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Prophetic Politics Toward a Communitarian Theology of Moral Place

Shane Paul Landry

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Prophetic Politics Toward a Communitarian Theology of Moral Place

A Senior Honors Thesis
by
Shane Paul Landry
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Louisiana State University
The College of Arts and Sciences
and
The Honors College
The Department of Political Science

Reading Committee
Dr. Murray D. Jardine Asst. Prof., Political Science

Dr. Gregory R. Schufreider Prof., Philosophy

Dr. James R. Stoner Prof., Political Science

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Ça C'est dédié à B.E.A.T. et aux cadiens qui sont après sauver la foi
du Bon Dieu toujours.

Introduction

The Problem of Modern Emotivism and the Prophetic Solution

We live in an age when information is sent and received almost at the speed of light. No place is too far or too remote to partake of our bountiful feast of "data." We live by CNN and find our fun by surfing the INTERNET. Our expression is through talk-shows. The news is our regime and our lives seem to revolve around the "latest" and most "up-to-date" sources of information.

Yet, despite the fact that we have more access to information than in any other period in history, the quality of that information is dreadfully low. In order to get the data from its source to the consumer public in the cheapest, quickest, and most easily digestible way, information is edited into synopsi that hit only the high points of a story or argument and neglect the deeper subtilties. If one wished to delve deeper in order to understand the finer points of a topic, the logic of the information revolution would exclude that possibility. New information would soon be placed on the plate before us, quickly to be gobbled up. The rapidity of informational distribution is making it impossible to communicate meaningfully with one another.

I mention this trend because I think we can hear amidst this cacaphonous rambling a prophetic call for repentance. It is a lone voice crying out in the savage wilderness of non-meaning. It is the voice of our humanity.

The desire for quicker and quicker media is, I believe, a perverse desire to know without mediation. It is an act of self-deification--a grasping for omniscence. It represents the hight of impatience. We are broadcasting, telecasting, faxing, sky writing,

and printing more than was ever previously thought possible, but communicating, we are not. Rather we are tacitly engaged in monologue; we want to be the sole speaker in a world so filled with noise that it is silent. Truly, we are talking to hear ourselves talk. We care not of the other person except to the extent that we can make him or her into our audience, hopefully an audience easily provoked into applause.

Our culture has pridefully twisted itself around the fig tree of absolute knowledge, that is to say total information. Such pride leaves no room for humanity. We are communal creatures whose personhoods are built by, through, and in relationships--relationships only made possible by some sort of communion, some rational exchange and sharing. Now, however, we are destroying the prerequisites of discourse. We no longer listen to the other. This can only spell ruination for our republic. Indeed, it implies the afixiation of the institutions sustained by discourse and true communication.

The wisdom of antiquity teaches that free people survive through discourse. The Bible tells how our humanity is gained by coming toward another to hear and respond, by *covenanting*. But what is it besides the simple pride of the *amor sui*, that has inspired this flight from discourse and has left us "speech-less"--freely expressing ourselves into nothingness? The answer is simple: It is the bad story we have been telling ourselves about ourselves.

For Alasdair MacIntyre we derive our place in the world, our

relationships and therefore our personhood, from the narratives which define our tradition. Since the Enlightenment we have abstracted ourselves from the context of community and temporal unfolding. We have been telling a story in which all of the roles are *deculturated* and *extemporaneous*. As these adjectives imply we try to make our role, our place, our motile activity outside of the temporal world--hence my use of the word "self-deification." Men, women, and children are not gods. We exist by, through, and in time. We are creatures of **Creation** (a term which will resound with deep significance shortly). To attempt to abstract ourselves from the world is nothing short of folly and is tantamount to what Eric Voegelin called "gnosticism." It is the work of miscreants.

It is no wonder that our modern story is flawed. It began as an anti-story. Not told in a manner that would rightly call the practices of our civilization back to the truest intentions of our tradition, it became, instead, a story told against the possibility of ontological stories. Instead of traditions and their narratives, the Enlightenment sought to base all knowing and being on the empirical certainty of objective mathematical truth. Purely descriptive, and averse to proscription, this new anti-story made no claims about the function of humankind. Indeed, it held that nothing could be said of such a thing. Because our ontology is a function of narrative, we are left without identity when such an anti-story is embodied in in practice. Thus modernity.

By trying to make ourselves gods, we have destroyed our humanity, and instead we have become like beasts, utterly

irrational and devoid of personal communicablity. This brutishness manifests itself in all aspects of contemporary existence. We see it in the way our personal relationships are practiced. Instead of communicative events that transend the participants, we objectify, or in Buber's language, make into "Its", those for whom we profess love. This is why marriages no longer work and we all feel used. Furthermore, we can see brutality in our relationships with the environment, as we make **Creation** in all of its wonderous form and diversity the instrument of our greed. It shines forth especially in our politics where elected demigogues neglect their representative roles as the discursive agents of their constituencies and instead spin-doctor themselves into the heaven of incumbency where they can partake freely of the ambrosia of power. Finally, and most tellingly of all, we can see in our relationships with ourselves the utter debasement of our personhood. We hate ourselves. Indeed, we hate ourselves for loving ourselves too much. The end result is not positive guilt that chastens us and calls us back to ourselves, but rather a twisted erotic hell, where the lack of a self is compensated for through the conquest of others. Be they in the guise of bodies, dollars, fame, or whatnot, it makes no difference, for the hole in our souls must be filled and no price--not even genocide--is too high to pay to add another drop of fulfillment to the bottomless pit of despair.

What we need, what we hear when we are forced to listen to the existential crys of our very bones and sinews, is a better story.

Only a true narrative can yield a true self.

There is such a narrative in our tradition, but it has been debunked, and discredited by the miscreant directors of this play called modernity. This story is Christianity. Of course much of this criticism was valid. In the High Middle Ages Christendom was corrupt. What we needed then, and what we most definitely need now, was a prophetic check upon the wayward institutions and practices of our tradition. What we got instead was an attempt to destroy the tradition. The tradition is not yet dead. It does, however, need to be called back to the primal existential roots which phenomenologically embody themselves in our narrative practices, our roles, our places, ourselves, when they are properly performed. The biblical tradition has much insight into the existential realities of the *conditio humana*. If we can listen to it once more and there by return to a communion with the Divine, then we will again be able to find our personhoods--our humanity.

Concretely such a task requires a prophetic rearticulation of the tradition. Such a rearticulation must avoid the rigidity of objectivism and the nihilism of relativism. It must embrace the existential reality of our being in the world. To do this I will employ the work of MacIntyre with his theory of virtue, and the work of the great language philosopher J.L. Austin. The late Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and especially Martin Buber are also sources of inspiration, although, because of their prevalence, they should simply be understood to inform much of my project. Of all thinkers, however, William

Poteat is by far the most important pillar supporting my enterprise. With these mindbodies fueling my interest and propelling me forward, I hope to contribute to the rearticulation of the Christian tradition in terms of the speech-act.

The speech-act implies a destruction of the false dichotomies between speaking and doing, knowing and doing, knowing and being, being and becoming, and truly even being and doing. An acceptance of context and also of the *a priori* dependence of the individual upon that context--which is, of course, the concrete relationships that make up our communities by, through, and in speaking-acting-being-knowing is *intended*.

The metaphor of the speech-act is most powerful indeed. The biblical tradition is the religion of speech *par excellence*. God is the paradigmatic Speaker-Actor in history, a history which is humanity's true narrative. He creates the world and history itself by, through, and in His words. God is in a covenanting conversation with His creatures, which by, through, and in the very act of creating them, He is also conversing with them about the reality of their own **Creation**. For human beings the conversation is of the utmost significance. We are fashioned after God's likeness. We too possess the great creative power of speech. We are, therefore, called to co-create, to truly enter into communion, with God and each other. It is our functional role, our place, as human beings to help sustain and create the world through our speaking-doings. To do this we must be faithful to our deeds and words. We must speak and act in such a way as to create valid

places for more **Creation**. Above all we must not become *miscreants*. We must not, in our unfaithfulness, create weak and untrue places that dis-allow the continuity of **Creation**. Such is sin; such is death.

Despite our noble **Creation** and valiant vocation we are finite creatures. Because of sin we cannot always know, and oft times care little about, what is appropriately faithful according to our factual situations. It is, then, only by the loving speech of God, His Spirit, and the redemming act of His Word, the Christ, that order is maintained in a world filled with disorderly unfaithfulness.

Since we are called to *humilitas*, and a life in imitation of Christ, a clear paradigm of political speech-action is implied by our tradition. To be good citizens of both Heaven and Earth, we must engage in prophetic politics. What is meant by this is that we must do all that is possible by human volition and the grace of God to sustain discourse. We are faithfully to preserve the vitality of the speech community by always striving by, through, and for co-creative conversation with ourselves, with one another and with God.

Let us then believe in order to understand.

Chapter I

Our World: Virtue and the History of Emotivism

1. Emotivism and Modern America

In 1981 a book was published which has since become a classic among political theorists and perceptive literary critics. Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* articulated for us a lucid account of our contemporary moral problem. Basically "there seems to be no rational way of securing moral agreement in our culture" (MacIntyre 6). No one interest group can agree with any other about the essential questions of morality and public policy that confront American democracy. We are simply unable to reach a reasonable political consensus on moral and ethical issues. As a result what passes for political discourse is nothing more than a mindless free-for-all in which political adversaries launch constant sorties of preprogramed and ontologically unfounded stock arguments against one another. It is a war of mere words. Be they the arguments for less government and taxes from the Right, or calls to protect our civil liberties from the Left, all standard contemporary argumentation superficially appears to be logically coherent, and yet, upon further listening, proves to be utterly devoid of firm ontological backing. Pertinent issues and ontological questions about the basis for ethics and morality, not to mention policy objectives, are never even raised. We never question our basic assumptions, and thus are incapable of truly critiquing ourselves or our political rivals with any degree of effectiveness.

MacIntyre would be quick to add that the presence of debate

about such things as ontology is the mark of a healthy cultural tradition. What we are facing, however, is not a debate or disscussion about ontology. Rather it is the attempt to debate without it! Our current avoidance of the fundamental questions of human existence has made our society into one big festival of orgiastic self-destruction. If the first week of 1995 is any indication of the future, we are truly headed for some rough times. Already we have seen the collapse of civility as an anti-abortion radical shot up abortion clinics in Massachusetts and Virginia, killing several and wounding others. Who knows when the next pot-shot or air craft will be aimed at the President? How long before academic freedom is totally done away with in favor of "sensitivity" seminars and "safe-sex" demonstrations? We are, quite frankly, in bad shape as a moral society. In the words of W.B. Yeats, "the center can not hold."

