

TRUTH REALITY VALUE  
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# does aesthetic creativity relate to or influence reality?

*amassed & designed by kathryn kelley*

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Truth  
reality  
value  
Culture

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THATCHING

*a collection of essays for the designer*  
TRUTH REALITY VALUE CULTURE  
2003

<p>only when you have made peace within yourself will you be able to make peace in the world.</p> <p>RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM</p>	



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topic	truth values behavior	truth.reality.value.culture
author	simon blackburn	
title	What are we to think about?	source think. NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1999
<p>Here are some questions any of us might ask about ourselves: What am I? What is consciousness? Could I survive my bodily death? Can I be sure that other people’s experiences and sensations are like mine? If I can’t share the experience of others, can I communicate with them? Do we always act out of self-interest? Might I be a kind of puppet, programmed to do the things that I believe I do out of my own free will?</p> <p>Here are some questions about the world: Why is there something and not nothing? What is the difference between past and future? Why does causation run always from past to future, or does it make sense to think that the future might influence the past? Why does nature keep on in a regular way? Does the world presuppose a Creator? And if so, can we understand why he (or she or they) created it?</p> <p>Finally, here are some questions about ourselves and the world: How can we be sure that the world is really like we take it to be? What is knowledge, and how much do we have? What makes a field of inquiry a science? (Is psychoanalysis a science? Is economics?) How do we know about abstract objects, like numbers? How do we know about values and duties? How are we to tell whether our opinions are objective, or just subjective?</p> <p>The queer thing about these questions is that not only are they baffling at first sight, but they also defy simple processes of solution. If someone asks me when it is high tide, I know how to set about getting an answer. There are authoritative tide tables I can consult. I may know roughly how they are produced. And if all else fails, I could go and measure the rise and fall of the sea myself. A question like this is a matter of experience: an empirical question. It can be settled by means of agreed procedures, involving looking and seeing, making measurements, or applying rules that have been tested against experience and found to work. The questions of the last paragraphs are not like this. They seem to require more reflection. We don’t immediately know where to look. Perhaps we feel we don’t quite know what we mean when we ask them, or what would count as getting a solution. What would show me, for instance, whether I am not after all a puppet, programmed to do the things I believe I do freely? Should we ask scientists who specialize in the brain? But how would they know what to look for? How would they know when they had found it? Imagine the headline: “Neuroscientists discover human beings not puppets.’ How?</p> <p>So what gives rise to such baffling questions?</p> <p>In a word, self-reflection. Human beings are relentlessly capable of reflecting on themselves. We might do something out of habit, but then we can begin to reflect on the habit. We can habitually think things, and then reflect on what we are thinking. We can ask ourselves (or sometimes we get asked by others people) whether we know what we are talking about. To answer that we need to reflect on our own positions, our own understanding of what</p>		<p>we are saying, our own sources of authority. We might start to wonders whether what we say is ‘objectively’ true, or merely the outcome of our won perspective, or our own ‘take’ on a situation. Thinking about this we confront categories like knowledge, objectivity, truth, and we may want to think about them. At that point we are reflecting on concepts and procedures and beliefs that we normally just use. We are looking at the scaffolding of our thought, and doing conceptual engineering. This point of reflection might arise in the course of quite normal discussion. A historian, for example, is more or less bound at some point to ask what is meant by ‘objectivity’ or ‘evidence,’ or even ‘truth,’ in history. A cosmologist has to pause from solving equations with the letter t in them, and ask what is meant, for instance, by the flow of times or the direction of time or the beginning of time. But at that point, whether they recognize it or not, they become philosophers. And they are beginning to do something that can be done well or badly. The point is to do it well.</p> <p>How is philosophy learned? A better question is: how can thinking skills be acquired? The thinking in question involves attending to basic structures of thought. This can be done well or badly, intelligently ore ineptly. But doing it well is not primarily a matter of acquiring a body of knowledge. It is more like playing the piano well. It is a ‘knowing how’ as much as a ‘knowing that.’ The most famous philosophical</p>

What is the point? It is all very well saying that, but why bother?  
 What's the point? Reflection doesn't get the world's business done.  
 It doesn't bake bread or fly aeroplanes.  
 Why not just toss the reflective questions aside, and get on with  
 other things? I shall sketch three kinds of answers:  
 high ground, middle ground, and low ground.

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character of the classical world, the Socrates of Plato's dialogues, did not pride himself on how much he knew. On the contrary, he prided himself on being the only one who knew how little he knew (reflection, again). What he was good at—supposedly for estimates of his success differ—was exposing the weaknesses of other peoples' claims to know. To process thoughts well is a matter of being able to avoid confusion, detect ambiguities, keep things in mind one at a time, make reliable arguments, become aware of alternatives, and so on.

To sum up: our ideas and concepts can be compared with the lenses through which we see the world. In philosophy the lens is itself the topic of study. Success will be a matter not of how much you know at the end, but of what you can do when the going gets tough: when the seas of argument rise, and confusion breaks out. Success will mean taking seriously the implications of ideas.

What is the point? It is all very well saying that, but why bother? What's the point? Reflection doesn't get the world's business done. It doesn't bake bread or fly aeroplanes. Why not just toss the reflective questions aside, and get on with other things? I shall sketch three kinds of answers: high ground, middle ground, and low ground.

The high ground questions the question—a typical philosophical strategy, because it involves going up one level of reflection. What do we mean when we ask what the point is? Reflection bakes no bread, but then neither does architecture, music, art, history, or literature. It is just that we want to understand ourselves. We want this for its own sake, just as a pure scientist or pure mathematician may want to understand the beginning of the universe, or the theory of sets, for its own sake, or just as a musician might want to solve problem in harmony or counterpoint just for its own sake. There is no eye on any practical applications. A lot of lie is indeed a matter of raising more hogs, to buy more land, so we can raise more hogs, so that we can buy more land... The time we take out, whether it is to do mathematics or music, or to read Plato or Jane Austen, is time to be cherished. It is the time in which we cosset our mental health. And our mental health is just good in itself, like our physical health. Furthermore there is after all a payoff in terms of pleasure. When our physical health is good, we take pleasure in physical exercise, and when our mental health is good, we take pleasure in mental exercise. This is a very pure-minded reply. The problem with it is not that it is wrong. It is just that it is only likely to appeal to people who are half-convinced already—people who didn't ask the original question in a very aggressive tone of voice.

So here is a middle-ground reply. Reflection matters because it is continuous with practice. How you think about what you are doing affects how you do it, or whether you do it at all. It may direct your research, or attitude to people who do things differently, or indeed your whole life. To take a

simple example, if your reflections lead you to believe in a life after death, you may be prepared to face persecutions that you would not face if you became convinced—as many philosophers are—that the notion makes no sense. Fatalism, or the belief that the future is fixed whatever we do, is a purely philosophical belief, but it is one that can paralyse action. Putting it more politically, it can also express an acquiescence with the low status accorded to some segments of society, and this may be a pay-off for people of higher status who encourage it.

Let us consider some examples more prevalent in the West. Many people reflecting on human nature think that we are at bottom entirely selfish. We only look out for our own advantage, never really caring about anyone else. Apparent concern disguises hope of future benefit. The leading paradigm in the social sciences is homo economicus-economic man. Economic man looks after himself, in competitive struggle with others. Now, if people come to think that we are all, always, like this, their relations with each other become different. They become less trusting, less cooperative, more suspicious. This changes the way they interact, and they will incur various costs. They will find it harder, and in some circumstances impossible, to get cooperative ventures going: they may get stuck in what the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) memorably called ‘the war of all against all’. In the market-place, because they are always looking out to be cheated, they will incur heavy transaction costs. If my attitude is that ‘a verbal contract is not worth the paper it is written on’, I will have to pay lawyers to design contracts with penalties, and if I will not trust the lawyers to do anything except just enough to pocket their fees, I will have to get the contracts checked by other lawyers, and so on. But all this may be based on a philosophical mistake-looking at human motivation through the wrong set of categories, and hence misunderstanding its nature. Maybe people can care for each other, or at least care for doing their bit or keeping their promises. Maybe if a more optimistic self-image is on the table, people can come to live up to it. Their lives then become better. So this bit of thinking, getting clear about the right categories with which to understand human motivation, is an important practical task. It is not confined to the study, but bursts out of it.

Here is a very different example. The Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543) reflected on how we know about motion. He realized that how we perceive motion is perspectival; that is, whether we see things as moving is the result of how we ourselves are placed and in particular whether we ourselves are moving. (We have mostly been subject to the illusion in trains or airports, where the next-door train or aeroplane seems to move off, and then we realize with a jolt that it is we who are moving. But there were fewer everyday examples in the time of Copernicus.) So the apparent motions of the stars and planets might arise because they are not moving as they appear to do, but we observers move. And this is how it turned out to be. Here reflection on the nature of knowledge—what philosophers call an epistemological inquiry, from the Greek *episteme*, meaning

knowledge generated the first spectacular leap of modern science. Einstein's reflections on how we know whether two events are simultaneous had the same structure. He realized that the results of our measurements would depend upon the way we are traveling compared to the events we are clocking. This led to the Special Theory of Relativity (and Einstein himself acknowledged the importance of preceding philosophers in sensitizing him to the epistemological complexities of such a measurement).

