memories. So, let's think about three men from a reasonably rich culture. Those men wish to form some sort of Irish club or association. What do they bring to that effort?

Tom remembers some things, perhaps consciously or perhaps just in his customs or habits or the skilled movements of his hat-making hands. Dick is the would-be organizer; he remembers other things not in Tom's memories but is wise enough to let himself be dependent upon Tom, not just because of Tom's hat-making skills but also because it's Tom who remembers a large number of songs from their Irish ancestors. It's Harry on the other hand who has taken up the odd habit of reading histories about these United States to which their Irish ancestors came and it's Harry who can tell them about some of the great accomplishments and some of the great failings of the land those hungry Irishmen came to, perhaps even telling of the way those Irishmen were once despised and treated as animals useful only for their strong backs.

The art of politics, building a church community or a local political community or a men's club, is meshing together those memories, leveraging off the gaps in any one man's memories, in order to nurture and coordinate the requisite skills and also to construct something like a narrative which gives meaning to that community. When I speak of leveraging off the gaps in memories, I'm largely pointing toward a humbling process similar to what St. Paul spoke about in Romans 12:3-4:

For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith

which God has assigned him. For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Some sociologists and historians, such as Robert Nisbet, have claimed that we are bound together in communities by ties of dependencies not by more noble sorts of ties. This implies to me that a proper acceptance of dependencies is itself a form of love but, in any case, we need each other's skills and we need each other's memories. As I've noted before, echoing others such as Nisbet, we've chosen to walk away from our smaller-scale communities and to become dependent upon the centralized powers of this modern age. We've left behind our community roles to become workers in giant corporations, citizen/soldiers in giant states, and consumers in giant marketplaces. The problem is that these modern institutions and communities are active in the behavior of always self-conscious and always self-concerned individuals. Their size as such is not a problem since the Body of Christ, even with salvation restricted to a relative few, will be more gigantic than any conceivable human state.

I think it relatively easy to define politics as the art, drawing upon some science and technology, of bringing together different skills and other forms of memory for the purpose of forming a community, perhaps to serve God and perhaps to get in a good game of bridge once a week. It's harder to define even a vague range of legitimate actions on the part of the those who take on leadership roles with a 'political' aspect, but I strongly believe they should limit themselves to being actors who are part of more or less spontaneous processes, perhaps guiding them when a community begins to stray from all possible moral paths, but, even then, not trying to guide them down a specific path but rather responding to immediate problems and opportunities. This is not so different from the shepherding of a flock and God presents Himself in the Gospels and much of the works of the Hebrew prophets as a shepherd and not as a king issuing commands.

15.5 Summary of the Reality of Communities

Communities are a form of true being, as much a form of being as the forms of being in the entities studied by astronomers and geneticists and chemical engineers. There isn't stuff, thing-like being, that God created and which are somehow organized by the imposition of relationships and other 'immaterial' non-thing-like forms of being. Those relationships and other immaterial forms of being are part of the stuff of this world, part of thing-like being. So far as we creatures are concerned, there is only what God created, that is, what He manifested in this particular Creation.

If we perceive communities, if we perceive married couples, if we perceive the universe itself, as true entities, then they are formed from created being; they are not assemblages of things brought together as if business partners bound only by the contract laws of modern, liberal nations. There is no magical force to be voluntarily added to what God created so that, "abracadabra!", there is now a bride and a bride-groom, and a married couple where once there was a woman and a man.

To move to an exotic example: the binding forces of particle physics are themselves particles. Gluons bind together quarks, not some sort of act of magic. Gluons are real being, as is the carpenter's glue we use to reconnect legs to chairs. The language is unsatisfying and will have to develop over time as we and members of future generations grow accustomed to the thoughts, but the one statement, "Communities are real and are not just a gathering of individuals," is as true as is the statement that "Protons are real and are not just a gathering of quarks."