As MacIntyre points out, the malignancies of the modern world have grown exponentially since the "Enlightenment." By this he means that the West has spent the modern era in the futile attempt to find a "rational" justification for morality without first attempting to articulate a rational ontological foundation for said moral system. Instead, we have only succeeded in making the science of morality, ethics, into an irrationalist mockery. Subjective unreality is all we can speak of in our contemporary depraved state. He says our current depravity is a "catastrophe." What is still worse is that most people, especially intellectuals, do not even realize it. The reason for this is "because the forms of

academic curriculum" that define American higher learning are themselves "symptoms of the disaster whose occurrence the curriculum does not acknowledge" (MacIntyre 4). Thus we have "reached a point where [we] no longer realize the nature of the catastrophe which [we have] suffered" (MacIntyre 3).

What is it, then, that has caused this catastrophe? What was "sufficient to throw the whole language of morality into grave disorder" effectively leaving us with no way to adjudicate between rival moral claims (MacIntyre 3)?

MacIntyre is a social historian and it is from that position that he approaches the problem of "emotivism" (his name for the nihilistic tendency of contemporary discourse). "Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (MacIntyre 11-12). My scope is not such that a detailed chapter by chapter analysis of *After Virtue* can be given. I will labor, therefore, to give a concise and accurate commentary on his conclusions. Suffice it to say that MacIntyre begins by looking backward in time as his philosophical archeology leads him to the reasons why we contemporaries paradoxically perceive our beliefs to be utterly arbitrary and yet still insist upon appealing to universal criteria in the course of our various debates.

For MacIntyre "the distinctively modern standpoint [is] of course that which envisages moral debate in terms of a

confrontation between incompatible and incommensurable moral premises and moral commitments as the expression of a criterionless choice between such premises, a type of choice for which no rational justification can be given" (MacIntyre 39). This amounts to a belief that the world is nothing more than an aesthetic struggle, a battle by starving artists to place their expression of the socially beautiful on the wall of the American political gallery. It is Nietzsche's will to power. MacIntyre's argument, as I stated earlier, is that this paradoxical modern epistemology, together with its accompanying concept of the self as aesthetic paradigm-chaser, is the end result of the Enlightenment's attempt to find a "rational justification" for morality. This attempt, effected primarily by northern European Enlightenment thinkers, was a specific effort to come to terms with the then contemporary social and philosophical problems brought about by the Protestant Reformation and the religious wars that followed it.

2. History of the Medieval Order

After Scholasticism reached its pinnacle in the High Middle Ages, the language and practice of morality in Western Europe was Aristotelian. The synthesis of Aristotle's ethical system with the morality of the Bible gave the Western mind "a three-fold structure" for moral discourse and practice. It amounted to the internalization of *The Nichomachean Ethics* (MacIntyre 52). Saying it simply, medieval Christendom's moral vocabulary was heavily

laden with a structural matrix that saw virtue as that which functioned as the concrete set of practices leading to the actualization of human potential. Virtue, in this system, was the pre-condition for the movement of humankind from the "untutored state-that-we-find-ourselves-in-by-nature" to that state of human actuality which is ours by that same nature if we are habituated into the proper activities and inculcated with the proper ways of thinking. This system is teleological. It was understood by medieval society that our goal is "the Good Life" which, through God's grace, leads to to the *metatelos* of the spirit (i.e. salvation and the Beatific Vision).

It is interesting to note that when we hear such a tone there is a profoundly evident ontological story that presents itself to us. Not only are we given a structure of clearly set possibilities of ontological becoming, but we are unmistakably given a hierarchy of possible becoming in which one way of becoming is superior to another and so on. This structure is re-inforced by the Platonic Anthropological Principle, the six day priority of creation from Genesis, and the European folk tradition's popular piety with its multitude of Angels, and mythical creatures comes, together in the orchestra known as "the Great Chain of Being."

"The Great Chain of Being" sings exactly of our place in Creation. There is no ambiguity. We are slightly less than than the angels but are at the summit of mortal **Creation**. Furthermore, the medieval ontology derived from "the great Chain of Being" and *The Nichomachean Ethics* attends to the possibility of sin and human

depravity because it recognizes that we can fall far short of Divine intentions as made manifest through the scriptures and as rationally attained from the study of natural being and becoming. In the medieval moral nexus of human potentiality lead to actuality by virtuous living, one could clearly apprehend what it means to be human.

In the Middle Ages, to be fully human meant to participate in the grace yielding sacramental community and thereby live the Good Life. Of course the virtuous life necessarily placed one in the possibility of attaining the fullest of all human actualities--a life among the Blessed in heavenly splendor.

3. Birth of Modernity

This world view began to loose its coherence, however, when the practice of virtue lost its context. Christendom was seduced by the temptation of greed and power made possible by the Italian Renaissance and the shifting of Europe's economic axis from the Baltic back to the Mediterranean, as the crusading armies reopened ancient trade routes with the Orient. With an abundance of wealth in their coffers the leaders of Christendom began to live lives of gross disparity between the faith and virtue they professed and the actual everyday practices they engaged in. Additionally, the self-same economic shift that brought prosperity to the South caused a depression in the once thriving Germanic regions of Christendom. It was no accident, then, that when pressed on by a resentment over

lost socio-political status, a restless middle class, and the blatant corruption of the ecclesiastical princes, that the northern Europeans effected the Reformation, thus causing Protestantism to erupt into history, splitting Christendom between its romance and germanic parts. In the course of its irruption the Reformation unleashed the tidal wave of bourgeois individualism. A hundred years later the other offspring of the Renaissance, modern scientific rationality, made its way north and married his Protestant sister. Soon they begat the progenitor of Modernity--the Enlightenment. The individualism of the Reformation, with its rejection of ecclesiastical and ultimately all human hierarchy, weakened the foundation of Europe's great ontological myth of "the Great Chain of Being." When the epistemological skepticism of the Scientific Revolution came into contact with this fertile soil of Individualism a great fig tree of secularization quickly burst up through the soil and blocked out the metaphysical light of the Middle ages. It is in the shade of that tree that emotivism finds its home. It is here that contemporary discourse died for lack of nourishing light.

MacIntyre says of the new scientific rationality that it was "calculative; it [could] assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more." He goes on to say, "in the realm of practice therefore it [could] speak only of means. About ends it [had to] be silent" (MacIntyre 54). It was this skepticism about teleology that was eventually adopted by the enlightened Protestant culture of Northern Europe. Disgruntled and frustrated by the

inability of their increasingly individualistic culture to reach consensus, and by the brutality of the wars which these disagreements produced, Enlightenment thinkers were led to conclude that there was no way to discern moral truth from the teleological modes of medieval discourse. The Enlightenment thus "reject[s] any teleological view of human nature, any view of man as having an essence which defines his true end" (MacIntyre 54). The curious thing is that the Enlightenment thinkers, while rejecting the heirarchy of goods that defined medieval moral thought, attempted to keep the language of virtue and moral practices derived therefrom. Indeed, "the divergences between Kant's and Kierkegaard's Lutheran, Hume's Presbyterian and Diderot's Jansenist influenced Catholic backgrounds are relatively unimportant" (MacIntyre 51). They were all adherents to what we would call today "traditional values." In this sense they were not radicals usurping moral decency but rather relatively good men, all searching for a way to justify the morality they held in common.

Morality was simply no longer justifiable by the Thomistic ontology of the High Middle Ages. In this light the new science appeared to be exceedingly successful in its appointed tasks. Understandibly scientific rationality looked like a beacon of light in the darkness of Europe's religious quagmire. Taking the hard sciences as their epistemological paradigm, the Enlightenment philosophers thus began their quest for a rational justification for those practices, those virtues, which they saw as vital for civility. Unfortunately their project failed.

Since the whole point of ethics--both as a theoretical and a practical discipline--is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end, the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a telos leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two remaining elements whose relationship becomes quite unclear. There is on the one hand a certain content for morality: a set of injunctions deprived of their teleological context. There is on the other hand a certain view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is. Since the moral injunctions were originally at home in a scheme in which their purpose was to correct, improve and educate that nature, they are clearly not going to be such as could be deduced from true statements about human nature or justified in some other way by appealing to its characteristics. The injunctions of morality, thus understood, are likely to be ones that human nature, thus understood, has strong tendencies to disobey. Hence the eighteenth-century moral philosophers engaged in what was an inevitably unsuccessful project; for they did indeed attempt to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand and a conception of human nature on the other which had been expressly designed to be discrepant with each other. This discrepancy was not removed by their revised beliefs about human nature (MacIntyre 54-55).

Simply "detach morality from [its] framework and you will no longer have morality; or, at the very least, you will have radically transformed its character" (MacIntyre 56). Thus, the Enlightenment's project totally collapsed under the weight of its own absurdity, thereby becoming the antecedent of contemporary emotivism.

It was, then, in their attempts to come to terms with their contemporary situations, that MacIntyre says the Enlightenment thinkers further decontextualized the vocabulary of moral discourse that had already begun with the Reformation. The Enlightenment set about destroying the heirarchical order of goods which had provided

the basis for the human telos and the virtues that actualized it.

For MacIntyre it is intrinsic in the Enlightenment thinking that a profound ambiguity about what it means to be human had arisen. Confounded by the lack of power in their emasculated moral vocabulary, the Enlightenment thinkers would continue to run into absurdities and self-contradictions as Newtonian physics, geometry, and deontology all proved to be inadequate substitutes for the onto-epistemological context that had been provided by Thomism. Eventually Kierkegaard would articulate his existentialistic choice *ex nihilo* between the ethical and the virtuous life. From then on emotivism would reign, although its tyranny would not be felt by the average American until the 1960s. Obviously "our language of moral and philosophical discourse has gone on holiday", as Wittgenstein would say. The places from which we stand in relation to each other have collapsed for want of firm foundation.

We still have not yet heard the definitive word on the origin of emotivism. For this we must delve deeper into *After Virtue* to get at MacIntyre's ultimate thesis. With this let us stretch our ears a little further in order to hear MacIntyre, hoping that our moral vocabulary can be made to cohere again.

4. Narratives, Practices, Virtues, and Functional Ontology

If *After Virtue* could be summed up in one sentence it would be that our contemporary lunacy about moral and ethical matters is a result of a loss or at least a rejection of tradition.

Specifically it is the loss or rejection of those narratives of the Christian tradition that provided the context for a *telos* oriented sacramental community. When the Protestants called the administrative hierarchy of that community into question--thereby questioning the roles provided for by medieval narratives, the Reformation, with its notion of an unmerited individual communion with and before God by faith alone undermined the ability of the moral vocabulary to provide concrete places of moral relationship from, by, and through which ethical *praxis* could be effected.