For a final example, we can consider a philosophical problem many people get into when they think about mind and body. Many people envisage a strict separation between mind, as one thing, and body, as a different thing. When this seems to be just good common sense, it can begin to infect practice in quite insidious ways. For instance, it begins to be difficult to see how these two different things interact. Doctors might then find it almost inevitable that treatments of physical conditions that address mental or psychological causes will fail. They might find it next to impossible to see how messing with someone's mind could possibly cause changes in the complex physical system that is their body. After all, good science tells us that it takes physical and chemical causes to have physical and chemical effects. So we might get an a priori, armchair certainty that one kind of treatment (say, drugs and electric shocks) has to be 'right' and others (such as

A system of thought is something we live in.

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treating patients humanely, counseling, analysis) are ‘wrong’: unscientific, unsound, bound to fail. But this certainty is premised not on science but on a false philosophy. A better philosophical conception of the relation between mind and body changes it. A better conception should enable us to see how there is nothing surprising in the fact of mind-body interaction. It is the most commonplace fact, for instance, that thinking of some things (mental) can cause people to blush (physical). Thinking of a future danger can cause all kinds of bodily changes: hearts pound, fists clench, guts constrict. By extrapolation there should be nothing difficult to comprehend about a mental state such as cheerful optimism affecting a physical state like the disappearance of spots or even the remission of a cancer. It becomes a purely empirical fact whether such things happen. The armchair certainty that they could not happen is itself revealed as dependent on bad understanding of the structures of thought, or in other words bad philosophy, and is in that sense unscientific. And this realization can change medial attitudes and practice for the better.

So the middle-ground answer reminds us that reflection is continuous with practice, and our practice can go worse or better according to the value of our reflections. A system of thought is something we live in, just as much as a house, and if our intellectual house is cramped and confined, we need to know what better structures are possible.

The low-ground answer merely polishes this point up a bit, not in connection with nice clean subjects like economics or physics, but down in the basement where human life is a little less polite. One of the series of satires etched by the Spanish painter Goya is entitled ‘The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters’. Goya believed that many of the follies of mankind resulted from the ‘sleep of reason’. There are always people telling us what we want, how they will provide it, and what we should believe. Convictions are infectious, and people can make others convinced of almost anything. We are typically ready to believe that our ways, our beliefs, our religion, our politics are better than theirs, or that our God-given rights trump theirs or that our interests require defensive or pre-emptive strikes against them. In the end, it is ideas for which people kill each other. It is because of ideas about what the others are like, or who we are, or what our interestes or rights require, that we go to war, or oppress others with a good conscience, or even sometimes acquiesce in our own oppression by others. When these beliefs involve the sleep of reason, critical awakening is the antidote. Reflection enables us to step back, to see our perspective on a situation as perhaps distorted or blind, at the very least to see if there is argument for preferring our ways, or whether it is just subjective. Doing this properly is doing one more piece of conceptual engineering.

Since there is no telling in advance where it may lead, reflection can be seen as dangerous. There are always thoughts that stand opposed to it. Many people are discomfited, or even outraged, by philosophical ques-

tions. Some are fearful that their ideas may not stand up as well as they would like if they start to thinking about them. Others may want to stand upon the ‘politics of identity’, or in other words the kind of identification with a particular tradition, or group, or national or ethnic identity that invites them to turn their back on outsiders who question the ways of the group. They will shrug off criticism: their values are ‘incommensurable’ with the values of outsiders. They are to be understood only by brothers and sisters within the circle. People like to retreat to within a thick, comfortable, traditional set of folkways, and not to worry too much about their structure, or their origins, or even the criticisms that they may deserve. Reflection opens the avenue to criticism, and the folkways may not like criticism. In this way, ideologies become closed circles, primed to feel outrage by the questioning mind.

For the last two thousand years the philosophical tradition has been the enemy of this kind of cozy complacency. It has insisted that the unexamined life is not worth living. It has insisted on the power of rational reflection to winnow out bad elements in our practices, and to replace them with better ones. It has identified critical self-reflection with freedom, the idea being that only when we can see ourselves properly can we obtain control over the direction in which we would wish to move. It is only when we can see our situation steadily and see it whole that we can start to think what to do about it. Marx said that previous philosophers had sought to understand the world, whereas the point was to change it-one of the silliest famous remarks of all time (and absolutely belied by his own intellectual practice). He would have done better to add that without understanding the world, you will know little about how to change it, at least for the better. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern admit that they cannot play on a pipe but they seek to manipulate Hamlet. When we act without understanding, the world is well prepared to echo Hamlet’s response: ‘ ‘Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on then a pipe?’

There are academic currents in our own age that run against these ideas. There are people who question the very notion of truth, or reason, or the possibility of disinterested reflection. Mostly, they do bad philosophy, often without even knowing that this is what they are doing: conceptual engineers who cannot draw a plan, let alone design a structure. We return to see this at various points in the book, but meanwhile I can promise that this book stands unashamedly with the tradition and against any modern, or postmodern, skepticism about the value of reflection.

If Goya’s full motto for his etchings is, ‘Imagination abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united with her, she is the mother of the arts and the source of her wonders.’ That is how we should take it to be.

In the end,

it is

IDEAS for which people

kill each other.

# Sources of Truth

## PARAMETERS

The Individual  
Pragmatism  
Emotion  
Tolerance  
Neo-Spirituality  
Religious Syncretism  
Relativism  
Pro-Choice  
Personal Interpreting  
Distrust of All Truth  
Subjective Truth

Science & Intellect  
Objective Truth  
Experiential  
Technology

Creative Order  
Social Order  
Romanticism

Supernatural

Revelation (God)  
Transcendent

New Age  
Nihilism  
Jesus Seminar  
Multi-Culturalism  
Scepticism  
New Hermeneutic  
No Absolute Truth  
Neo-Gnosticism  
Historical Criticism  
Individualism  
Radical Relativism

Secularism  
Form Criticism  
Social Gospel  
Humanism

Mystery  
Hierachy  
Church Authority

Gospel  
Tradition

SOURCES OF TRUTH

topic

title

A TAXONOMY OF WORLD-VIEWS

DECONSTRUCTION

POSTMODERNISM

1989 A.D. - PRESENT

MODERNITY

1789 A.D. - 1989 A.D.  
FROM THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE  
TO THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

RENAISSANCE

1517 A.D.

MEDIEVAL WORLD

590 A.D. - 1517 A.D.

ANCIENT WORLD

APOSTOLIC PERIOD TO 4TH CENTURY

2.OI

truth.reality.value.culture

author Rev. Frank Marangos,  
D.Min., Ed.D.

web 2003 Greek Orthodox  
Archdiocese of America



3.OI

*Humanism Philosophical Essays. F.C.S. Schiller*  
THE ETHICAL BASIS OF METAPHYSICS

ARGUMENT

The place of Conduct in Philosophy: (a) The absolutist reduction of Conduct to appearance; (b) the pragmatist reaction which makes conduct primary and thought secondary. Is Pragmatism irrationalism? No, but it explains it by exposing the inadequacy of intellectualism. Ways of reaching Pragmatism (1) by justification of ‘faith’ against ‘reason,’ (2) historical, (3) evolutionary. The definition of Pragmatism. Its relation to psychological teleology. The supremacy of ‘Good’ over ‘True’ and ‘Real.’ Kant’s Copernican Revolution, and the complication of the question of reality with that of our knowledge. A further similar step necessitated by the purposiveness of actual knowing. The function of the will in cognition. ‘Reality’ as the response to a will to know, and therefore dependent in part on our action. Consequently (1) ‘reality’ cannot be indifferent to us; (2) our relations to it quasi-personal; (3) metaphysics quasi-ethical; (4) Pragmatism as a tonic: the venture of faith and freedom; (5) the moral stimulus of Pragmatism.