We modern believers in a radical and incoherent individualism deny too easily our raw perceptions of communal entities. We ignore the underlying being which can't be explained to any significant extent by assembling our understanding of the constituent members and other parts. This is strange on the part of sacramental Christians; after all, some of the special bonds coming down to unite man and woman as a married couple, individuals as a Church, and mortal men as sharers of God's life are brought about by those acts we call Sacraments. The more general, less special bonds are still knowable as the glue of a sacramental world.

16 What is the Body of Christ?

Individual human beings aren't simply absorbed into the Body of Christ as in a science fiction movie where they, or alien beings, become entirely enslaved to some sort of collective. Those who are saved will remain their own particular selves and yet will be one Body of Christ as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain individual divine Persons and yet are one God.

One real-world implication of my worldview is that it's likely, certainly more than possible, that there are a multitude of organs in this developing Body of Christ. I doubt the Church is the entirety of this Body though She is the organ which is linked to God in specific ways and thus the most important of the organs. Yet, I believe there will be organs in the Body, even in the world of the resurrected, which will correspond to a variety of human needs and human desires, many of which the Church has nurtured over the centuries and yet are mostly independent of the Church. Complex human relationships will continue to exist in the Body of Christ. Just because there will be no enemy countries in Heaven doesn't mean there won't be any need for human beings to engage in some purer and more abstract form of politics. Just because we won't need to toil for our food doesn't mean there won't be any desires by the resurrected to engage in productive activities.

The Body of Christ and all its members, individual and communal, will continue to dance and sing, to play games and think through mathematical problems,

It's better for now to be a little vague about the definition of the Church, but it's clear the Church is the center of worship and communion with Christ and, through Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit as well. The Church is the organ in which and through which the community of Christ's chosen brethren can worship God and in which they are taught the great truths, creeds and moral commandments given to us by revelations from God. Yet,

there are other human needs met by other forms of human community which overlap the human community which is the Church but are most certainly not fully subordinate to Her though subordinate in terms of moral and spiritual guidance. In fact, we need to learn moral rules from the Church just so they can be used in all of our human activities which meet valid human needs.

Those other needs, economic and artistic and political, are lesser than our need for communion with God, the very Source of our being, but they are true needs and noble in their own lesser way. They, in fact, correspond to human efforts to imitate God in His freely chosen role as Creator. There are many human needs which can be met only by entering the marketplaces, the regions in which individuals can interact with many of the organs of which they are members.

I've written in negative terms about the marketplaces in the modern world, especially in my book *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* [9], but I've also written in negative terms about the Church Herself when She has acted outside of the region of Her competence in the Galileo affair and, more recently, in the incompetent meddling of bishops and their subordinates in political and economic and social matters about which they seem willfully and self-righteously ignorant. But the problem doesn't come so much from one organ of the Body of Christ sometimes intruding into the regions of other organs—we don't yet know how the organs are defined or how their responsibilities are properly delineated. The problem comes when one organ intrudes and has the power to continue its intrusion and does so when it becomes clear that it has exceeded its own authority and competence.

I'm forced to speculate far ahead of more specific and better-formed theories just because Western Christians and all others with responsibilities for Western Civilization have failed to respond properly to the enterprises of gathering modern empirical knowledge. Those enterprises have opened new possibilities for understanding God's Creation and have also demolished old ways of understanding the nature of man, the possibilities of resurrection, and other aspects of Creation and relationships between God and His creatures. My way of looking at created being as multi-leveled, going from abstract truths to concrete being, gives ways for human thinkers to ascend to higher abstractions for both more general understanding but also for a descent back down toward particular, or concrete, being which might exist. To reach some speculative understanding of the world of the resurrected, a human thinker ascends from this realm of growth and decay to high levels

of abstraction and then tries to find a path down toward a world made of stuff similar to the stuff of this world, yet one where growth might be possible but decay doesn't occur. That second world would be the home of the resurrected, the tent of the Body of Christ.

I've speculated several times on the possibility of abstracting from knowledge in physics and differential geometry to derive higher-order abstract knowledge which can then be concretized by a different route to be used in our moral understandings. My speculations are still a bit tentative and vague, but the interested reader can find some of the relevant discussions in the following essays on my main weblog:

- *Differential Geometry and Moral Narratives* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=267>,
- *Mathematical Physics and Moral Philosophy* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=436>,
- *Fictitious Forces in the Moral World* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=980>, and
- *Christian Traditionalism: Moving With God's Story.* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=1304>.