In a very real sense the Reformation turned centuries of social hierarchy, with all of its authoritative intentionalities and antecedential references to "the Great Chain of Being"--spoken into nature by the Creator--on its head. The fatal flaw of medieval Christendom was in the fact of its authoritative appeal to the cosmological stasis of "the Great Chain of Being." By attempting to justify all of the power relationships in society by analogical reference to a divinely ordained static natural and supernatural hierarchy, the medievals left their society with only one alternative to the corrupted human authority of the magisterium. This means that when the authority of the natural is no longer justifiable, one has recourse only to the Divine--the supernatural. Thus it was that Protestant theology articulated a spiritual individualism that sought justification only by faith in the transcendent God. Of course this tacitly bespoke its loss of faith in human kind.

As MacIntyre points out the decontextualization of the moral

vocabulary from the narratives which grounded it led to the curious situation in which virtue concepts were increasingly reduced to the injunctions placed upon the base nature of humanity. Prohibitive rather than actualizing this perverted notion of virtue would be mixed and mingled with Newtonian physics to beget the Hobbesian idea of morality as nothing more than coercive corrective on the random inertial motions of the passions. It is this irrational Rationalistic view of morality that has given us the emotivist self and necessitated the growth of the state as "neutral" referee in the great battle between incommensurable paradigms that defines our age.

MacIntyre recognizes the inflexibility of the medieval paradigm. His project is therefore to revive some notion of Aristotelian ethics in a way that affords it the dynamic flexibility that a paradigm must have if it is to endure the buffets of "the bitch goddess *Fortuna*" who confronts all historic existence. His hope is that in so doing we will once more be able to talk rationally about moral issues. His task is nothing short of the re-establishment of true discourse in our republic.

At rock bottom MacIntyre wants to tell us about the priority of narrative. It is only in a story that roles, that is to say moral places by, for, and with relation to other moral places, can be established, thus producing some semblance of predictability in our various sayings and doings with in the life-world which is animated by those self-same stories. Indeed our very humanity is dependent, in this view, on our ability to ground ourselves in

concrete practices defined, delineated, and directed by our narratives.

The Aristotelian idea that ontology is a function of nature is taken by MacIntyre and rearticulated in such a way as to make the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves the basis of our *praxis* and therefore, also, of our virtue. In short we derive what it means to be human from our tradition (the sum of all of our stories and critics of stories we tell). These narratives contain certain roles, places of moral relation, which are inevitably embodied in the life-world of society by the practices they inform. These practices, being concrete actions aiming at particular ends are necessarily teleological. All practices therefore have virtues which are internal to them for a virtue is simply that which allows a practice to complete the task for which it is intended. MacIntyre, as Aristotle, Aquinas, and even Heidegger recognized before him, realizes that ontology is inseverably tied to functional intentionality.

The problem with modernity and our inability to talk about right and wrong in a meaningful and rational way, is that emotivism has ceased to see us as functionals. It has stopped seeing us as part of a greater human story. This is a fundamental part of MacIntyre's argument, for "human kind" is just as much a functional concept as are "watches." Just as a watch is a good watch if it keeps accurate time, so too is a person a good human being if he or she acts according to his or her highest possible actuality as spoken by, through, and in our narrative tradition (MacIntyre 58).

5. In MacIntyre's Defense

In a final note from *After Virtue*, let me conclude by saying that this system is profound in its truth and yet so simple in its form. Despite this there have been those who have attacked MacIntyre. From the Right it is held that he throws the whole system of morality into relativism by historicizing virtue. They see *After Virtue* as nothing more than a clever disguise for the same emotivism that he wishes to refute. This is unjust and simple minded. If the modern experience of science has taught us anything it is that we can no longer look at the world as a natural static order. It was the rigidity of medieval objectivism that modernity revolted against in the Enlightenment and it is objectivism which would most assuredly not be tolerated by the contemporary intellectual climate of the Left. It is for this reason, along with the fact, as I will demonstrate, that MacIntyre's system of functional ontology derived from our great narrative tradition is indeed more in keeping with the most powerful and primal intentionalities of our tradition.

From the Left, MacIntyre is criticized because of his emphasis upon narratives and the intentional parameters they provide and is oft accused of attempting to totalize history by privileging tradition. To this I can only say, "Yes!" Thankfully so. To understand why the post-modern critique of the obvious is an absurdity, though, I must first rediscover, or rather rearticulate,

in prophetic fashion, some sense of our functional ontology as human persons.

Toward this end I will now spring forward from the diving-board that is *After Virtue* and plunge head first into the refreshing and life-giving waters of our historically differentiating tradition. For it is my assertion that the most potent human intentionalities, stretching, indeed leaping forth from, by, and through our mindbodies in their most primal engagement with the life-world, are existentially embodied in the metaphorical narratives that make up the Biblical tradition.

Chapter II

Co-Creative Conversation, Christianity, and Functional Ontology

1. Redeeming Redemption: Metaphors of Experience

Diving into the waters of Sophia let us be quick to our task. We must redeem the tradition of redemption. We must effect a prophetic rearticulation of the most primal ontological intentionalities that stretch out from, through, and in our phenomenological engagements with the life-world by, through, and in our functional mindbodies.

The biblical tradition grew up in the Levant. It was a land surrounded by the great cosmological empires of antiquity--Egypt, Assyria, Persia. Interspersed through out this land there were also the animistic pagan religions of the nomads and semi-nomads who roamed on the edges of these ancient civilizations. All of these religions, like all human thought, were expressed through metaphors derived from our most primal experiences. These religions were all concerned with the continuity of the world. Almost universally, the religions of the Near East articulated the experience of continuity and duration in existence, by individuals, communities and the life-world itself, which encompasses both, in terms of natural fertility. This is to say that the primal experiences of birth and seasonal regeneration were juxtaposed to those of death and seasonal decay in a rich and copious mythology that provided the justification for the various ritualistic practices the various communities engaged in as they worked to save their world and themselves by appeasing the deities of their

pantheons.

Birth and death, spring and fall, along with the many other similar existential oppositions that engage us, were weaved together into complex systems of oral narratives and eventually written into the proto-literate cosmologies for which such stories as "The Gilgamesh Epic" and the "Enuma Elish" are representative. Quite frequently, as with our stated examples, these narratives and other religious stories revolved around the clash between the forces of chaos and those of order. In the "Enuma Elish" narrative, the world is formed by the forces of *Marduke*, who slew the great chaos dragon, *Tiamat*. It is from her body that the world is made. Such myths as this one were embodied in the world, that is, *transubstantiated* from metaphor to practical reality by, through, and in the ritualistic re-reading and/or re-enactment of the great cosmic struggle between the forces of creation--birth, order, and goodness--and those of the miscreants--death, chaos, and evil. In some of these primitive cultures human sacrifice was common as was ritualized copulation; all were done in an effort to recreate the primal phenomenon of existence and thereby, through their appeasement of their gods, ensure a good harvest and the birth of healthy babies both of which are essential to the continuity of a community and its world.

It was in this cultural *milieu* of defeating the tyranny of chaos by the potency of the fertile hero (or at least by abating fateful disorder by sacrificial offering) that the Hebrews erupted into history sometime in the late Bronze Age. The uniqueness of

Israelite religion is that whereas their pagan neighbors took fertility as the paradigm of **Creation**, the Jews, presumably by, through, and in revelation, came to understand **Creation** not primarily as fertility (although they continued to recognize the *procreative* power of it) but, rather, as the creative speech of the Lord God, **YHWH**. Thus it has been in our biblical tradition ever since. It is to the reality of **Creation** by, through, and in speech, that we now must attend. In so doing I hope to demonstrate the way in which this metaphor is played in the intentional nexus of our tradition. I wish to tell how this metaphor is phenomenologically grounded in our mindbodily coherence and articulation.

Our goal is a rearticulated Christian moral vocabulary based upon the gestaltic extention of the mindbodily rationality of humanity by, through, and in the temporally thick and ever unfolding human life-world spoken to us by, through, and in the most potent metaphorical intentionalities of the biblical tradition. Such a rearticulation is meant as a prophetic reminder of our functional ontology, as human persons before God and each other. It will be sung anew, thereby re-informing our *praxis* and providing a context for the moral virtues.

2. Caveat: Don't Cosmologize Truth

At this point it is prudent to restate the implied caveat from the last chapter's analysis of medieval collapse. We must shy away

from the temptation to render the metaphorical paradigm we are discussing as a static *TRUTH*. Not only does it do injustice to our tradition's potency which is light years away from the intellectual infancy of cosmological stasis, but also because of the dangers inherent in the human condition. We are finite creatures and can only know a finite amount about our factical situations in the life-world in any given temporal instant. If Micheal Polanyi is correct "we always know more than we can say", but this still does not imply exhaustive knowledge of our full human potency. We can never know all possibility. Logically, cosmological symbologies are sufficient to provide a place for humankind, but they are not necessary.

Truly, the inflexibility that comes from objectifying the truth of human existence can cause us to become trapped under the suffocating waves of fate as the tide of history rolls passed our hard and immovable cosmo-linguistic structures, thus placing the whole narative tradition in the very real possibility of drowning. We know this in the very marrow of our bones. If, as we go along on our journey, we come across some stumbling block, something that trips us up, then we will probably break some bones if we tighten up and render our musculo-skeletal structures rigid as the hard earth violently presents herself to us.

We must also resist the gnostic temptation to cosmologize faith because such can only lead to tyranny. On the one hand, it could destroy the human dignity that we are trying to effect by, through, and in re-establishing firm places of moral relationship,

through some sort of reactionary enforcement of obsolete and/or corrupted practices. This is what happened in the Inquisition and in the genicidal lunacy of *der Dritte Reich*. On the other hand, such an unfounded absolute knowledge claim would be a lie. It would be a lie which should be called out. Just as the Protestant Reformation threw the whole tradition into disarray and opened the door for much strife and human suffering, so too could a revolt against a rearticulated Christian cosmology throw what little order we have left into the smoldering Pit of Gehanah.

The two epistemological alternatives given us by modernity--objectivism and relativism--must be transended. This involves an abandonment of the mind-body dualism which has defined Western thought since Descartes. We can no longer continue to search for some fictional connection between an autonomous *mind* and the *body*, which is equally autonomous, that feeds that mind sensory data. The mind and the body are one. The means to effect this conceptual shift is located in the tacit paradigm embodied in the Hebrew language.