WHAT HAS PHILOSOPHY TO SAY OF CONDUCT?  
SHALL IT PLACE IT HIGH OR LOW, EXALT IT ON A PEDESTAL FOR THE

This essay, originally an Ethical Society address, is reprinted from the July 1903 number of the International Journal of Ethics with some additions. Its title seems of course to put the cart before the horse, but it is easy to reply that nowadays it is no longer impracticable to use a motor car for the removal of a dead horse. The paradox is, moreover, intentional. It is a conscious inversion of the tedious and unprofitable disquisitions on the metaphysical basis of this, that, and the other, which an erroneous conception of philosophical method engenders. They are all wrong in method, because we have not de facto a science of first principles of unquestionable truth from which we can start to derive the principles of the special sciences. Plato certainly failed to deduce the principles of the sciences from his metaphysical Idea of Good, and it may be doubted whether any one has ever really deduced anything from metaphysics. The fact is rather that our ‘first’ principles are postulated by the needs, and slowly secreted by the labours, of the special sciences, or of such preliminary exercises of our intelligence as build up the common-sense view of life.

So what my title means is, not an attempt to rest the ‘final synthesis’ Upon a single science, but rather that among the contributions of the special sciences to the final evaluation of experience that of the highest, viz. ethics, has, and must have, decisive weight.

ADORATION OF THE WORLD OR DRAG IT IN THE MIRE TO BE TRAMPLED ON BY ALL SUPERIOR PERSONS? Shall it equate it with the whole or value it as nought? Philosophers have, of course, considered the matter, though not perhaps as carefully nor as successfully as they ought. And so the relations of the theory to the practice of life, of cognition to action, of the theoretical to the practical reason, form a difficult and complicated chapter in the history of thought. From that history one fact, however, stands out clearly, viz. that the claims on both sides are so large and so insistent that it is hardly possible to compromise between them. The philosopher is not on the whole a lover of compromise, despite the solicitations of his lower nature. He will not, like the ordinary man of sense, subscribe to a plausible platitude like, e.g. Matthew Arnold’s famous dictum that Conduct is three-fourths of Life. Matthew Arnold was not a philosopher, and the very precision of his formula arouses scientific suspicions. But anyhow the philosopher’s imperious logic does not deal in quarters; it is prone to argue aut Caesar aut nullus; if Conduct be not the whole life, it is naught. Which therefore shall it be? Shall Conduct be the substance of the All, or the vision of a dream?

Now, it would seem at first that latterly the second alternative had grown philosophically almost inevitable. For, under the auspices of the Hegelizing ‘idealists,’ Philosophy has uplifted herself once more to a metaphysical contemplation of the Absolute, of the unique Whole in which all things are included and transcended. Now whether this conception has any logical meaning and value for metaphysics is a moot point, which I have elsewhere treated; but there can hardly be a pretence of denying that it is the death of morals. For the ideal of the Absolute Whole cannot be rendered compatible with the antithetical valuations which form the vital atmosphere of human agents. They are partial appreciations, which vanish from the standpoint of the Whole. Without the distinctions of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Pleasure and Pain, Self and others, Then and Now, Progress and Decay, human life would be dissolved into the phantom flow of an unmeaning mirage. But in the Absolute the moral distinctions must, like all others, be swallowed up and disappear. The All is raised above all ethical valuation and moral criticism: it is ‘beyond Good and Evil’; it is timelessly perfect, and therefore incapable of improvement. It transcends all our antitheses, because it includes them. And so to the metaphysician it seems an easy task to compose the perfection of the whole out of the imperfections of its parts: he has merely to declare that the point of view of human action, that of ethics, is not and cannot be final. It is an illusion, which has grown transparent to the sage. So, in proportion as his insight into absolute reality grows clearer, his interest in ethics wanes.

It must be confessed, moreover, that metaphysicians no longer shrink from this avowal. The typical leader of this philosophic fashion, Mr. F. H. Bradley, never attempts to conceal his contempt for ethical considerations, nor omits a sneer at the pretensions of practice to be heard in the High Court of Metaphysics. “Make the moral point of view absolute,” he cries, “and then realize your position. You have become not merely irrational, but you have also broken with every considerable religion.”

And this is how he dismisses the appeal to practice, “But if so, what, I may be asked, is the result in practice? That I reply at once is not my business;” it is merely a “hurtful prejudice” if “irrelevant appeals to practical results are allowed to make themselves heard.”

Altogether nothing could be more pulverizing to ethical aspiration than chapter xxv. of Mr. Bradley’s Appearance and Reality. And the worst of it all is that this whole treatment of ethics follows logically and legitimately from the general method of philosophizing which conducts to the metaphysical assumption of the Absolute.

Fortunately, however, there appears to be a natural tendency when the consequences of a point of view have been stated without reserve, and become plain to the meanest intelligence, to turn round and try something fresh. By becoming openly immoralist, metaphysic has created a demand for its moral reformation. So, quite recently, there has become noticeable a movement in a diametrically opposite direction, which repudiates the assumptions and reverses the conclusions of the metaphysical criticism of ethics which we have been considering. Instead of regarding contemplation of the Absolute as the highest form of human activity, it sets it aside as trivial and unmeaning, and puts purposeful action above purposeless speculation. Instead of supposing that Action is one thing and Thought something alien and other, and that there is not, therefore, any reason to anticipate that the pure contemplations of the latter will in any way relate to or sanction the principles which guide the former, it treats every judgment as an act and Thought as a mode of conduct, as an integral part of active life. Instead of regarding practical results as irrelevant, it makes Practical Value an essential ingredient and determinant of theoretic truth. And so far from admitting the claim to independence of an irresponsible intelligence, it regards knowledge as derivative from conduct and as involving distinctively moral qualities and responsibilities in a perfectly definite and traceable way. In short, instead of being reduced to the nothingness of an illusion, Conduct is reinstated as the all-controlling influence in every department of life.

It may be admitted, however, that all effective ethical effort ultimately demands a definite attitude towards life as a whole, and it therefore becomes an urgent need to find a philosophy which will support, or at least will not paralyse, moral effort. The new method of philosophizing will supply this desideratum in an almost perfect way. It has been called Pragmatism by the chief author of its importance, Professor William James, whose Varieties of Religious Experience so many others besides the professional readers of philosophic literature have been enjoying. But the name in this case does even less than usual to explain the meaning, and as the nature of Pragmatism has been greatly and conspicuously misunderstood, we must try to put it in a clearer light.

We may best begin by mentioning a few of the ways in which Pragmatism may be reached, before explaining how it should be defined. For many have conceived a considerable prejudice against it by reason of the method by which William James approached it.

James first unequivocally advanced the pragmatist doctrine in connexion with what he called the ‘Will to believe.’<sup>1</sup> Now this Will to believe was put forward as an intellectual right (in certain cases) to decide between alternative views, each of which seemed to make a legitimate appeal to our nature, by other than purely intellectual considerations, viz. their emotional interest and practical value. Although James laid down a number of conditions limiting the applicability of his Will-to-believe, the chief of which was the willingness to take the risks involved and to abide by the results of subsequent experience, it was not perhaps altogether astonishing that his doctrine should be decried as rank irrationalism.

Irrationalism seemed a familiar and convenient label for the new doctrine. For irrationalism is a permanent or continually recrudescient attitude of the moral consciousness, the persistent vogue of which it has always been hard to explain. It is ably and brilliantly exemplified at the present day by

3.03 Mr. Balfour's Foundations of Belief, and, in a less defensible form, by Mr. Benjamin Kidd. And if, instead of denouncing it, we try to understand it, we shall not find that it is entirely absurd. At bottom indeed it indicates little more than a defect in the current rationalism, and a protest against the rationalistic blindness towards the non-intellectual factors in the foundation of beliefs. Common Sense has always shown a certain sympathy with all such protests against the pretensions of what is called the pure intellect to dictate to man's whole complex nature. It has always felt that there are 'reasons of the heart of which the head knows nothing,' postulates of a faith that surpasses mere understanding, and that these possess a higher rationality which a bigoted intellectualism has failed to comprehend.

If, then, one had to choose between Irrationalism and Intellectualism, the former would undoubtedly have to be preferred. It is less inadequate to life, a less violent departure from our actual behaviour, a less grotesque caricature of our actual procedure. Like Common Sense, therefore, Pragmatism sympathizes with Irrationalism in its blind revolt against the trammels of a pedantic Intellectualism. But Pragmatism does more; it not only sympathizes, it explains. It vindicates the rationality of Irrationalism, without becoming itself irrational; it restrains the extravagance of Intellectualism, without losing faith in the intellect. And it achieves this by instituting a new analysis of the common root both of the reason and of the emotional revulsion against its pride. By showing the 'pure' reason to be a pure figment, and a psychological impossibility, and the real structure of the actual reason to be essentially pragmatical, and permeated through and through with acts of faith, desires to know and wills to believe, to disbelieve and to make believe, it renders possible, nay unavoidable, a reconciliation between a reason which is humanized and a faith which is rationalized in the very process which shows their antithesis to be an error.

That, however, Pragmatism should have begun by intervening in the ancient controversy between Reason and Faith was something of an accident. In itself it might equally well have been arrived at by way of a moral revolt from the unfruitful logic-chopping and aimless quibbling which is often held to be the sum total of philosophy.