Christian thought has not responded much in two centuries to new knowledge of God's Creation. We have a lot of ground to make up and we probably can't hope to make it up too fast. For now, let me return to a more limited line of thought.

I've spoken in the past of Western Civilization as being a home which the Christian Church (in the West) built for Herself. This is a metaphor used by Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). Cardinal Ratzinger went on to note that Christians of the West hadn't properly maintained their home. Western Civilization isn't in trouble because of invasions by pagans or Satanic agents but rather because Western Christians were morally irresponsible in their duties toward their own civilization. Pagans and others didn't invade the West. They were the children of resident ex-Christians and they wandered into vacated public spaces.

With that as background, I'll move on to the possibility that Western Civilization wasn't so much a house as a unstable colony of human communities which could be viewed as a first try at developing the Body of Christ.

Some of those organisms, individual or communal, grew into parasites or cancers prospering for a while at the expense of the earthly Body of Christ as a whole. The evolutionary pathways of multi-cellular organisms, such as bipedal apes, passed through similar rough spots. I imagine there were paths which dead-ended when parts of organisms began to prey on other parts. A family line of creatures which develop fatal cancers before the onset of the age of reproduction will disappear pretty quickly.

If we believe there is a forward thrust in this development of the Body of Christ, then the world itself, God's story, will select out the diseased organs and new organs might grow in their place but maybe different sorts of organs will grow. Let's consider this a process of presentation and selection—natural selection is a specific such process.

And I return to my speculative claim that the Body of Christ is made of multiple organs and the Church is the most important of those organs because it is by way of the Church that we are united with the Lord Jesus Christ and, through Him, with the Holy Trinity. Given this hypothetical understanding of the Body of Christ, God's story which is this world isn't one where a righteous Church struggles against worldly powers which serve un-Godly purposes. It's a story in which the various organs of the Body of Christ are developing in themselves even as the greater Body also develops.

We have to keep in mind that individuals are also developing, as individuals, as members of various organs, and as members of the entire Body of Christ. This is one of the reasons for my current speculations. If we are to be truly saved, as our own selves, then it must be true that grace completes and perfects nature rather than overriding it in any way, let alone mutilating it. The activities and structures corresponding to all legitimate human needs and desires are to be completed and perfected when we rise from the grave to live for time without end with the Lord Jesus Christ. We human beings naturally form communities and institutions for several of our major categories of needs. I don't see the Church as being capable of satisfying all these needs. And—to repeat—I don't foresee those needs disappearing in the world of the resurrected, not if we're to remain human beings.

These sorts of speculations make it possible to discuss the Body of Christ coherently. We can speak of life after death and still sound sane but we have to adjust to speak in terms consistent with those realms of Creation we can directly perceive or can reach by the proper exercise of our all-too human minds.

This program of thought would force us Christians to work hard to understand complex and rich domains of being, to be capable of thinking of the Body of Christ as a fantastically complex organism, not the simple choir in heaven of *Amazing Grace* but rather the embodiment and realization of an awful lot that's good about human life including many things we can't quite realize in this mortal realm. Political relationships would remain as would cultural traditions—all brought to their fullness but remaining alive and growing. The implied developmental processes and the resulting complex structures might be describable by tools similar to those used by Einstein to develop his general theory of relativity—differential geometry and the closely related tensor calculus. Or those processes might be similar to those of quantum mechanics. In any case, they don't seem likely to be well described in any meaningful sense by existing modes of theological or mystical discourse.

The question I raised to start is, “Is the Church Herself but one organ in the Body of Christ?”

My best speculations right now indicate this to almost certainly be the case. Moreover, the Church Herself has acted in recent centuries, especially through the Papacy, as if She is to play the role of moral and spiritual guide for the economic and political and social powers, in addition to playing Her primary role in directly communicating with God through worship and praise. The Church in recent centuries, through the Popes and through the bishops sitting in council, hasn't claimed any right to rule directly, only to play the role of conscience, a role not yet acceptable to most of the other organs of the Body of Christ ¹.