3. Hebrew Thought and Functionality

As Thorlief Bowman tells in *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*, the Israelites made no distinction between "knowing", "being", and "doing." Furthermore, because of the heavily contextual logic, or heavy emphasis upon particular situations, of the Hebrew language, there is no meaningful distinction between

"knowing" and "doing" either. Thus for the Israelites, as it must be for us, there was no rigid barrier between "being", "knowing", and "doing." There was rather a holistic event--intentional **Creation**. Bowman also demonstrates that since the Hebrews had no tenses comparable with the Indo-European present or future, their conception of Creation was not one of a static eternal order, but, instead, a dynamic event in which the verbal potency of God was made manifest. With their two tenses, one describing actions completed and the other actions in progress, the Israelites were embedded in an ever unfolding lively temporality that was necessarily oriented toward activity. This emphasis upon action, upon functions, yields a dynamic context generated *telos*. Additionally, in Hebrew the same word, *dabhar*, denotes both "word" and "deed." Essentially this boils down to a psycho-epistemological connection in the thinking of the Hebrews between "saying" and "doing."

With such a logico-linguistic system, the Hebrews found their place in a world that was a three-way dance of dynamic existential delight. We should, I believe, listen to our cultural antecedents and learn from them our true ontological intentions. Otherwise we are like decontextualized pronouns: lost in non-meaning. We must come to hear our tradition as a great rhythmic canticle in which there is no "being that does and knows things", but rather there is an *energetic* (actualized and active) "being-knowing-doing."

So, then, the Hebraic roots of the biblical tradition point us in a very definite way as we move to rearticulate it in the

prophetic event that is our current enterprise. There is to be no dissection of our humanity. We are not minds who just happen to be imprisoned in corporeal finitude. We are ambient mindbodies that engage the life-world by, through, and in which we have our existence, in all of our copious and profound humanity. Further, the separation of theoretical and technical/practical knowledge is subsumed into the more complete event of "knowing-doing." Since, doing is to be thought of as producing a deed--acting--and at the same time, a word--speaking; we have a situation in which all existential human reality hangs on the integrity of the speech-act by, through, and in which we effect the relationships of phenomenological self-disclosing that is the world, **Creation**; for as Bowman also says, the beingness of a being is the consequent of an effective antecedent action, its function. Thus in the process of my ambient mind-bodily speaking-acting, I derive my being, as a political theorist for instance, from the fact of my effecting verbally and practically the phenomenal event of political theory. The same holds for a king. A king is a king because he effects *kingliness*. A king is a king because he acts like a king. If the monarch can not act like a king--produce kingly speeches and actions, then he is not a true king. The same is true for all **Creation**. A chair is only a chair if it effects, acts in accordance with the intentionalities of *chairliness* (i.e., it functions as a chair). Indeed, even **YHWH** is the Lord God, only, or rather precisely because, effects *Godliness*! So forth and so on the litany could go on. Alas, we have returned to functional ontology.

The point is that we can no longer, if we are to be true to the primal intentionalities of our tradition, base our ontology on the stasis of substantive correspondence. Quite frankly we would do well to lose the idea of the noun for a while, as we inculcate our thinking-acting into the virtues of the *gerundival* Hebraic paradigm. We must, therefore, take our Hebraic paradigm to heart, and hear ontology as a functional relationship (and thus possessing of teleological intentionality) between being, knowing, and doing--all wrapped up at once--in the temporal thickness of the phenomenon of **Creation**; disclosing itself in the triadic dynamism of lively speech-action uniting us with God, our neighbors, and, indeed, with all of **Creation**.

4. Creation and the Speech-Act

This Hebrew paradigm is very similar to the work done on language and logic by the great J.L. Austin in his little book *How to Do Things With Words*. For Austin "to utter...is to do" (Austin 6). He speaks of what he calls "performatives." Performatives are words that "do things" and affect/effect reality in a very concrete external way. Austin tells us how we do/make--create--the world with our speech. Performatives are verbal **Creation**. One simple example of this is when a ship is commissioned. The master or mistress of ceremonies christens the ship "Queen Elizabeth" for instance. In so doing, he or she has quite literally made a reality which had not been there before. The words of institution

at a wedding are another example, as are the words of a priest at the celebration of the Eucharist for a priest is said to *facere deum*. Having now gotten our bearings in the pool of wisdom let us specifically address the question of human functional ontology. Let us, then, at long last, get to the core of humanity as revealed to us by the Holy Scriptures and the spiritual tradition which animates them.

We hear in Genesis 1:1-2 of the very first speech-action, that is to say the first performative, ever. The primordial **Creation** takes the form of speech as God's *ruach* (the breath of speech or wind that pushes out; *pneuma* in Greek) is spoken over the abysmal nothingness to produce the world. With our Hebraic paradigm we can hear in this first mentioning of activity the origin of being. This is the primordial utterance, the first performative. **Creation** represents God's first word or *dabhar* on, through, by and in **Creation**. Truly, it is by, through and in the word--the *Dabhar*, the *Logos*--that God makes the world. It is through the *Dabhar*, in the *Dabhar*, and in the unity of the Holy *Ruach*, that all glory and honor are rendered to the Creator. So it is, then, that God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, His *Ruach*, His self-disclosing manifestation in the temporal unfolding of activity--His *Paraclete*--effects the **Creation** of the world. God is thus the Speaker-Creator *par excellence*. All potentiality, all possibility for being and intentional speaking-acting is parasitical upon His primordial speech-action.

5. Metaphorical Intentionality, Time, and the Mindbody

As the narrative of Genesis progresses, God continues to create the world for six days in additive fashion, with each new level of **Creation** being made to rest upon the existential temporal thickness of God's breath, His *Ruach*, which forms the previously created world. Each creative word of God is spoken upon the ones before it. The *Dabhar* is an aggregate. He draws all things unto Himself and all **Creation** makes up His *corpus*. Each new creative word spoken by the Father piles up atop the one before it. This begets a pressure that pushes the previous word forward into the future, just as the new word *futurally* comes. In just such a way existence is stretched out to yield space and history. "Without [the] primordial whence of our tonic mindbodies [stretched in their cohesion]...being happily equivocal as between 'space' and 'time'--there could be no space and no time..."(Poteat 73). The cohesive tensions of **Creation** are always existing by, through, and in, simultaneously pretending and retrotending each other--but always ordered by the context of temporally unfolding progression. Poteat makes this point in *Polanyian Meditations*. It is the source of the experiential logico-temporal stretch that gives us both time itself and the coherence of our mindbodies as they rationally hang together in existential gesticulation. The ligamentation of the ambient mindbody, temporality, and linguistic logic is expressed by Poteat in the following passage:

'Time' is the very radix of our mindbodily being; that we do indeed know what is--or perhaps better, that it is--'know' is anterior to saying what it is, 'know' more immediately than we know anything, 'know' before being asked what it is; that this 'knowledge' that is a 'motif' imbuing our most unsearchable wit in the etymology of words like intend, tense, portent, attend, detente, tender, and tonic. The phylogenetic and ontogenetic antiquity and radicality of our knowledge of the 'temporality,' the 'intentionality' of our mindbodily being lies hidden--for reflection ('If I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not')--in the very tendons of our language, that reality (language) that while wholly human is yet somehow no man's making and that was on the scene when we arrived--as mankind, we as you and me. The temporality of our being appears and is 'known' as the from-to structure of the tonicity of our living mindbodies and of their motility. And these are modulated into the 'temporality' apart from which words like tense, attend, tender, and portent would be without force. Without this basal 'temporal' distention there could be for us no such power as attending, attention, that is stretching forward. In short, we carry this 'temporal' arche about in the sinews of our language and in the sinews of our mindbodies that had them first. (Poteat 73)

For Poteat all speaking-acting is a metaphorical intentionality or "a carrying over in order to stretch across". Poteat says, "insofar as I am alive and in being from moment to moment, continuously integrating the particulars of my mindbody to its totality in accord with its own inherent 'logic,' my beating heart, not as pumping blood through my vascular system, but in its very beat, the beating itself altogether worldly, palpable, and yet intimate, a dynamic, intentional, from-to, temporal *gestalt*: is a "bearing me forward in the world in and upon its very particular and changing rhythms" (Poteat 155). Truly the mindbodily gesticulations effecting our ambience, our motility, is an intentional metaphor--a carrying of us forward into futurity as

we stretch and release the various tensions in our bones and tissues that hold us together, give us our coherence, our logic, and ultimately account for our very motility (i.e. our motivation).

In this tone the temporally sequential **spoken act A** pretends the **being spoken B** which will, in turn, pretend the **to be spoken act C**. C, will, of course, retrotend B, which is retrotending A. Poteat gives the example of "a heard melody," but I believe it holds for all human experience, be it tactile or linguistic:

What does it mean then to say that the notes in a heard melody are temporally related? It means that the notes with which the melody begins pretend the notes that follow; that the notes that follow retrotend the notes with which it begins. This 'time' that separates and joins the notes of a melody is a derivative of the archaic temporality of our mindbodily being; even as each 'movement' of my existence as a mindbody, viewed from 'within' my reflecting self, pretends its next existential 'movement'; and that 'movement' retrotends the prior. Except that my existential relation to this pretension and retrotension is more intimate and immediate than that which has been mediated in the melody, and hence is less readily remarkable. (Poteat 74)

All **Creation** thus coheres. It all hangs together by, through, and in the logic of the *Logos*, the *Dabhar*. Every word spoken is empowered, potent--indeed pregnant--with both futurity and logical coherence as it metaphorically leaps from a speaker's lips, circumambiently emplaced by, through, and in the life-world effected by the past retrotended words of that self-same speaker and his or her fellow conversants. Every word spoken is the consequent of the ones before it and the antecedent to the ones which are yet to come.

6. Creative Conversation

A wonderful analogy for **Creation**, in this tone of relational logic embodied in speech-action by the ever pushing and stretching forward of the referential *Ruach* in this great carrying over in order to bear across our primal humanity is that of the lively temporal exchange of *conversation*. It is by, through, and in the temporal unfolding of the world by, through, and in conversation that the metaphorical intentionalities of speaking-acting are stretched--extended--from one spoken instant to the next, from one person to another, thus binding experience into one coherent place (i.e. the life-world). Austin states, "Our word is our bond" (Austin 10). By relating to each other in conversation our intentionalities are intimately bound together to create the concrete factual situations that define our moral places by, through, and in our practical spaces. Thus, God speaks the world into existence via His conversation which is directed through, in, and to His **Creation**, His creatures, which He is, by the very act of creating them, also conversing with them about the reality of their own **Creation** and of their utter dependency upon Him.