Or again, it might be reached, most instructively, by a critical consideration of many historic views, notably those of Kant and Lotze, and of the unsolved problems which they leave on our hands. Or, once more, by observing the actual procedure of the various sciences and their motives for accepting, maintaining, and modifying the 'truth' of their various propositions, we may come to realize that what works best in practice is what in actual knowing we accept as 'true.'

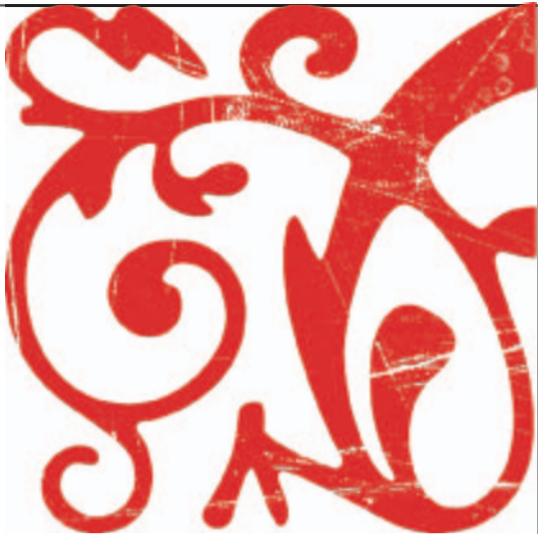
But to me personally the straightest road to Pragmatism is one which the extremest prejudice can scarce suspect of truckling to the encroachments of theology. Instead of saying like James, 'so all-important is it to secure the right action that (in cases of real intellectual alternatives) it is lawful for us to adopt the belief most congenial with our spiritual needs and to try whether our faith will not make it come true,' I should rather say 'the traditional notion of beliefs determined by pure reason alone is wholly incredible. For is not "pure" reason a myth? How can there be such a thing? How, that is, can we so separate our intellectual function from the whole complex of our activities, that it can operate in real independence of practical considerations? I cannot but conceive the reason as being, like the rest of our equipment, a weapon in the struggle for existence and a means of achieving adaptation. It must follow that the use, which has developed it, must have stamped itself upon its inmost structure, even if it has not moulded it out of pre-rational instincts. In short, a reason which has not practical value for the purposes of life is a monstrosity, a morbid aberration or failure of adaptation, which natural selection must sooner or later wipe away.'

It is in some such way that I should prefer to pave the way for an appreciation of the aims of Pragmatism. Hence we may now venture to define it as the thorough recognition that the purposive character of mental life generally must influence and pervade also our most remotely cognitive activities.'

In other words, it is a conscious application to the theory of life of the psychological facts of cognition as they appear to a teleological Voluntarism. In the light of such a teleological psychology the problems of logic and metaphysics are rejuvenated by the decisive weight given to the conceptions of Purpose and End. Or again, it is a systematic protest against the practice of ignoring in our theories of Thought and Reality the purposiveness of all our actual thinking, and the relation of all our actual realities to the ends of our practical life. It is an assertion of the sway of human valuations over every region of our experience, and a denial that such valuation can validly be eliminated from the contemplation of any reality we know.

Now inasmuch as such teleological valuation is also the special sphere of ethical inquiry, Pragmatism may be said to assign metaphysical validity to the typical method of ethics. At a blow it awards to the ethical conception of Good supreme authority over the logical conception of True and the metaphysical conception of Real. The Good becomes a determinant both of the True and of the Real, and their secret inspiration. For from the pursuit of the latter we may never eliminate the reference to the former. Our apprehension of the Real, our comprehension of the True, is always effected by beings who are aiming at the attainment of some Good, and choose between rival claimants to reality and truth according to the services they render. Is it not then a palpable absurdity to deny that this fact makes a stupendous difference?

Pragmatism then has taken a further step in the analysis of our experience which amounts to an important advance in that self-knowledge on which our knowledge of the world depends. Indeed, this advance seems to be of a magnitude comparable with, and no less momentous than, that which gave to the epistemological question priority over the ontological.



It is generally recognized as the capital achievement of modern philosophy to have perceived that a solution of the ontological question- What is Reality? -is not possible until it has been decided how Reality can come within our ken. Before there can be a real for us at all, the Real must be knowable, and the notion of an unknowable reality is useless, because it abolishes itself. The true formulation therefore of the ultimate question of metaphysics must become-What can I know as real? Thus the effect of what Kant (very infelicitously) called the Copernican Revolution in philosophy is that ontology, the theory of Reality, comes to be conditioned by epistemology, the theory of our knowledge.

But this truth is incomplete until we realize all that is involved in the knowledge being ours and recognize the real nature of our knowing. Our knowing is not the mechanical operation of a passionless ‘pure’ intellect, which

## GRINDS OUT GOOD AND GRINDS OUT ILL, AND HAS NO PURPOSE, HEART, OR WILL.

Pure intellection is not a fact in nature; it is a logical fiction which will not really serve even the purposes of technical logic. In reality our knowing is driven and guided at every step by our subjective interests and preferences, our desires, our needs and our ends. These form the motive powers also of our intellectual life.

Now what is the bearing of this fact on the traditional dogma of an absolute truth and ultimate reality existing for themselves apart from human agency? It must utterly debar us from the cognition of ‘Reality as it is in itself and apart from our interests’; if such a thing there were, it could not be known, nor rationally believed in.

For our interests impose the conditions under which alone Reality can be revealed. Only such aspects of Reality can be revealed as are (1) knowable and (2) objects of an actual desire, and consequent attempt, to know. All other realities or aspects of Reality, which there is no attempt to know, necessarily remain unknown, and for us unreal, because there is no one to look for them. Reality, therefore, and the knowledge thereof, essentially presuppose a definitely directed effort to know. And, like other efforts, this effort is purposive; it is necessarily inspired by the conception of some good (‘end’) at which it aims. Neither the question of Fact, therefore, nor the question of Knowledge can be raised without raising also the question of Value. Our ‘Facts’ when analysed turn out to be ‘Values,’ and the conception of ‘Value’ therefore becomes more ultimate than that of ‘Fact’ Our valuations thus pervade our whole experience, and affect whatever ‘fact,’ whatever ‘knowledge’ we consent to recognize. If, then, there is no knowing without valuing, if knowledge is a form of Value, or, in other words, a factor in a Good, Lotze’s anticipation has been fully realized, and the foundations of metaphysics have actually been found to lie in ethics.

In this way the ultimate question for philosophy s becomes—What is Reality for one aiming at knowing what? ‘Real’ means, real for what purpose? to what end? in what use? in what context? in preference to what alternative belief? The answers always comes in terms of the will to know which puts the question. This at once yields a simple and beautiful explanation of the different accounts of Reality which are given in the various sciences and philosophies. The purpose of the questions being different, so is their purport, and so must be the answers. For the direction of our effort, itself determined by our desires and will to know, enters as a necessary and ineradicable factor into whatever revelation of Reality we can attain. The response to our questions is always affected by their character, and that is in our power. For the initiative throughout is ours. It is for us to consult the oracle of Nature or to refrain; it is for us to formulate our demands and to put our questions. If we question amiss, Nature will not respond, and we must try again. But we can never be entitled to assume either that our action makes no difference or that nature contains no answer to a question we have never thought to put.

It is no exaggeration therefore to contend, with Plato, that in a way The Good, meaning thereby the conception of a final systematization of our purposes, is the supreme controlling power in our whole experience, and that in abstraction from it neither the True nor the Real can exist. For whatever forms of the latter we may have ‘discovered,’ some purposive activity, some conception of a good to be attained, was involved as a condition of the discovery. If there had been no activity on our part, or if that activity had been directed to ends other than it was, there could not have been discovery, or that discovery.

WE MUST DISCARD, THEREFORE, THE NOTION THAT  
IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD WE COUNT  
FOR NOTHING, THAT IT MATTERS NOT WHAT WE DO, BECAUSE REALITY IS WHAT IT IS,  
WHATEVER WE MAY DO. IT IS TRUE ON THE CONTRARY THAT OUR ACTION IS ESSENTIAL  
AND INDISPENSABLE, THAT TO SOME EXTENT THE WORLD (OUR WORLD) IS OF OUR



3.05 MAKING, AND THAT WITHOUT US NOTHING IS MADE THAT IS MADE. TO WHAT EXTENT AND IN WHAT DIRECTIONS THE WORLD IS PLASTIC AND TO BE MOULDED BY OUR ACTION WE DO NOT KNOW AS YET. WE CAN FIND OUT ONLY BY TRYING: BUT WE KNOW ENOUGH FOR PRAGMATISM TO TRANSFIGURE THE ASPECT OF EXISTENCE FOR US.