If the Body of Christ is forming now in this mortal realm, then it becomes possible to explore that process and to come to some significant understanding of the Body of Christ and how it develops. More than that, the effort to understand the Body would seem likely to give us some idea of the nature of the world of the resurrected and of our own perfected and completed human natures. This effort would seem to be the duty of those who claim to be Christian thinkers, theologians or philosophers or historians or creative writers.

¹To be sure, I've noted that American Catholic bishops and other American Christian leaders meddle in areas quite beyond their expertise, without even making a pretense to gain any expertise. It takes a while for some changes to fully take in this world of slow development processes.

17 Why We Need a Christian Civilization

I've made the claim that the Christian Church itself is but one organ in the Body of Christ, though the most important and potentially most powerful organ. I would supplement that claim with another: the true power of the Church is dependent not upon external force but upon proper execution of Her duties of teaching those who are at least nominally within Her doors and evangelizing those who are without. The Church prays and worships; She teaches how to pray and worship, Who it is that we worship, and why we pay Him such respect.

There are more open questions than certain statements in any interesting exploration and analysis of God's Creation and of our relationships to Him. This is good. Our meaningful and plausible questions about revealed knowledge, speculative knowledge, and various sorts of empirical knowledge lead to larger and richer human minds, especially in the communal form of the human mind—the intellect. For a little background on this understanding of 'intellect', see my essay, *Intelligence vs. Intellect* at <http://loydfueston.com/?p=1246> and read Jacques Barzun's book *The House of Intellect* [3].

The ultimate setting for an intellect, the largest possible domain in terms of human culture and individual minds, would be a civilization encompassing all of humanity. Such a civilization would be a mortal embodiment of the Body of Christ. To repeat: I've taken the position that the various aspects of human life over which the Church's human servants have renounced complete authority—moral and spiritual authority over all human institutions still belongs to Her—are manifested and lived in institutions which are part of the Body of Christ but somewhat independent of the Church. Nothing in the Body of Christ can be even somewhat independent of the en-

tirety of that Body or truly independent of each individual member. Think of a large mass of entities in which every individual relationship and every relationship of all possible groupings exist and are strong.

Let me summarize what I have claimed up to this point: the perfect and complete human civilization in this mortal realm would be one which is a balanced, honest, and creative response to all of God's revelations and also the explorable aspects of Creation as it can be understood by creatures such as us.

Ants and other social insects are quite plausibly described by scientists such as E.O. Wilson, a founder of the discipline of sociobiology, as slaves to their DNA, or perhaps to the family line whose characteristics are encoded in their DNA—in this restatement, I'm proposing that DNA is more a glue than a substance. It's mostly correct to say that this makes those insects non-individualistic members of a community which is, typically a domineering sisterhood of neuters or a sisterhood of neuters dominated by a fertile mother. In the first case, the fertile mother exists but, more or less, as a slave of her daughters. There is a genetic basis for these two different ant societies which the interested reader can find in Wilson's books on sociobiology, such as *Sociobiology, The Abridged Edition* [32], or in articles over the years published in magazines such as *Scientific American*.

There are examples of slave societies, such as the Mameluks of Islamic history. The Mameluks were non-Arab warriors purchased or captured as slaves by Arabs. You can find a description of the Mameluks at <http://en.wikipedia.com/wiki/Mameluk>. They formed a warrior caste whose members were typically of higher status than free-born Muslims, but the Mameluks were in theory and to a large extent in fact subordinated absolutely to their caste as a whole. This can be seen, at least by me, as a human society resembling in some ways ant societies but far from completely because, while education and training would have inculcated the Mameluk-attitude, there was a necessary external pressure to conform rather than conformance being a part of the basic nature of the member as is true of ants and other social insects. More generally, the caste was defined by other than genetic relationships though most Mameluks were captured from a relatively small number of ethnic groups, typically Christians.