In the course of God's conversation with His creatures, which is ultimately indistinguishable from their **Creation**, God willingly subjects Himself to the unfolding of temporal thickness. God, then, while creating the world also dwells in the world. God creates His own context by, through, and in which each successive

stage of **Creation** happens. **Creation** is a place for more **Creation** to take place. Concretely God can only say "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that dry land may appear," after He has said, in the course of His conversation, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other." The point here is that God creates in due time. **Creation** takes the form of narrative.

God has willingly bound Himself to the contextuality of temporal unfolding. God must, therefore, be faithful to His words (His **Creation**) because if His words were not faithful (i.e. did something different from what He said--lied and created a rift between His divine doings and sayings) He could no longer seek fellowship in conversation with us, which is His revealed will. This is because each level of **Creation** serves as the contextual starting place from which divine speech-action must proceed.

7. Owning Words: Personality, Responsibility, and Freedom

In Poteat's vocabulary God must be responsible to what He is creating by, through, and in His sayings and doings, by His owning up to His words.

But the heart of actual speech is the *radically* contingent, *absolutely* novel, and underivable act of owning and owning up to these my very particular words--*and this is so no matter how often it is done*. Unowned 'words' are not in fact words; absconded from, they have become mere sounds--as when we say of another's empty and unowned 'speech': 'words, words, words,' when what we

mean is of course 'sounds, sounds, sounds.' (Poteat 95)

Owning one's words is the active collating extension of one's deeds and sayings to produce valid places or motifs for future motile speaking-acting which is necessary, says Poteat, for personality and freedom to exist.

Authentic speech is the act of owning my own words *before you*. Indeed, speaking authentically, that is, owning my words *before you* is precisely the means of my *being a person*; to be able to be a person is for me at bottom nothing other than to *be able before you* to own my words. (Poteat 95)

Simply put, in order to be able to converse with His **Creation**, God necessarily involves Himself in an intimate and non-reducible way with the context of **Creation**, which is the ground and springing place for all meaning, but which is also a range or limitation upon that meaning, by owning His words, which means being ever faithful to what He is creating. This limit to meaning is precisely the faithfulness which God effects in creating and sustaining the World. By creating the world, God must be responsible to it, for as we know from the *gestalt* of the Bible, God is the Ever Faithful Promise Making and Promise Keeping Lord of All **Creation**.

8. Co-Creativity

God is bound by His own will to time. As He converses with

His creatures, He also creates the world and those with whom He is conversing. To use the analogy of conversation, though, implies that not only God, but also His creatures are creators. This is indeed the case for all **Creation** partakes of God's creativity--His Holy *Dabhar*, the *Logos*. **Creation** is animated by the *Ruach*. Therefore God speaks to the Earth and she replies with geological processes. God speaks to the trees and plants and they respond by bearing fruit. God speaks to the animals; they give birth to offspring. Finally, God speaks to us, and we too, are expected to reply. We are intended to participate. God asks us to join in the *Holy Conversation of Creation*. Indeed, by being invited to converse with God (the invitation being implicit in the fact of our own **Creation**) we are called, yes, even created to be co-creators with our loving Father.

As human beings made in the image and likeness of God, we occupy a special position at the Lord's creative banquet. Of all **Creation**, we sit closest to Him. The Lord has singled us out, as a species and as individuals, in the course of His creative conversation. He has given us a special task in *co-creation*. Our place, our functional ontology, in the Holy Conversation is to faithfully serve God through our faithful dominion over His ever temporally unfolding **Creation**. We, by virtue of the *Ruach* that God breathed into the nostrils of our metaphorical ancestor Adam, thus giving us the faculty of speech (i.e. the capacity for speaking acting which mirrors that of our divine and loving Father), has obliged us to be the bearers of His unending creativity. God has

made us as though we were His Holy Megaphone. We are to amplify His loving creativity and faithfulness. It is by, through, and in us that the Lord's divine Word is to go out and faithfully create, ever renewing the face of the earth. To be sure we are called by God to be like Him, always owning our words so that only faithful and valid places will be breathed from our mouths as our speech-acts stretch out in order to bear across our creative intentionalities.

Chapter III
The Phenomenology of *Creation*

1. Human Functional Ontology

Imersed in the waters of sophia we can now answer the question: What is human functional ontology? We are both creatures and creators, made--spoken--in the likeness of God, and called by Him to faithful fellowship in **Creation**. This is to say that we are called to be stewards of **Creation** as we converse by, through, and in that self-same **Creation**, with each other and God Himself, the Creator of all. It is in, through, and in *conversation*, the act of coming towards one another, that **Creation** is effected. **Creation** is our speech and speech is the breath of **Creation**. Heard simply, the world endures in the articulate relationship between all **Creation**.

As I said in the last chapter, religious metaphors speak about our primal experiences of endurance. Earlier still I made reference to the primordially of this experience in the structural coherence of the ambient mindbody. Let us talk about this some more.

2. Logic and Mindbodily Coherence

Before the primordial speech-act of **Creation** there was nothing. I mean this literally. It is, however, the case that order, coherence, and experience all precede existence. Properly speaking there can be no *existence* with out *being*, without

ontology. Ontology is a linguistic construct. The being of beings is effected by, through, and in the words we share in a common language. It is in the lively activity of speaking to one another that existence is given a name, *signified* and therefore rendered *Significant*. Existence, being, is thus a function of our performative speaking-acting. As Poteat points out, the logic of our languages, in all of their wonderfully diverse and yet utterly similar grammars, partake of the *logic* of our motile mindbodies in all of their ambient coherence as we engage experiential phenomena in the life-world. "Our languages have the logic of our mindbodies which had it first" as Poteat would say. What is meant by this is that our concrete mindbodies project their experience of sinewous cohesion by, through, and in the grammars of our languages. This is not even to mention the projective coherence of motility itself, as our mindbodily structures, in their gestaltic ambience, expand and contract, pull and press, extend and compress our tissues in order to move us from one factual experience to another. The very fact that our arms and legs hang to our torsos, in their potent extension and contraction, is the most primal experiential basis for all derived rationality, that is to say coherence--the logic in our speech-action.

Our languages make sense. They are logical and partake of rationality because they are extensions of our primal experiences of mindbodily coherence. To be blunt, there would be no being if it were not by, through, from, and in the primordial order of pre-existence. Herein I believe flows the fundamental truth of the

doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. There [was] *no-thing* before **Creation** because there was no spoken performative to effect being. The pre-existential coherence of the mindbody is the most primal, indeed, pre-ontological manifestation of God in human experience. We find in the very structure of our ambient mindbodies a trace of God's speech-action.

When the early Church was searching for a description of Christ, it adopted *logos*. *Logos*, in the first century C.E. had widespread philosophical currency. The *Logos* had so many connotations that its ambiguity was the only medium precise enough to come close to capturing the idea of the trace in **Creation**. Only *logos* was capable of expressing to the Hellenistic understanding the profound and primordial order effected by the ever-faithfull **YHWH** and His son Jesus. Thus the author of the Fourth Gospel proclaims:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God;
and all things were made through Him, and without Him
nothing was made (John 1:1-3).

All rationality in the world, all being, is parasitical upon the pre-existential order of the motile mindbody. Our speech-acts are always ordered, always rational. Existence makes sense! Ontological experience is antecedently referable to the *a priori* coherence of the primordial order of God as made manifest by, through, and in the very sinew that collates our skeletons, as we

express and compress our tissues to effect motility. It is not wrong to say as Poteat does that "muscles make assumptions." This means that our muscles unreflectively rely upon the context of their coherence as we effect active *extensions* and *intentions* by, through, and in our basic bodily movements. Muscles intend, and thus, by extension, so do our languages.

3. Motivated Movement

These intentions carry with them a tacit *telos* since all intentions *intend* something. All speech-action is intentional. It is all metaphorical. The metaphorical intentionalities of our speaking-doing, like the muscular expression they represent, is extended in a *movement*. They are abstracted events that find their root, their place, their *motif* or *motive* in the primordial motility of our ambient mindbodily rationality. Metaphors are events by which we extend, "bear over in order to carry across," the very eventual-being that we ourselves are, and that is the life-world--**Creation**. If this is true, then all existence, all performative speech-action, is always *moral* for all existence is derived from the dynamic logic of *motile* coherence. All language, all morality, is a preceded or habitual *mode* of engagement with the life-world and with our fellow conversants. It is an outward movement, an extension to, for, and in the temporally thick and ever unfolding life-world, as we move to verbally bear over and across our intentions in order to effect something.

Hence the reason for my adoption of MacIntyre's ethics. His theory of virtue from narrative practices represents adequately the existential human condition. If all human experience of existence is a motile event, a movement with a motive--a metaphorical intention--then, in the course of our fleshly temporal distension, as we effect various practices or speech-actions (i.e. as we create), we necessarily need virtue. Virtue is what carries our potent mindbodily motives into spokenness-actuality. Without virtue, human motility, morality, is meaningless--incoherent. It is futile.

4. Community and Creation

It is now time to swim in a slightly different direction. Having carried on about the antecedent character of our motile mindbodily coherence and the derivative nature of all articulate *Praxis*, be it spoken, done or even known, the phenomena of **Creation** itself must be fleshed out a little more.

We humans are primates. As any naturalist can testify, most primates are social creatures. Society is, especially for us, the factual situation of our kind. From the moment we come into the life-world, we are with others. Community, along with coherence, are pre-ontological. It is in the context of our communities that all motility, and thus morality, necessarily takes place. Our places in a community are defined by our relationships with our fellows. This is primordially a tactile experience. It is as

concrete as the caress of a lover, the suckling of an infant, or the swat of an angry hand. In these articulate gestures the intentions of our mindbodily rationality are communicated with each other. It is the most basic form of *conversation* because in motile gesticulation we "move toward each other in order to stand together," by, through, and in tactical metaphors. As we further abstract ourselves from our primal coherence, this pre-lingual and therefore pre-ontological, experience of metaphorical intentionality is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the *Ruach*, the Breath of Speech, extended into potent **Creation**. **Creation** becomes the temporal space of our extended moral places.

In extending our intentionalities toward each other we effect **Creation**. The life-world, in all of its dynamic ambience and temporal extending, is that space which exists, subsists, hangs and coheres between conversant persons. The life-world is an event of conversation. We share our words and bring our intentionalities together, weaving them into the great matrix of dynamic ambient existence. The world, like our mindbodies, according to the progenitive logic of the pre-ontological order, the intentionalities of God, is **Creation** by, for, from, in, and through **Creation**. **Creation** is a place for more **Creation** to take place. In the course of temporal unfolding our words come and go together to effect the existence of the life-world.