IT FREES US IN THE FIRST PLACE FROM WHAT CONSTITUTES PERHAPS THE WORST AND MOST PARALYSING HORROR OF THE NATURALISTIC VIEW OF LIFE, THE NIGHTMARE OF AN INDIFFERENT UNIVERSE. FOR IT PROVES THAT AT ANY RATE NATURE CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO US AND TO OUR DOINGS. IT MAY BE HOSTILE, AND SOMETHING TO BE FOUGHT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT; IT MAY BE UNSUSPECTEDLY FRIENDLY, AND SOMETHING TO BE COOPERATED WITH WITH OUR WHOLE HEART; IT MUST RESPOND IN VARYING WAYS TO OUR VARIOUS EFFORTS.

Now, inasmuch as we are most familiar with such varying responsiveness in our personal relations with others, it is, I think, natural, though not perhaps necessary, that a pragmatist will tend to put a personal interpretation upon his transactions with Nature and any agency he may conceive to underlie it. Still even ordinary language is aware that things behave differently according as you ‘treat’ them, that eg., treated with fire sugar burns, while treated with water it dissolves. Thus in the last resort the anthropomorphic ‘humanism’ of our whole treatment of experience is unavoidable and obvious; and however much he wills to disbelieve it the philosopher must finally confess that to escape anthropomorphism he would have to escape from self. And further, seeing that ethics is the science of our relations with other persons, i.e. with our environment qua personal, this ultimateness of the personal construction we put upon our experience must increase the importance of the ethical attitude towards it. In other words, our metaphysics must in any case be quasi-ethical.

It may fairly be anticipated, secondly, that Pragmatism will prove a great tonic to re-invigorate a grievously depressed humanity. It sweeps away entirely the stock excuse for fatalism and despair. It proves that human action is always a perceptible, and never a negligible, factor in the ordering of nature, and shows cause for the belief that the disparity between our powers and the forces of nature, great as it is, does not amount to incommensurability. And it denies that any of the great questions of human concern have been irrevocably answered against us. For most of them have not even been asked in a pragmatic manner, i.e. with a determination to test the answers by the value of the consequences, and in no case has there been that systematic and clearsighted endeavour which extorts concessions, or at least an answer, from reluctant nature. In short, no doctrine better calculated to stir us to activity or more potent to sustain our efforts has ever issued from the philosophic study.

It is true that to gain these hopes we must make bold to take some risks. If our action is a real factor in the course of events, it is impossible to exclude the contingency that if we act wrongly it may be an influence for ill. To the chance of salvation there must correspond a risk of damnation. We select the conditions under which reality shall appear to us, but this very selection selects us, and if we cannot contrive to reach a harmony in our intercourse with the real, we perish. But to many this very element of danger will but add to the zest of life. For it cannot but appear by far more interesting than the weary grinding out of a predetermined course of things which issues in meaningless monotony from the unalterable nature of the All. And the infinite boredom with which this conception of the course of nature would afflict us, must be commingled with an equal measure of disgust when we realize that on this same theory the chief ethical issues are eternally and inexorably decided against us. Loyal co-operation and Promethean revolt grow equally unmeaning. For man can never have a ground for action against the Absolute. It is eternally and inherently and irredeemably perfect, with a ‘perfection’ which has lost all meaning for humanity, and so leaves no ground for the hope that the appearances’ which make up our world may somehow be remoulded into conformity with our ideals. As they cannot now impair the inscrutable perfection of the Whole, they need not ever alter to pander to a criticism woven out of the delusive dreams of us poor creatures of illusion.

It is a clear gain, therefore, when Pragmatism holds out to us a prospect of a world that can become better, and even has a distant chance of becoming perfect, in a sense which we are able to appreciate. The only thing that could be preferred to this would be a universe whose perfection could not only be metaphysically deduced, but actually experienced: but such a one our universe emphatically is not.

Hence the indetermination which, as William James has urged,' Pragmatism introduces into our conception of the world is essentially a gain. It brings out a connexion with the ethical conception of Freedom and the old problems involved in it, which we need not here consider. When we do, we may see that while determinism has an absolutely indefeasible status as a scientific postulate, and is the only assumption we can use in our practical calculations, we may yet have to recognize the reality of a certain measure of indetermination. It is a peculiarity of ethics that this indetermination is forced upon it, but in itself it is probably universal. In its valuation, however, we may differ somewhat from James, regarding it neither as good nor as ineradicable. Our indeterminism, moreover, cannot have the slightest ethical value unless it both vindicates and emphasizes our moral responsibility.

3.06

This brings us to our last point, viz. the stimulus to our feeling of moral responsibility which must accrue from the doctrine of Pragmatism. It contains such a stimulus, alike in its denial of a mechanical determination of the world which is involved in its partial determination by our action, and in its admission that by wrong action we may evoke a hostile response, and so provoke our ruin. But in addition it must be pointed out that if every cognition, however theoretical, be an act, and so must have a practical purpose and value, it is potentially a moral act. We may incur indeed the gravest responsibilities in selecting the aims of our cognitive activities. We may become not merely wise or foolish but also good or bad by willing to know the good or the bad; nay, our very will to know may so alter the conditions as to evoke a response congenial with its character.

**IT IS A LAW OF OUR NATURE THAT WHAT WE SEEK THAT WE SHALL, IN SOME MEASURE, FIND.** Like a rainbow, Life glitters in all the colours; like a rainbow also it adjusts itself to every beholder. To the dayflies of fashion life seems ephemeral; to the seeker after permanence, it strikes its roots into eternity. To the empty, it is a yawning chasm of inanity; to the full, it is a source of boundless interest. To the indolent, it is a call to despairing resignation; to the strenuous, a stimulus to dauntless energy. To the serious, it is fraught with infinite significance; to the flippant, it is all a somewhat sorry jest. To the melancholic, each hope is strangled in its birth; to the sanguine, two hopes spring from every grave of one. To the optimistic, life is a joy ineffable; to the pessimistic, the futile agony of an atrocious and unending struggle. To love it seems that in the end all must be love; to hate and envy it becomes a hell. The cosmic order, which to one displays the unswerving rigour of a self-sufficient mechanism, grows explicable to another only by the direct guidance of the hand of God. To those of little faith the heavens are dumb; to the faithful, they disclose the splendours of a, beatific vision.

So each sees Life as what he has it in him to perceive, and variously transfigures what, without his vision, were an unseen void. But all are not equally clear-sighted, and which sees best, time and trial must establish. We can but stake our little lives upon the ventures of our faith. And, willing or unwilling, this we do and must.

In conclusion let us avow that after professing to discuss the relations of Philosophy and Practice, we seem to have allotted an undue share of our time to the. former, and to have done little more than adumbrate the; practical consequences of the new philosophy. In extenuation we may urge that the stream of ‘Truth which waters’, the fertile fields of Conduct has its sources in the remote and lonely uplands, inter apices philosophiae, where the cloud, capped crags and slowly grinding glaciers of metaphysic soar into an air too chill and rare for our abiding habitation, but keenly bracing to the strength of an audacious climber. Here lie our watersheds; hither lead the passes to the realms unknown; hence part our ways, and here it is that we must draw the frontier lines of Right and Wrong. It would seem, moreover, that in the depths of every soul there lurks a metaphysic aspiration to these heights, a craving to behold the varied patterns that compose life’s whole spread out in their connexion. With the right guides such ascents are safe, and even though at first twinges of mountain-sickness may befall us, yet in the end we shall return refreshed from our excursion and strengthened to endure the drudgery and commonplace that are our daily portion.



# Does aesthetic creativity re

Does art possess the capacity to **heal society**? These questions seem implicit to Walker Percy’s understanding of itself as **a moral guidepost to commend society as well as correct it**. Literature represents and describes;

“So it is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it”  
*(Rushdie 18).*

## ECONOMIC DOMINATION AND THE FUNCTION OF ART

*www.subverbis.com Stephen Conway*

Art, in one sense, creates its own political agenda. Percy pursues his diagnostic theory of literature having reckoned with the basic relationship between language and life. Percy seems to answer the initial two questions posed with a resounding yes.

4.01

The issue of art’s impact upon a society is not quite so easily resolved, however. Not every person writes or thinks about art with the same set of assumptions. In order to strike at the heart of the question “what is the purpose of art?” we must first identify, understand and appreciate certain fundamental assumptions inquiries, mediating contexts, surrounding the political nature of art and the role of the artist in authentic creativity. I would like to frame my discussion within the apparent struggle between two ideological contexts: modernism and postmodernism. Using Percy’s diagnostic theory of literature to facilitate the discussion, we can examine how modern and postmodern assumptions attempt to shape the purpose of aesthetic creativity.