Recent science-fiction television series, and probably movies, have included such societies of fully subordinated slaves. This is a very unlikely development of the human race, not because of some idealistic understanding of man but because of man's strategies and skills for survival and repro-

duction. We are individualists in a sense but mostly small-group creatures. By ‘small-group’, I mean simply that concrete, hand-to-hand, mouth-to-ear, relationships—based on genetic or gene-proxy relationships—are the foundation of any larger human communities. Human communities form from smaller units which are then formed from individuals who retain some of the good and bad characteristics of that implausibly free-standing individual of American myth and libertarian ideology.

I’ve grossly oversimplified by claiming “Human societies form from smaller units which are then formed from individuals.” In fact, individuals and various communal groupings of human beings, such as teenagers or young mothers or members of a crafts group or local politicians or lawyers, form various groups in all sorts of combinations of individual and group relationships. Larger-scale societies are complex networks drawn from this entire mess. Even then, all sorts of relationships cut horizontally, vertically, and diagonally through this network which itself is many-dimensional. The mess is certainly interesting and a mere hint as to why E.O. Wilson rightly claims that understanding the biological and social nature of man is a problem orders of magnitude greater than those of physics though it’s possible that feedback to physics will raise equally complex and equally deep questions about realms of being and types of entities which are the objects of that field of study.

We need not only a more exact understanding of man but plausible ways to explore and discuss possible futures, not to plan a path toward one of those but to allow experimental movements to various futures by individuals and communities. We also need a Homer or Shakespeare to give us poetic ways to express that more exact understanding in terms which can become the mainstream ways of thought for this civilization I’m vaguely envisioning.

It truly would take a great-souled poet to show us and teach us that a perfected and completed civilization would be the form and substance of a perfected and completed human race acting and thinking and feeling along with the Creator as He goes about His work. This is a description of the Body of Christ, at least to a sacramental Christian. It’s the description of a human race at peace with itself and its members, individual and communal, and also at peace with Creation and with God Himself. It’s an ideal but one which can guide us in forming communities which are morally and spiritually well-ordered as well as being appropriately rich and complex in cultural areas, artistic and intellectual. Such communities will be in a state of peace with each other and also with Creation and the Creator.

18 The Body of Christ as the Point of It All

I read somewhere, in a far distant spacetime, that Medieval theologians had a one-line joke: Heaven and Hell are the same place. An inch-millisecond ago by cosmological standards, circa 1900, Albert Jay Nock left the Episcopal ministry and later said it was partly because he couldn't see that many human beings had much in the way of life in them in this mortal realm and couldn't see how such creatures could possibly enjoy life without end. God can save who He will but it's not so easy to imagine that everyone, even some very nice men and women, could be happy in a Heaven which accords with Christian beliefs, or Jewish beliefs for that matter. It would seem that sharing the life of God, being able to enjoy life without end, would require a little bit of spunk inside. There are no couch-potatoes in Heaven.

In various writings, I've made substantially the same claim by stating that Heaven isn't an everlasting DisneyWorld, a place where passive pleasure-seekers can enjoy just the right mixture of nice foods and nice shows and nice rides for time without end. To enjoy Heaven, a human being would have to be a member of the Body of Christ, the perfected and completed community of all human beings who are God-centered and who live in a way that isn't self-absorbed but rather absorbed in our proper human activities. In Part IV, *Human Acts as Participating in the Story Which is Our World*, I spoke of acts as being "where the rubber meets the road." It's not that we suppress thinking or feeling, but rather that we become God-like and all of our thinking and feeling are folded into acts-of-being.