5. Phenomenology of Ethics: Stewardship, Morality, and Movement

This **Creation** is moral. It is moral because it has its antecedent in our motile mindbodies. Thus **Creation** is a moral place, a whence, by, for, to, and through which motivated events take place. The proper science of **Creation** is, then, ethics.

We have now told a story about the human condition. In our story we, the createrly speaker-actor-knower-creatures, the stewards of **Creation**, by, through, and in our conversations with each other and with God, the Logic behind logic, the *Logos*, the *Dabhar*, the Creator of All Things, effect moral **Creation** and produce through our various relationships, our many moral places in the life-world. By, through, and in His speaking-acting us in His likeness, God has entrusted us with **Creation**. Along with this power comes an awesome responsibility. By endowing us with His Holy *Ruach*, the Great and Potent Faculty of Speech, God has called us to stewardship. This is the basis of our freedom and of our personhoods.

When we create we must be faithful to our words-deeds. We must own up to what we say and do. Just as God, in Primal **Creation** backs up His speech-action with unending faithfulness, so too must we, as stewards of **Creation** and as agents of the Lord's intentionality, back up our words and actions with as much faithfulness as the finitude of the human condition will allow us. In so doing-saying we effect moral personality. The whole of our

tradition points to the necessity of faithfulness in **Creation**. Our biblical heritage informs no other practice if not the communal quest for fulfillment in the holy co-creative conversation that is human existence. We are a people of covenants--that is of binding conversations.

6. Moral Places by, for, and Through Creation

When we speak-act, moral places are created. If our words-deeds are true and effectively carry across our intentions, intentions which themselves are subject to the logic of the tradition, in so far as the tradition reflects the logic of our primordial mindbodily coherence, then they hold true. Our words-deeds must, then, be strong. They must cohere. Cohesion is the essence of **Creation**. When we are faithful, we speak-make moral places that are strong enough to carry the weight of our intentionalities. As a community our discourses are faithful when the weight of all the moral intentionalities of our differentiated tradition can be carried over in the metaphorical intentionalities of our political speaking-doing. In short, **Creation**, along with the freedom and personality that facilitate it, is a goal, a perscribed practice, that can only be actualized by the virtue of faithfulness.

As I said earlier in this chapter, all speech-action is ordered because of the nature of its coherent antecedent, the motile mindbody. While it is ordered, makes sense and is rational;

not all speech-action is coherent. The goal, the motive, of speech-action is to effect a coherent narrative, or a solid series of moral places that, because of their strength, can allow for even more speech-acts of moral **Creation** as we continue our holy co-creative conversation with God and each other. Unfortunately, however, we are sometimes unfaithful to our words-deeds, and there by also unfaithfull to God and each other. At these times the whole world is in danger. Because the world has its coherence by, through, and in faithful **Creation**, unfaithfulness destroys our moral places by making them weak--too weak to carry the intentionalities that represent God's plan for **Creation** as expressed to us through the scriptures of our tradition.

7. Genesis: Paradigm of Creation

This is the reality of sin in the world. Sin is corrosive and a result of our weakness. In our pride, we hide from the reality of our mindbodily finitude, and seek to save ourselves. Where we are insufficient, we all too often try to be self-sufficient. In so doing we isolate ourselves from each other and from God. Isolated we are lost in despair. Our being, our existence, is destroyed as the possibility for conversation disapears. When we in our prideful folly turn away from God to ourselves, we cut the umbilical cord connecting us with the life of the community. Without the community we are not.

The Eden story in Genesis is once more instructive. It should

be heard as a general pre-literate treatise, fortunately and yet ironically preserved in writing, on the human condition. While we are created to faithfully serve God and each other through the speaking-doing that is the co-creative conversation between us and God, we can, because of our awesome potency that comes from being creators fashioned after God's likeness, but still only mortal and not divine, be wooed into believing that we are self-sufficient. Satan of course is the paradigm of *mis-creative* arrogance. He is the personification of malevolent intention; he is always faithful to his unfaithfulness.

Our sinful speech-acts effect incoherence in the life-world. **Creation** falls apart as the sinewous collation of faithful conversation is disrupted and thrown into nihilism. Sin is truly death for it is what removes us from the world by making a rift between conversants. Chapter Three of Genesis is, thus, a paradigm for what we ought not to be doing-saying. It tells what happens when we attempt to extend our lowly egos to the moral height of God. Unfaithfulness breaks the primordial covenant by, through, and in which we are ontologically bound. Unfaithfulness is a rejection of our humanity in the attempt to be God. Therefore, we are expelled from the experiential paradise of loving co-creative conversation with God and our fellows. We are expelled from Eden because we seek to alienate ourselves from the limits placed upon the human condition and assume the moral and creative equivalence of God.

The human condition is such that we are potentially either

faithful creators of unfaithful mis-creants. When we are faithful the world endures; when we are not, it collapses under the weight of unfulfilled intentionality. It is the work of faithful speaking-doing to effect **Creation**. When we refuse to create because of the blasphemous fear of failure we viciously deny our calling as stewards of **Creation**. Likewise, when we refuse to allow God to be our creative guide, we viciously isolate ourselves in the pseudo-reality of ego-centric mis-creation, and the life-world loses its coherence as we are separated from God, the Logic of Logic, the source of all **Creation**. To paraphrase St. Paul, it is not I that creates, but it is the creative Christ in me.

8. Faithful Speech-Action and Cohesion

All potent creativity comes from faithfulness because it is only by, through, and in faithful doings-sayings that stable places are created thereby facilitating further acts of doing-sayings. A place can only serve as a spring from which new acts of creative faithfulness can happen if it is strong enough to carry (i.e. bear across) the loving intentionalities of God's will.

Creation cannot continue if it is not able to retrotend back to some act of faithfulness, because in order to have true being, that is to effect true and valid **Creation**, a moral place must be able to pretend further acts of moral **Creation**, a speech-action which requires the *tacit*, *tactile* and *tactical* foundation of a firm grounding which necessarily serves as the antecedent for any and

all new moral places of **Creation**. It is this dynamic copiousness--this aggregative creating--that forms the life-world.

Above all faithfulness is the life of the world, and unfaithfulness is its death. God is truly the creator of the world because it is He and only He that is ever faithful. All other faithfulness is parasitical upon His grace. When, by God's loving generosity, we are faithful to Him and each other, the world is sustained and we are good stewards of **Creation**. By, through, and in our faithful co-creation, we are allowing the *Ruach*, God's Holy Breath, by, through, and in us to effect the continuity of **Creation**. Therefore, when we are unfaithful and isolated by sin from God--no longer conversant co-creative recipients of His holy grace, since we have turned our backs on Him and refused in our pride to hear His word and to own up to our own, we can not create a viable world. All places of further faithfulness are rendered impossible and sinful death befalls **Creation**.

9. Redemption From Mis-Creation

Sin destroys **Creation** because it ends conversation; it kills moral discourse and personal relationship. It is only by, through, and in the grace of God mediated by, through, and in the community--the people of God--that we can effect the continuity of **Creation**. When pride forces us into the self-righteous assumption that we can survive without God and each other we doom ourselves to death. **Creation** only lives by every word of the Father.

Yet, as the scriptures tell, God's revealed will is that **Creation** continue despite our sinful destruction of it. This is why God called us to be stewards of it. The statement of God's loving willingness to effect the continuity of **Creation** is implicit in His very speaking-creating the world in the first place. It is not God's will that His **Creation** perish.

If God makes certain that the flowers of the field get sunlight to live and the birds of the air seeds to sustain them, how much more effort would the Lord extend to save us, the pinnacle of His **Creation**? We know the answer to this question because the Gospels tell us that God so loved the world that He sent us His son, the *Dabhar*, to die in our stead. In His loving display of faithful concern for us and **Creation**, God allowed His incarnate son to suffer the agony and the humiliation of the cross so that we might learn by His holy example the humility that allows us to take up our crosses--which are the limitations of the human condition--and faithfully and joyfully rejoin the holy conversation of **Creation**.

So as St. Paul tells us, it is through the sin of Adam (the paradigm of unfaithful humanity) that death is introduced into the life-world, but it is through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ that life is brought back to it. Christ, by, through, and in His loving sacrifice, stops the mis-creation effected by sin via His most holy effectation of faithfulness. Because of His faithfulness, God raises Him (and us, to the extent that He is allow by us) on the third day. By, through, and in Christ's holy act of humble

faithfulness, He bridges the communication gap between us and God, effected by sin, and thus brings us and God back together so that we can once more live as faithful co-creators with the Father.

Once the holy conversation of co-creation recommences, God can send out His Holy *Ruach*; He can speak again His Holy *Dabhar*. Through the profundity of Christ's most faithful speech-act of the Passion and Resurrection, He can thus effect valid and sustainable places from which the renewed co-creative partnership between God and His creatures can effect new **Creation**.

Chapter IV
Prophetic Politics

1. Sin and the Victomization Cycle

Our plunge into the waters of sophia has been fruitful. The treasure that we sought has been found. It is now time to return to the surface and be warmed by the light of the sun while we count our riches. I must now, therefore retell my narrative in the context of contemporary political discourse.

What we have is a phenomenologically derived ethical imperative that comes from the dynamic event of being conversant persons with ambient mindbodily coherence. Co-creative conversation is our duty as citizens of existence. Owning our words and being faithful to our doings-sayings is not a choice. We are created by God to be stewards of **Creation**, as we speak-make and sustain the life-world by, through, and in our discursive relationships with each other and God Himself. This implies great responsibility for each of us to everyone else, just as it implies the necessity and primordiality of community. **Creation** is a linguistic event. It is thus a corporate enterprise. Each and every one of us is therefore responsible for the integrity of the life-world, the community, the "sacramental" church, and the body politic.

Unfortunately we can, and all too often do, neglect and deny this obligation. Such, though, is only to forsake all sense. It is to blaspheme against the primordial order spoken by, through, and in God into the very coherence of our sinewously collated

motile mindbodies. To reject faithfulness is nothing short of denying **Creation**. It is nihilistic and is the source of evil in the life-world. To resist the voice that speaks to us from the marrow of our bones and from the beautiful and dynamic otherness of **Creation** is to throw away our humanity.

For us there is only really three onto-epistemological options. We could be divine, human, or brutish. Of course only one of these is a viable option. The other two are only on the margins of humanity. When we resist the primal order of the Eternal Law, the *Logos*, spoken into our ambient muscles and skeletons, our unfaithfulness is always indicative of existential blasphemy. At such times we abdicate our humanity in favor of egomania; making our own little "private" universes in which we become tyrannical analogues to God. Then we force others into our idea of who and what they should be.