Percy’s approach to art is inherently modern. He is concerned with unity and truth and achieving them through the creative process. Modernism claims to Speak to some form of ideological absolute, a universal quality. All things ultimately move to reveal a unified whole, a universe bathed in Truth. Reason is the primary tool of the modernist. It is privileged above all other human faculties. Reason allows humanity to possess knowledge, to know, to assimilate, to unify. Truth and knowledge are hopelessly intertwined. The search for knowledge is thus the search for truth as well. Percy mirrors this modern reverence for the power of human thought, when he claims that literature is essentially cognitive. Art is an expansion and extension of the mind. Art is thus actively involved in the search for Truth.

Equally important to knowing the Truth is the ability to communicate it to others. Language gives thought form and life.

“Modernism from its very beginning, therefore, became preoccupied with language, with finding some special mode of representation of eternal truths” *(Harvey 20).*

For some modernists like Habermas, language, the capacity for speech, is the defining characteristic of humanity. This ability allows us not only to learn the Truth but to communicate it to others as well. Language must be used perfectly, received without distortion, in order to communicate Truth. Language is more than simply mimetic to the modernist. If used properly, language presents the possibility of authentically altering reality .

Percy places responsibility for communication squarely upon the shoulders of the artist. Artists, especially writers, raise language to a higher level of communication. They push language toward perfection, toward Truth which lies at the center. Through language, art sets ideological standards and begins to change the face of society based on these standards. Art is innately political

Integral to the use of reason and language is the subject who uses them. Modernism places the individual in a unique yet universal context. subjectivity and the freedom to explore its limitless possibilities is at the core of modernism. Is it possible, though, for an author to speak from both an individual and universal stance? Modernists (including Percy) would say yes. Each subject, each artist is uniquely creative yet centered in some absolute ideology, dogma of some sort. Paradoxically modernists suggest that precisely because all subjects are unified, connected to a universal sense, each subject exists as a unique distinct individual. The artist is thus deeply connected to aesthetic creation as both a process of universal revelation and self discovery. In this manner modernist art is an end in and of itself.

promotes a specific truth, postmodernism can be seen as a shift toward the ontological, a discussion of Being (Harvey 41). As a method of critique and a possible set of abstract conditions, postmodernism takes issue with the modernist relation between reality and art. Postmodernism posits itself in the form of an ontological question. It calls absolutes and universal truths into question; it de-centers ideology without espousing one of its own, and it absolutely demands we sever language from life.

“There is in postmodernism, little overt attempt to sustain continuity of values, beliefs, and disbeliefs” *(Harvey 56).*

Every facet of Being is fragmented, disjointed, and isolated. Unity is nothing more than a socially constructed illusion.

Postmodernism calls into question a sense of identity on both an individual and a universal level. Rather than placing ideology in an absolute context, postmodernism suggests that ideologies are spontaneously created and later used to manipulate and control the masses. Even reason is suspect and scrutinized. Reality cannot be contained within the bounds of thought. Extended to another level, language also fails to capture even the essence of thought accurately. Communication itself seems futile and false. Truth becomes relative, factional, and disjointed in such a universe.

The authority/authenticity of the subject is also undermined. The artist has no ideological center, no creative source from which to draw upon. Art exists, therefore, on a particular rather than a universal level. Instead of effecting real change, art becomes commodified, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Art is a tool for social and political control.

Parody is the most viable weapon of the postmodern artist. An artist must first become aware of the mediating contexts which surround him or her in order to transcend them. Postmodernism sets itself with an impossible task: to limit language and reason through language and reason.

If modernism can be described as epistemological in that it

“Postmodernism paradoxically manages to legitimize cultures (high and mass) even as it subverts it” (*Hutcheon 15*).

Perhaps the 18th century Russian poet Fyodor Tjutchev captured the essence of postmodern parody in his poem “Silentium!” when he wrote, “A thought expressed is a lie.” What he wrote is both true and false. He underscores the tenuous relationship between reality and language, and undercuts his own attempt to escape it. Where the modern artist like Walker Percy is dogmatic, the postmodern artist tries to remain critical.

There is something dissatisfying in a postmodern critique, however. Postmodernism is as extremist as modernism in that it does not allow absolutes. The postmodern critique presents relativity and fragmentation as ubiquitous and inescapable. Dissatisfaction with postmodernism may be rooted in the fact that it fails to deliver a substantive paradigm shift from the modern, or possibly because art (modern or postmodern) remains under the tyranny of an economic system.

Regardless of a modern or postmodern interpretation, the function of aesthetic creativity remains a mystery. Art can teach or question the nature of Being. In either event its power to create authentic political change is suspect. Art, whether epistemological or ontological, is a method of insuring the survival of the advanced capitalistic state in which it is allowed to exist and flourish. David Harvey suggests,

“The sharp distinctions between modernism and postmodernism disappear to be replaced by examination of the flux of internal relations within capitalism itself” (*342*).

Modernism and postmodernism could themselves be subjects of economic domination. They may simply reflect power shifts within the scope of advanced capitalism. The function of aesthetic creativity may remain unassailable if we are allowed to approach the problem only from an environment of evolving capitalism.

The question may then become: can art express or alter reality through non-rational and non-theoretical discourse? Again the postmodern paradox arises, attempting to limit language with language. Tjutchev the Russian poet suggested using the abstract and symbolic nature of poetry to de-construct and re-construct language itself. Poetry would become a higher form of language, a more authentic method of communication. Even with poetry, only a limited victory is possible in the quest for the purpose of art. Without the ability to step away from or ignore the advanced economic state in which we live, we must approach art with the possibility that it may serve no purpose or function at all.

late to or influence reality? of literature and art in general. Literature is a thought-involved process concerned with communication; it presents readers with a method of articulating and resolving problems in society.

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TRUTH IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE CONCEPT BUT A **RELATIVE** ONE. DIFFERENT CULTURES AND EVEN **DIFFERENT** POLITICAL POSITIONS EACH HAVE<sup>5. OF</sup> **THEIR OWN TRUTHS.**

HISTORY<sup>5. OF</sup> CANNOT GIVE US ANY **KNOWLEDGE** IN AN ABSOLUTE SENSE. DIFFERENT AGES **REINTERPRET** THE PAST FOR THEIR **OWN PURPOSES.**

WE DO **NOT HAVE ACCESS** TO ANY SUCH THING AS A **REAL WORLD.** WHAT WE THINK OF AS REALITY IS A **CONSTRUCT** OF OUR OWN MINDS, OUR LANGUAGE AND OUR **CULTURE.**

Before long—

THE **MEANING** OF ANY TEXT IS IN THE EYE OF THE **INTERPRETER.** PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC, SEXUAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS WILL READ **HISTORICAL** EVIDENCE THEIR **OWN** WAY, AND THAT WAY WILL BE DIFFERENT TO PEOPLE FROM OTHER **PERSPECTIVES.**

HISTORY IS THUS NOT FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT TO **MYTH** OR TO FICTION. WHEN HISTORIANS LOOK AT PAST CULTURES THEY CANNOT BE **OBJECTIVE,** NOR CAN THEY **ESCAPE** FROM THE COCOON OF THEIR OWN POLITICS OR CULTURE. WHAT HISTORIANS SEE IN THE PAST ARE THEIR OWN **VALUES** AND INTERESTS **REFLECTED** BACK AT THEM. 

KEITH WINDSCHUTTLE

My friend Charles Headland once told me it was the **mental-com-part- [men-ta]-li-za-tion** of his life that set him searching for peace.

As an accountant with a large Croydon firm, he had one set of friends; as a peace activist, another; as a church member, still another; and finally, his family. **Nothing connected** these sectors, and each day had to be balanced so as to fulfill his commitments to all four.

The object of life is **NOT** to be on the side of the majority, **BUT** to escape finding oneself in the ranks of the insane.

Life is full of **D I V I S I O N S** :  
between the home and the workplace;  
the private and the public;  
the job and the leisure-time activity;  
the political, the professional and the personal.

In itself, there is nothing wrong with this.  
The problems begin when these  
**separate realms create contradictions and conflicts.**  
inconsistency can become compromise,  
and after that, even hypocrisy.

# FEELING THAT GNAWING

Drained: Stories of people who wanted more. Johann Christoph Arnold

Back in the 1960s, Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest, made national headlines when he and eight others (his brother Philip was among them) raided the draft board office in Catonsville, Maryland, and dragged all the draft files they could get their hands on out into the street.

Then, in front of a small audience of newspaper and television reporters, they poured homemade napalm over the files and set them ablaze—an act of protest against the Vietnam War.

It was not only the war's fundamental injustice, Berrigan says, that prompted him to take such a dramatic step, but also the 'fragmented conscience' that lay at the ROOT of the compromise and hypocrisy of so many priests and ministers. In peacetime, they would preach enthusiastically on the Ten Commandments, especially 'thou shalt not kill.' BUT in wartime, these SAME clergymen were only too willing to bless bombers, which were used to drop napalm not merely on enemy targets but also on innocent villagers.