I'll repeat a short quote from *Time and Free Will* [4], in which the philosopher Henri Bergson told us:

[W]e are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it, when they have that indefinable

resemblance to it which one sometimes finds between the artist and his work. [page 172]

We are free when mind and heart and hands are one, when we think and feel and do as but one act and there are no other sorts of acts possible. How do we reach that state of being? I'll start my explanation by repeating another quote, this one by by Kenneth Minogue in *The Liberal Mind* [20]:

[I]n considering the circumstances in which free independence is possible, we must observe that it depends to a very large extent on an intellectual interest in how things are, in contrast to the desire to make things conform to a pre-established plan. [page 151]

Our freedom, allied closely with the expression of a truer and richer human personality, “depends to a very large extent on an intellectual interest in how things are, in contrast to the desire to make things conform to a pre-established plan.” Stated in an explicitly Christian way, we must be interested in what God actually did as Creator and not in some human system of thought which corresponds to a world considered desirable by one or another school of thinkers.

We can be truly free only by sharing in the freedom of God and we can do that only by imitating our Father and Maker, in our thinking and feeling and doing. This doesn't mean becoming absorbed in our own efforts. It rather means we should look to the Creator and imitate His acts of creating and shaping and sustaining even if we can do so only to the extent of gaining some knowledge and some understanding of what God has done, is doing, and might do. We paint or sing and encapsulate the glories we would praise by those acts of praise. We build good furniture or a new robot to explore the dark side of the moon and learn how to make our own the thoughts of the Creator, thoughts He has manifested in His trees and His moon. We nurture our interest in how things are, learning to be active in our explorations of Creation. We adjust our knowledge and our understanding to what we discover about Creation.

And by doing our work, by losing ourselves in our work, whether it be bearing and raising children or writing wills or handling explosives at an iron mine, we can move toward the goal of personhood, of unity and coherence and completeness. We work with God to improve His Creation.

By improving the lot of a crippled child or by selling young families the house they need, we take on a share of not only personhood but also a share of God's own freedom in His work as Creator. As Kenneth Minogue told us in *The Liberal Mind* [20]:

There are no means which serve the precise end of freedom, for freedom, like happiness, is not an end that can be pursued. [page 158]

“[F]reedom, like happiness, is not an end that can be pursued,” but it is an end that can be gained by learning that task of the artist: shaping ourselves so that “our acts spring from our whole personality.”

Losing ourselves in what is worth doing, learning how to imitate our Creator—if only by way of knowing and understanding what he does, we begin to share the life of our Creator by imitating Him and sharing in His work. We begin to truly serve God. As servants of God, we are free and are happy, if only in the world of the resurrected. As the Jewish philosopher, Abraham Heschel told us in *God in Search of Man* [16]:

[T]he essence of religion does not lie in the satisfaction of a human need. As long as man sees religion as a source of satisfaction for his own needs, it is not God who he serves but his own self. [page 350]

On the same page, Heschel somewhat restates the claim: “The purpose of religion is not to satisfy the needs we feel but to create in us the need of serving ends, of which we otherwise remain oblivious.”

From a slightly different point of view, we learn once again that we serve best by serving our Maker, by helping Him to complete His work in this mortal realm. We help Him to tell a good story by living our parts well.

God doesn't exist to serve us, though He offered to serve us if we enter His community—for my current efforts, it matters not if we understand that community as the People of Israel or the Christian Church and I tend to think both are part, and only part, of the Body of Christ. In important ways, God truly serves the Body composed of His friends and servants; by so serving, God serves each of the members of that Body. At the same time, it's also true that God, as Creator, serves in some significant sense all that He created—to His ends and for His pleasure. But God as Creator serves

all the lilies of the field and the beasts of the forest. If you submit to God's 'servitude' in only this way, you might be headed to the same permanent grave as those lilies and beasts.

Appendices

Other Writings by Loyd Fueston

Why Speak of Other Writings?

My work is of a whole though I've been told that my writing style, at least for fiction, changes a lot to fit the story I'm telling. I think I tend to write theological and metaphysical works, and the occasional political piece, in the style of a story-telling philosopher such as Plato or Nietzsche. I also write novels in the style of a philosophical novelist, such as Melville, or a theological novelist, such as Flannery O'Connor. Those novels are an integral part of the development of my worldview, my understanding of the Creator and His Creation, including that unique part of Creation—man.