In short by making ourselves gods we pervert ourselves while we necessarily oppress others by repressing true **Creation**. In a world ordered by discourse--by conversation--it is only corruption to rudely engage in the mis-creation of monologue. Not content with our mere finite humanity, such pride can only curse God and the "herd" that follows His "slave morality." On the social scale the institutionalization of this sort of hubris leads to totalitarianism and the genocide that represents the perfection of misanthropy.

We can sin in the other direction as well. We can deny our creativity. We can become sheepish and complacent. We can give up

in the face of life's hardships. Victims, we become like the proverbial sheep lead to the slaughter. However lowly this may seem, it is also hubris. Perhaps it is the worst kind. Residing in our self-debasement is the tacit assumption that we could have created the human condition better than God did. We see in the sinful ways of humanity, not a moral ineptitude on our part, but a defect in God's intentions. We thus refuse to own up to anything, not wanting thereby to be bound to a repugnant order.

To be so presumptuous is just as much an act of self-deification as is egomania. The egomaniac tries through the force of his or her will to mold **Creation** in his or her own image. It is idolatrous. The victim is simply passive-aggressive; he or she is the structural inverse of the egomaniac. Instead of tyrannizing the other, he or she tyrannizes the self. They damn with every breath their own debauchery, the circumstances that facilitate it, and the God they wrongly believe to have intended it. Furthermore, when the sin of self-victimization is institutionalized the result is ultimately also totalitarianism. After all the petty Hitlers of the world need many sheep to populate their irrealities. The sheepish victim, is of course, always looking to escape his or her victimization by entrusting all of his or her faith, hope, and love in some millenarian salvation.

2. Christ the Incarnate *Dabhar*: Soteriology

The legitimization of blasphemy has lead modernity to neglect

the existential needs of human speech-communities. We have institutionalized the victim and the victimizer. Our whole political discourse is ordered around this all too simplistic dychotomy. Be it from those like Foucault who wish to bracket off intentionality and focus the philosophical eye only on the forces and power privileging that define society or the liberals like Hobbes who see the human condition as fundamentally a "war of all against all" and therefore requiring a monolithic state to keep us from victimizing each other, modernity offers us few conceptual tools for transcending the naked force of the will. If at every instant we are simultaneously victims and victimizers how can there be any true justice in the world?

The answer is that there cannot be. The paradox is that such is precisely the human condition. Because of pride--the paradigmatic original sin--we are constantly involved in an unending cycle of dehumanization. The reality of sin in the world means that we are all, each and everyone of us, miscreants. Despite the divine intentions that animate us at the very depths of our mindbodily coherence, we deny the order of existence and effect incoherence in the life-world. **Creation**, our trust, is lost because we are unfaithful.

This has always been the case for us. The difference in contemporary America is that in times past the social institutions and the moral vocabularies that animated them were designed to curb, re-educate and re-direct the sinful impulses of humanity. Modernity on the other hand has done away with restraint. All we

have as moral currency is the worthless emotivist self choosing life-styles, creeds, sexual orientations, and religions as if they were nothing more than laundry detergents of various brands and labels. MacIntyre says critically of this emotivist life: "a life lived from moment to moment, from episode to episode, unconnected by threads of large-scale intention, would lack the basis for many characteristically human institutions: marriage, war, the remembrance of the lives of the dead, the carrying on of families, cities and services through generations and so on" (MacIntyre 103). The consumerization of morality has lead to the whole-sale abdication of humanity. We are destroying discourse, and the responsibility prerequisite for it.

There is hope, however, just as there is hope in every generation. The intentionalities of God will not be denied. His creativity is far stronger than our sin and His love is more potent than our pride. Where there is only sin and death, victims and victimizers, the speech-action of the True God is incarnated into our broken world. Where existence has become debased, the Word Made Flesh extends His arms to reunite us with our primordial coherence. By, through, and in His cross and resurrection, Christ demonstrates what is required to save our selves, our society, our world: **loving sacrifice.**

It is in the extention, the stretching of the Holy **Dabhar** by, through, and in the crucifixion that divinity is once more joined to humanity.

The mediator, Christ, reunites us with God and with each

other. He restores true community. He re-initiates co-creative conversation--discourse. Where there is only alienation and the death of desparate egotism, the **Dabhar** mends our hearts by filling them with one another. The grace of the cross is what saves us from death. Indeed, for our political society, it is only by, through, and in the loving cross of Christ that we can be saved from utter anarchy or the tyranny of totalitarianism.

Our sin destroys the coherence of the life-world because in our unfaithfulness we refuse to converse. But Christ, in His humanity, throws Himself into the abyss of incommensurability in order to bind all things to Himself--to ground, once more, **Creation** in the eternal logic of our primordial coherence. As the hands and feet of Christ, the Man-God, are nailed to the Cross our words and our deeds, severed by sin, are reconciled. Blind because we have turned from the light of experience, our eyes are re-opened by the grotesque sight of a just man hanging on a tree. Deafened by our own insulence, the cry of "It is finnnished!" rings out in our ears as if to say, "go forth and sin no more." Truly, when Christ's crucifixion is consumated, so too is the re-unity of divinity and humanity. Because of the cross our world can make sense again.

3. Felicity and Recreation: Christian Freedom

In our tradition the work of Christ could be likened to "the lifting of the burden of self-seriousness," as David B. Harned, has said in his book *Images for Self-Recognition*. It is like the

reunion of lost children with their loving father. In an unfaithful conversation, a fallen life-world, existence is filled with danger and anxiety. Social experiences and expectations are invalidated. Our faith in the coherence of the world is constantly strained and the faithful love of our communities is lost. We are abandoned and left to fend for ourselves. Self-deification seems a necessity. In a world with out divinity, we can only be certain of the raw will and wit of "supermen." The vicimization cycle is the only fruit of such a situation.

Such is the case with modern America. We have lost touch with the Transendent. The inadequate narratives of secularized liberalism leave us with a great thirst for the Divine. We compensate for this through the petty idolatry of the emotivist market, in which we can worship our pick of gods. Like any other consumable, though, these *daimons* are liable to disposal at any instant. As soon as they become an inconvenience, they are thrown away. This bespeaks the utter lack of transcendence that these idols hold for the hearts of contemporary Americans. For us, of course, the self can be the only god.

The tension between our prideful desire to make ourselves gods and our primal *Desire* to have a relationship with *L'Autrui*, or the absolute Other as Levinas calls it, is the origin of contemporary anxiety and frustration. It is the soul wrenching cry for an "I-Thou" relationship in a utilitarian society that has institutionalized the "I-it." The burden of sin is precisely the unquenchableness of egotism. It is the thirst of an infant for the

life giving milk that only comes from a dynamic loving relationship with the Nurturing Other in a cosmos where only the willful self is allowed to exist. It is no wonder that Psychologists and other mental health professionals are doing great business. In a society where the unending "rat race" for personal success is the only reality, and our only relationship with others is competitive, one can not help but go crazy.

Our contemporary life-world has been rendered incoherent--debased--by our insane insistence on institutionalizing hubris. The message of the Gospels, though, is that we as the children of God, can play. We can partake of **Recreation**. The comedy of resurrection destroys the tragedy of crucifixion effected by unfaithful hubris. This, too, is an insight of David B. Harned. Freed by Christ to depend on each other and on God we can, like Christ, effect **Recreation**. Where **Creation** has fallen because of our unfaithful speech-action, Christ recreates **Creation**, and allows the world to hang together again. **Recreation** reunites us. Our task as good stewards of **Creation**, while obliging us to be responsible persons owning up to our words and deeds--being faithful to God and our fellows--is not a burden. The cross of Christ is as light as a feather carried gently by the breeze. The "fertility" of faithful speech-action, of the holy co-creative conversation between us and God is nothing if not the essence of **felicity**.

The felicity of co-creative conversation, the mutual **Creation** of the life-world, the joy of faithful personality, is thus

playful. This is the same felicity that Austin mentions in his exposition of performatives; except that we have it here in its primal nakedness. **Creation** is playful. Eden is bliss. It is only after our sin effects fallenness in the life-world that existence becomes toil. Freed by Christ to play, to converse, we can in our **Recreation** pretend!

In short the **Recreation** of Christ allows us to have a future. Freed from the anxiety of sustaining the our world by only the force of our own feeble wills, we can pretend a future; we can stretch our faithful metaphorical intentionalities by, through, and in the futurity of temporal unfolding as we joyfully converse with each other and the God who we find through **Creation**. With God's own faithfulness to sustain us as we sustain the life-world, we no longer have to be so anxious about our own futures. Indeed, those compromises we must make in discourse no longer seem so impossible to bear. Hope replaces anxiety because we have faith in the faithfulness of God.

4. *Imitatio Christi* and Political *Humilitas*

In politics, in religion, in all realms of human existence--for it all depends upon discourse (i.e. co-creative conversation)--some rational compromise, some leeway, some space, is a necessity. The old fashioned *imitatio christi* is therefore in order. We, realizing our sinful ways, must, none the less, embrace the felicity of life and its accompanying possibility of "death" that

define true humanity, just as Christ embraced His. As Christ in His humility tells us through His whole spoken-acted narrative, the true road to divinity is not in the alienation and hubris of the victimization cycle, but in **humilitas** itself. By humbly accepting the human condition and the limitations it places upon us we are as close to the Divine as is humanly possible. When we imitate Christ it is no longer us that speak-act, but rather it is Christ by, through, and in us. The soteriological narrative is embodied in our personal stories at such times. In our concrete existential living in all of its liquid ambience we become Christ for each other. We, in so actualizing our potentiality for faithful stewardship--faithful co-creative conversation--effect both **Creation** and the **Recreation** that make up the great banquet of humain existence.

When we accept our humanity we embrace and actualize the primordial coherence of **Creation** in our lives and in our societies. Submitting ourselves to the restraints of a community we can be fully human. We can enter into the conversant relationships of faithful **Creation** that effect the spaces, the places, from, through, and in which our personalities are expressed. As I said we can only really be when we are part of a community for **Creation**, existence, is conversation--a lively community of conversants. We are by, through, and in our relationships with others, and yet we are still not reducible to those relationships.

Humilitas implies not only an acceptance of our humanly limitations as mindbodily communal creatures but also the awesome

potentialities that dwell in each of us to speak-make-create moral places and thereby to effect the continuity of **Creation**. This point can not be made too often. Humility is felicitious existence.

Humility is an event in which we speak and listen in turn. It is some what akin to Aristotle's idea from *The Politics* that in the "Ideal Polis" each citizen should rule and be ruled in turn. Humilitas is thus how we give our fellows their due voice and where we receive our own. It is here where we give the other enough room to be a moral person and where we are to be given the same. Humilitas is an event that embraces our potential by, through, and in grace, to speak-make justice in all of its rich valencies. Mostly it is the potential to love! It is when we can play because our loved ones are by, with, and for us.