In the years since the Vietnam War ended, Berrigan's unflinching commitment to peace has won him countless admirers and friends, as well as his share of enemies.

But the same inconsistency has shown itself again and again: anti-war people are pro-abortion, and militarists are pro-life; anti-abortion activists are pro-death penalty, and so on. Everyone wants to get rid of some particular evil, after which they feel the world is going to be a better place,' he concludes.

'They forget that you cannot be for the bomb and for children at the same time.'

Rabbi Kenneth L. Cohen has said much the same. In a recent essay he reminds readers of the horrifying two-facedness of Nazi life, where friendly husbands and fathers 'shot Jews in the morning and listened to Mozart in the afternoon' The example is extreme, but it highlights the potential end of every path where conflicts run unresolved and threaten not only peace, but life itself.





Charles Moore, a former college instructor,  
**longed for wholeness** in his life  
but could not find it.

6.02

Eventually he concluded that  
as long as he was at the  
**centre** of his personal search  
he would **never** find a satisfactory answer.

When I reflect on my life even ten years ago, I see that I was living a slow death of gradual disintegration. The explosive energy of my youth was fast becoming dissipated, not because of reckless living, but as a result of obsessively attempting to hold everything together. It was a meltdown of my own choosing. I was obsessed with trying hard, being good, meeting needs and doing the right thing. There were so many good causes to join, so much knowledge to master, so many people to meet, so many relationships to build, so many obligations to fulfill and so many opportunities to explore. I wanted everything, and I got what I wanted. But there was no existential coherence. I was fragmented inside and out.

How all this happened is easier for me to see now than it was then. I was simply unable to integrate the disparate, dangling threads of an over-full life. Individually and singly, the threads could not be joined together into a meaningful whole.

There was my work as a professor, and my own graduate studies. Both demanded my time; both demanded my allegiance. Joined together only in idea, these two parts of my life were in fact worlds apart. Then there were professional relationships with colleagues to maintain, though apart from our shared academic interests, we had little in common.

As life's demands increased, my strength did not. Besides, I had other concerns, other interests. There was my personal life—my wife Leslie, my friends and hers, my family and hers—with multifarious dimensions that never quite seemed to intersect. Sometimes they overlapped, but they never really came together.

Try as I might, I couldn't 'get it together'. Unable to let any one thing go, yet overwhelmed by keeping everything simultaneously under control, I created elaborate coping mechanisms, which I perceived would get me through. I had a confidential counseling relationship with a close friend; I made opportunities for 'release' through leisure, entertainment, etc., with my wife; I learned to reschedule my graduate studies and readjust my teaching load; I backed out of this or that

time-consuming relationship, and so forth. But paring down, adjustment and mending never did the trick. Well-intentioned and dedicated as I was, I was frantic and frayed, and my life remained disconnected.

Now that I look back, it seems ironic how full, yet how incomplete, my life felt. I had virtually everything I ever wanted: meaningful employment, intellectual excitement, altruistic outlets, caring friends, material success and freedom to adjust my schedule whenever I felt the need to do so. But I was not at peace. The boundaries of my life were wide, and I kept all my options open.

In retrospect I see I was playing right into that grand deception: it's your life; do with it what you want. I had made my life the center of the universe, even under the guise of serving others. Despite my efforts to live selflessly, I was trapped in the madness of a middle-class lifestyle that revolved—not only ultimately, but in the most mundane ways—around my wants and desires. I just couldn't see that this kind of living was unreal, untrue.

No matter how many ways I tried to compensate for the lack of synthesis in my life, it wasn't until I stopped living on terms centered on personal fulfillment and independence that I began to find some sense of coherence. And I saw that I had a choice to make: I could continue living in that way, negotiating a multiplicity of demands and relationships of my own choosing; or I could begin anew on an altogether different foundation, one where community (not self) and mutual service (not personal fulfillment) were the premise.

I don't think the question of personal peace will ever go away entirely. But the intent of my heart and the course of my actions are no longer at odds: the inner and outer dimensions of my life actually cohere; and they are held together, not strenuously, by force of will, but by a deep sense of peace. And the mystery of it is that it came into my life not because I struggled for it, but because my eyes were opened to see past the myth of self-fulfillment, and into the reality of a more abundant life.

all of these quests are **motivated by a sense of the**

**UNDERNEATH**

**f** **r a g m e** **n / t a t i o n** **o f**  
**l i f e** , and by the desire for it to be overcome.

7.01

subject **a** sees **o**

I.

i will try to put  
it plainly.

the first subject

“subject **A**”

sees the object

“**O**” and records the  
experience as “**O<sub>a</sub>**”

which describes

**the perception of  
object **O** by subject **A**.**

II.

(mustn't fall into the trap of  
blindly placing faith in the  
transcendental being of the  
object **qua percipi**. whatever  
the “truth of being” of a given  
object/perception, it must  
not, because it is precisely that  
“truth” which is in question,  
play a supporting role in this  
analysis the phenomenological  
bracketing)

revision :

the first subject “subject **A**” has  
the experience “**O<sub>A</sub>**”  
which is typically described as  
the perception of object  
**O** by subject **A**.

a second subject

“subject **B**” experiences

“

which is in turn described as

**the perception  
of **O** object  
by subject **B**.**

our inquiry, then, concerns  
the reality of object **O**, its  
**ontology** (as sartre would  
say), or its **mode of  
existence** (in the words  
of foucault).

III.

the dogmatic

myth of platonism :

presupposing the

material and factual existence

of object **O** **prior to**

**any given perception**

(**O<sub>A</sub>**, **O<sub>B</sub>**,  
*etc.*),

the determination

of truth is based

upon accuracy **with respect**

**to the transcendental**

**object.**

example :

subject **A** has the experience

“**A<sub>O</sub>**,” where “**O**” in

this case is taken to represent

**the origin of language.**

The experience “**A<sub>O</sub>**” then.

describes the specific attitude

(perception) taken by subject a

towards the origin of language,

which, in this example, is that

**language evolved as an**

**instrument of man's**

**expression and that the**

**series thought-speech-**

**writing describes the**

**accuracy of representation**

**in language with respect**

**to ideas, in declining order**

**of strength.** notice that this

expression places implicit value

on the notion of proximity.

subject **B**, meanwhile, has

the experience “

with “**O**” again

depicting **the origin of language.** “**O<sub>B</sub>**” then describes the perception of the origin of language

by subject **B** or, more  
particularly, **the notion  
that language erupted  
spontaneously  
(following levi-strauss)  
and that valuing speech  
over language depends  
upon a metaphysics  
of presence which  
is itself an historical  
but unjustified  
presupposition.**

in modern times it has been  
proclaimed definitively and  
factually that subject **B** has  
“correctly” described the object  
“

and is therefore entitled to bash  
subject **A** over the head with a  
fistful of diplomas.

IV.

the dada myth

subject **A** grows hyacinths or  
crystal mesmerized, the flame  
glub glub

# subject **b** sees

7.03

V.  
the ultra-nietzschean  
myth of free play :

to begin with or  
to find along the way the  
object-corpse and bold  
proclamations of death! death!  
death! until the truth-value of  
object **o** becomes  
nothing more than nostalgia,  
the naive ignorance of infinite  
deferral from metaphor to  
metaphor, a film without end  
and so no middle either, i.e.,  
**all references to the  
transcendental object  
are dismissed as  
fallacious; the game of  
truth has no winners.**

example :  
on the one hand,  
subject **A** undergoes the  
perception “**oA**,” where  
“**o**” is mistakenly believed  
to be, for the purposes of this  
example, **the intentional  
attempt at meaning  
made by the author of a**

**given work.** the perception  
“**oA**” is thus believed to be

a **reasonable reading of  
object **o** by subject **A**.**  
subject **b**, on the other hand,  
having thoroughly examined  
the texts of nietzsche, derrida,  
and paul de man, experiences  
“**ob**”  
and shrewdly acknowledges the  
absence of any definable object  
**o** and therefore describes said  
perception with words devoid  
of any intentional content  
“**ob**” is thus **one  
link in an infinite chain  
of signification without  
center or point of  
reference.** we have been  
blessed with a number of such  
poignant revelations which  
unfortunately (due to the  
breakdown of communication  
theory) we are unable  
to understand. subject **b** runs  
circles of obscurity around  
subject **A**.