Nonfiction Books

In 2006, my first published book appeared due to the kindly intervention of the theologian Stanley Hauerwas and the generosity of Jon Stock at *Wipf & Stock*, a republisher of Christian works of merit and a first publisher of works marketed in the academic community. That book was *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* as described at http://loydfueston.com/?page_id=17. Only a paltry number of copies have been sold. A follow-up book about struggling through a difficult period, *The Peace of Christ* as described at http://loydfueston.com/?page_id=89 did no better.

I set out on a different path and published my next book, *Four Kinds of Knowledge* [11], on the Internet intending to allow personal use though I reserved derivative rights, first under my own wording and then under a Creative Commons license—see <http://creativecommons.org/>. This book is

available for downloading at <http://loydfueston/downloads/know.pdf>.

Recently, I expanded and radically revised an article I'd written about human rights. The book, *Human Rights: An Evolutionary and Christian Perspective*, can be downloaded from <http://loydfueston/downloads/rights.pdf>. There is also a short article, *Justice: The First Step Towards God*, which can be downloaded from <http://loydfueston/downloads/rights.pdf>.

Collections of Writings from Weblogs

I've released three editions in book-form of lightly edited versions of the essays I've posted on my two blogs since 2006: primarily *Acts of Being* at <http://loydfueston.com/> but there are a fair number of essays from my inactive blog *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* at <http://loydf.wordpress.com/>. That book, *Acts of Being: Selected Weblog Writings From 2006 to 2012*, is available for free download at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/acts.pdf>. It's large and contains about 440 chapters. I'll be releasing another update at the end of 2013.

I thought to make it easier for others to dig into my writings by making them available in smaller groups, with themes which would sometimes correspond to the seven parts in *Acts of Being*:

1. *Making Peace With Empirical Reality*,
2. *The Human Mind as a Re-creation of God's Creation*,
3. *Love and Stuff*,
4. *What is a Universe?*,
5. *Freedom and Structure in Human Life*,
6. *The Narrative We Know as a World*, and
7. *What Means It All?*.

As of 2013, I've published two samplers:

1. *A Modern View of Creation: Making Peace with Empirical Reality* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/acts-emp.pdf>, and

2. *A Modern View of Creation: The Human Mind* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/acts-mind.pdf>.

These samplers don't seem to have drawn much interest and I probably won't release any more.

Novels

Consistent with my view of the unity of human knowledge, at least true knowledge, I consider my fictions to be part of the same effort as my non-fictions. I've made six novels available for free download under a Creative Commons non-derivatives license:

- *Corporate Sex* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/corpsex.pdf>;
- *A Man for Every Purpose* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/aman.pdf>;
- *The Hermit of Turkey Hill* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/hermit.pdf>;
- *The Open Independence of the Seas* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/open.pdf>;
- *Safe Harbours and Open Seas* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/safe.pdf>;
- *The Modern Critic* at <http://loydfueston.com/downloads/critic.pdf>;

Other Writings to Come

I'm back to working, sporadically but seriously, on several works of fiction. I'm also planning to put some additional writings from the blog, *To See a World in a Grain of Sand* at <http://loydf.wordpress.com/>, in book form(s). In particular, I wrote some Lenten meditations which I consider to have some worth. The intent was to write meditations in a spirit of peace with modern empirical knowledge rather than 'spiritual' meditations with pre-modern understandings of the world. I don't know if I succeeded but

I plan, God willing, on getting back to organizing them into book form in time for Lent in 2014.

My general plan is to return to writing novels over the next year and to get back to reading serious materials in mathematics and physics to see what might result.

In my opinion, we can't move forward in developing better and richer understandings of God in His role as Creator, of His manifested thoughts (Creation), or of man in particular until we have a body of words and concepts which are drawn from current understandings of Creation as we can perceive and explore it. Those understandings would have to then be developed in a more or less freely creative style into a narrative which is an image of God's story, the story which is this world. Homer and the great lyric poets of ancient Greece are said to have blazed the paths followed by the ancient Greek scientists and philosophers. We also need poets and novelists to do this sort of work though I suspect they would nowadays have to follow Einstein and Darwin, if only to catch up.

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