Effecting humility is the faithfulness that God intends for us. It is the humanity that is effected by our motile bones and tissues. It is what allows us to love God, our neighbor, and ourselves. Humilitas is true humanity.

Politically it is a very exciting event indeed. Being called-created to speak-make faithful moral places for the **Creation** of ever more moral places is above all the domain of politics. Some may resent my rendering of everything as political, but Aristotle was right: "Politics is the architechtonic science". For us politics is the discursive establishment of ethical frame works. Political discourse is when, where, and how the moral world is structured. Politics is, quite literally, the **Creation** of moral

space by, through, and in which is found moral places and morally responsible persons.

Politics is the event when we corporately create and sustain the life-world. It is the realm of constructive, but sometimes destructive, discourse. It is the event whereby we decide if we are to be faithful stewards of our world and where we carry over in order to stretch across, for the next generation, the intentionalities of our differentiated narrative tradition. Politics is the decisive event in which we stress the virtues necessary to attain our common goal--the continuity of co-creative discourse, the life-world of the body politic. It is by, through, and in the practice of politics that we turn ourselves toward the highest moral goods and an orientation toward the community, our world; or if we should invert reality by, through, and in sin, turning reality on its head, so as to collapse all things into ourselves, politics could be when we effect the mis-creation of the victimization cycle and the tyranny that always accompanies it.

5. Prophetic Suggestions

Contemporary America has thus far made the latter. The pride of individualism has destroyed community. Without community there is no conversation, there is no life-world. All that remains is emotivism and the perverted mockery it makes of the human spirit.

The conservatives will speak their empty words about "family values." They claim that their program is what we need. We should

not be fooled. They are advocates of the capitalist's **amor sui**. Hidden in their rhetoric is a rugged individualism that hates community. It hates the community because the "other" always holds us accountable as Levinas points out. **Humilitas** and responsibility are demanded by a world populated by other persons. Community is a restraint on how much money we can make and how many people and nations we can exploit in so doing. **Recreation** is inefficient.

"Family values" are not a call for **family**. They are not a validation of a loving and responsible community. The capitalist hates true family. Grand Maw and Grand Paw are the bearers of tradition and community virtues. They inculcate the young into community oriented behavior. Such virtue has no place in the market because it implies that some things are not, and can never be, for sale. Furthermore they remind us of our own mortality, our own dependence, as we are confronted in our youthful arrogance by their fading beauty and weakened forms. The capitalist thus articulates planned obsolescence to remove all that is old, all that reminds us of history and thus frees us from the coporeal reality of the present.

At the very least, the Right seeks only to support the most rudimentary form of community: The reductionist nuclear family. This is primarily because of a pragmatic necessity. There must be someone laboring to raise children sufficiently polite and competent to take "Big Mac" orders with courtesy and efficiency.

The liberals are no better. Their expressive individualism seeks to give in to the hedonism of an undifferentiated economy of

pleasure. The highest virtue of these egotistical miscreants is in their toleration of the intolerable. The distinctions between right and wrong, mine and yours, responsibility and licentiousness and even male and female are nothing more than barriers to their self-aggrandizement. The Left's flight to absolute freedom from restraint is a blasphemous attempt to escape the world of finite humanity. Where the Right kills community through economic exploitation, the Left destroys it through its reckless pride and epicurean immorality.

Both the Right and the Left seek in their own ways to destroy the community of **Creation** and the traditions that hold it together. They both, in the mis-creations of their self-deification, effect not divinity but the most perverse form of brutishness imaginable.

Humilitas--self-sacrifice--is what our society needs. Humility is the road to **Recreation**. Having been called to be co-creators means that we must share in the cross of Christ. We must, like Him, throw ourselves into the abyss of contemporary emotivism and bind our community once more together. It is in our power, insofar as we are strengthened by God, to mend our speech-community. We can re-commence conversation--**Recreate**. We can turn our hearts, ears and mouths toward each other and the God that resides in everyone of us. True political discourse, faithful **Creation**, is still possible. We have only to lay aside our pettiness and pride in favor of loving relationships born by, through, and in the breath of co-creative conversation.

At rock bottom the political imitation of Christ, the

effectation of humble sacrifice, implies that we may have to give up working overtime and a third car in order that we can spend more time with our families and tend to our civic and moral duties. It means we must fargo wanton sexual liasons in favor of the loving monogomy that fosters community. It implies that employers pay their workers family (i.e. community) wages so that the dignity of work, **physical Creation**, is elevated and the material quality of our children's upbringing is improved. This could also mean that stock holders might have to collect lower dividends and executives smaller bonuses. We might have to allow for personal inconveniences so that the community as a whole might benefit. We may even have to pay more taxes to ensure that our fellow conversants, our families, friends and compatriots have some sort of reliable social insurance. Probably most important of all, it means that we must devote ourselves to the heroic fecundity of child rearing. Nothing is more felicitous for **Creation** than the **Recreation** of our life-world by, through, and in the next generation.

6. Conculsion: Political Propheticism

The list of possible self-sacrifices could go on and on just as does the list of actual self-aggrandizement. The point is that political and moral **humilitas** are one and the same. The idea that religion has no place in politics is ridiculous. Religion has everything to do with politics for it has everything to do with morality, the ultimate function of human beings. Politics is

communal **Creation**. It is therefore most significant for the life-world. Yet, at the same time this is not simply a corporate affair. We can lose ourselves and abdicate our personality by turning from God and the community towards the mis-creation of the **amor sui**. Morality is a dynamic dance between the personal and the community. The sin of one person hurts the whole community just as the sin of the whole community hurts each and every one of us. This makes sense. We are all creatures and creators wrapped up in the same gestaltic mesh; we are all in the same co-creative conversation. All citizens of the life-world are utterly dependent upon the grace that works by, through, and in our faithful speech-action. Each of us has a responsibility to the rest of **Creation**, and the great primordial Speaker Himself, to effect faithful change, to effect **Recreation**, in our political society. We will have to be humble like Christ in order to say-do this; we will have to make some sacrifices.

This whole grand process is *prophetic*. Truly, this whole essay has been about *prophetic politics*. It is about allowing for faithful **Creation** of the moral places that are spoken-made for the purpose of further acts of motile **Creation**, in the course of our temporally distending moral/political discourse, by practically applying the narrative tradition that is the setting for our life-world and the unfolding of history. It is the *imitatio christi*. Indeed, prophetic politics is the effectation of **Recreation** so that **Creation** might continue.

Like the prophets of ancient Israel called the kings and

wayward leaders of the Hebrews into account, making them therefore, responsible for their words-deeds--owning up to what they had done-said, so too must we call our society back to its truest intentionalities. We must reconcile ourselves to each other and God by reconciling ourselves with the nobility of our holy tradition, our covenant. Freedom, personal dignity, loving service for the other, and above all the ideal of faithful co-creative conversation, animated by love, must be re-affirmed by a prophetic citizenry who seeks to insure the continuity of the life-world, of the community, of **Creation** by, through, and in the recreative iterations of the primordial mindbodily intentionalities--the **dabhar** spoken into our tissues--that make up the spirit, the Holy **Ruach**, of our tradition. Each generation is called to affirm the truth of its ancestors while at the same time working to amend and rectify their lies and misdeeds.

Prophetic politics is a process of prudence as well as faithfulness. It recognizes the historicity of temporal unfolding and the multitude of possibilities afforded us by the futurity of felicitous **Recreation**. Contingency must be reckoned with. In our finitude we can never know all that must be known. All that we have is the **Ruach** and our tradition to guide us through the paths of fate. To objectify or cosmologize the tradition and its message is to kill it by destroying the discourse that it embodies. Prophetic politics is an interrogation of the past in order to critique the present. It is also an interrogation of the present that critiques the tradition so as to reapply--**Recreate**--it in the

future. Prophetic politics is the opposite of objectivism and yet is not, and can never be, the equivalent of relativism.

At the heart of prophetic politics is the humble recognition of our full humanity in all of its magnificence and baseness. It knows that the world is not perfect because we are not perfect. It affirms the fact that we can, none the less, effect positive change; we can recreate, in our personal and communal lives. No political order is eternal or static, but rather all are subject to the only order that truly endures, the Eternal *Logos*, the *Dabhar*, the Primordial Word of God spoken into the coherence of our mindbodies in their ambient communal narrative.

The virtue of *humilitas* drives us to be like Christ, the perfectly human and perfectly divine self-sacrificer who recreates the life-world by re-initiating the broken conversation of co-creation. Christ is also the perfect prophet and the perfect priest. Christ is the paradigmatic embodiment of the spirit, the Holy *Ruach*, in the practical institutions that order the life-world. Binding all things to Himself, Christ, unifies the whole of human experience into one dynamic mindbodily gestalten. Slave and free, man and woman, Greek and Jew, oral and literate, East and West, Spirit and law, priest and prophet, governor and governed, intentionality and institution, and even divine and human are all wrapped up together in the mysterious personhood of Jesus Christ.

If we are, then, to follow His example we must strive to always be more faithful, to bind all things together by, through, and in discourse, so that discourse may continue. We are called as

good stewards of **Creation** to forgive and be forgiven by, through, and in a sacramental existence of **Recreation**. The sin that separates us and keeps us from true community must be overcome by, through, and in a prophetic rearticulation of the truest intentionalities of our tradition. To save our republic, our states, our local communities, our families and ourselves we must take up the Christly cross of prophetic politics and strive to reform by, through, and in discourse to recreate **Creation** the **Creation** of our children might take place. We must take hold of that task which is our ontological duty. Humbly each of us, according to our personal talents and gifts is obliged to leave the world better than we found it.

The existential delight of prophetic politics is the **Recreation** that makes the continuity of human **Creation** possible. It is the actualization of our humanity as the co-creative stewards of **Creation**. A Prophetic politics has as its goal the continuity of a loving creative event by, through, and in which every one participates and contributes, according to their abilities, as we strive, indeed grope, toward ever more faithfulness to God and each other. It is not a static order and yet it is bound by the truth that we are, in the depths of our being, creative mindbodily speaker-doer-knowers, engaged always in the existential quest for continuity. We are by, through, and in each other and without each other we are not. To preserve ourselves and each other, prophetic politics is the communal stewardship of the tradition, a continual **Creation** by, through, and in **Recreation** of ever more

faithful, ever more strong moral places for more **Creation**.
Prophetic politics is nothing more and nothing less than a co-
creative conversation between us and God.

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