VI.  
the myth of in between :

based upon a subtle awareness  
of both the autonomous and  
problematic power of language  
as well as the finer points of  
semiotic theory, this is the  
myth of commonsense par  
excellence,  
whereupon the experience  
“**oX**”  
describes only a **perceptual  
experience on the part  
of subject **X** with  
regards to an object **o**  
whose reality is not an a  
priori transcendental but  
an a posteriori dynamical  
object defined by the  
intersubjective meaning  
granted it by the  
community.**

example :  
subject **A** experiences “**oA**”  
where  
“**o**” refers to subject  
**b** and subject **a** describes  
“**oA**” as the perception  
**I have of subject **b** as  
object **o** which by no**

**means entirely defines  
subject **b** but which  
must be considered as  
a constituent part of  
the community which  
determines the reality  
of subject **b**.**  
(subject **b** is  
anti-social and feels  
uncomfortable outside a  
university setting. lost in a  
linguistic crisis, subject **b**  
is incapable of determining  
whether or not such a thing as  
perception exists, much less  
subject **A**.)

adherence to the notion  
of social consensus in the  
construction of referents, or to  
historical systems  
of internally consistent logic  
and a belief in the possibility of  
dialogue being  
—as they are—  
terribly outdated,  
the estranged and yet  
somehow reactionary

**b** philosophic tropes of subject  
**b** are evidently more  
applicable to the anguish of  
twentieth-century humanity.  
VII.  
the problem gets bigger when  
you realize all subjects are  
objects even reflexively.  
the greatest  
myth of all :  
v  
**know thyself**  
VIII.  
we love a challenge.



# Being

Being good: a short introduction to ethics. Simon Blackburn

8.01

**INTRODUCTION** We have all learned to become sensitive to the physical environment. We know that we depend upon it, that it is fragile, and that we have the power to ruin it, thereby ruining our own lives, or more probably those of our descendants. Perhaps fewer of us are sensitive to what we might call the **moral or ethical environment. This is the surrounding climate of ideas about how to live. It determines what we find acceptable or unacceptable, admirable or contemptible. It determines our conception of when things are going well and when they are going badly. It determines our conception of what is due to us, and what is due from us, as we relate to others. It shapes our emotional responses, determining what is a cause of pride or shame, or anger or gratitude, or what can be forgiven and what cannot. It gives us our standards—our standards of behavior. In the eyes of some thinkers, most famously perhaps G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), it shapes our very identities.** Our consciousness of ourselves is largely or even essentially a consciousness of how we stand for other people. We need stories of our own value in the eyes of each other, the eyes of the world.

The workings of the ethical environment can be strangely invisible. I was once defending the practice of philosophy on a radio programme where one of the other guests was a professional survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. He asked me, fairly aggressively, what use philosophy would have been on a death march? The answer, of course, was not much—no more than literature, art, music, mathematics, or science would be useful at such a time. But consider the ethical environment that made such events possible. Hitler said, ‘How lucky it is for rulers that men cannot think.’ But in saying this he sounded as if he, too, was blind to the ethical climate that enabled his own ideas, and hence his power, to flourish.’ This climate included images of the primordial purity of a particular race and people. It was permeated by fear for the fragile nature of this purity. Like America in the post-war McCarthy era, it feared pollution from ‘degenerates’ outside or within. It included visions of national and racial destiny. It included ideas of apocalyptic transformation through national solidarity and military dedication to a cause. It was hospitable to the idea of the leader whose godlike vision is authoritative and unchallengeable. In turn, those ideas had roots in misapplications of Darwinism, in

German Romanticism, and indeed in some aspects of Judaism and Christianity. In short, Hitler could come to power only because people did think—but their thinking was poisoned by an enveloping climate of ideas, many of which may not even have been conscious. For we may not be aware of our ideas. An idea in this sense is a tendency to accept routes of thought and feeling that we may not recognize in ourselves, or even be able to articulate. Yet such dispositions rule the social and political world. There is a story about a physicist visiting his colleague Neils Bohr, and expressing surprise at finding a good-luck horseshoe hanging on the wall: ‘Surely you are not superstitious? Oh, no, but I am told it works whether you believe in it or not.’ Horseshoes do not, but the ethical climate does.

An ethical climate is a different thing from a moralistic one. Indeed, one of the marks of an ethical climate may be hostility to moralizing, which is somehow out of place or bad form. Thinking that, will itself be a something that affects the way we live our lives. So, for instance, one peculiarity of our present climate is that **we care much more about our rights than about our ‘good.’** For previous thinkers about ethics, such as those who wrote the Upanishads, or Confucius, or Plato, or the founders of the Christian tradition, the central concern was the state of one’s soul, meaning some personal state of justice or harmony. Such a state might include resignation and renunciation, or detachment, or obedience, or knowledge, especially self-knowledge. For Plato there could be no just political order except one populated by just citizens (although this also allows that inner harmony or ‘justice’ in citizens requires a just political order—there is nothing viciously circular about this interplay).

Today we tend not to believe that; we tend to think that modern constitutional democracies are fine regardless of the private vices of those within them. We are much more nervous talking about our good: it seems moralistic, or undemocratic, or elitist. Similarly, we are nervous talking about duty. The Victorian ideal of a life devoted to duty, or a calling, is substantially lost to us. So a greater proportion of our moral energy goes to protecting claims against each other, and that includes protecting the state of our soul as purely private, purely our own business. We see some of the workings of this aspect of our climate in this book.

Human beings are ethical animals. I do not mean that we naturally behave particularly well, nor that we are endlessly telling each other what to do. But we grade and evaluate, and compare and admire, and claim and justify. We do not just ‘prefer’ this or that, in isolation. We prefer that our preferences are shared; we turn them into demands on each other. Events endlessly adjust our sense of responsibility, our guilt and shame and our sense of our own worth and that of others. We hope for lives whose story leaves us looking admirable; we like our weaknesses to be hidden and deniable. Drama, literature, and poetry all work out ideas of standards

of behaviour and their consequences. This is overtly so in great art. But it shows itself just as unmistakably in our relentless appetite for gossip and the confession shows and the soap opera. Should Arlene tell Charlene that Rod knows that Tod kissed Darlene, although nobody has told Marlene? Is it required by loyalty to Charlene or would it be a betrayal of Darlene? Watch on.

Reflection on the ethical climate is not the private preserve of a few academic theorists in universities. After all, the satirist and cartoonist, as well as the artist and the novelist, comment upon and criticize the prevailing climate just as effectively as those who get known as philosophers. The impact of a campaigning novelist, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dickens, Zola, or Solzhenitsyn, may be much greater than that of the academic theorist. A single photograph may have done more to halt the Vietnam war than all the writings of moral philosophers of the time put together.

Philosophy is certainly not alone in its engagement with the ethical climate. But its reflections contain a distinctive ambition. The ambition is to understand the springs of motivation, reason, and feeling that move us. It is to understand the networks of rules or ‘norms’ that sustain our lives. The ambition is often one of finding system in the apparent jumble of principles and goals that we respect, or say we do. It is an enterprise of self-knowledge. Of course, philosophers do not escape the climate, even as they reflect on it. Any story about human nature in the contemporary climate is a result of human nature and the contemporary climate. But such stories may be better or worse, for all that.

Admiring the enterprise, aspiring to it, and even tolerating it, are themselves moral stances. They can themselves flourish or wither at different times, depending on how much we like what we see in the mirror. Rejecting the enterprise is natural enough, especially when things are comfortable. We all have a tendency to complacency with our own ways, like the English aristocrat on the Grand Tour: ‘The Italians call it a coltello, the French a couteau, the Germans a Messer, but the English call it a knife, and when all is said and done, that’s what it is.’

**We do not like being told what to do.** We want to enjoy our lives, and we want to enjoy them with a good conscience. People who disturb that equilibrium are uncomfortable, so moralists are often uninvited guests at the feast, and we have a multitude of defences against them. Analogously, some individuals can insulate themselves from a poor physical environment, for a time. They may profit by creating one. The owner can live upwind of his chemical factory, and the logger may know that the trees will not give out until after he is dead. Similarly, individuals can insulate themselves from a poor moral environment, or profit from it. Just as some trees flourish by depriving others of nutrients or light, so some people flourish by depriving others of their due. The western white male may

Time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the **APPALLING SILENCE of the GOOD PEOPLE**. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and **without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of stagnation.**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

flourish because of the inferior economic or social status of people who are not western, or white, or male. Insofar as we are like that, we will not want the lid to be lifted. Ethics is disturbing. We are often vaguely uncomfortable when we think of such things as exploitation of the world's resources, or the way our comforts are provided by the miserable labour conditions of the third world. Sometimes, defensively, we get angry when such things are brought up. But to be entrenched in a culture, rather than merely belonging to the occasional rogue, exploitative attitudes will themselves need a story. So an ethical climate may allow talking of 'the market' as a justification for our high prices, and talking of 'their selfishness' and 'our rights' as a justification for anger at their high prices. Racists and sexists, like antebellum slave owners in America, always have to tell themselves a story that justifies their system. The ethical climate will sustain a conviction that we are civilized, and they are not, or that we deserve our better fortune than them, or that we are intelligent, sensitive, rational, or progressive, or scientific, or authoritative, or blessed, or alone to be trusted with freedoms and rights, while they are not. An ethic gone wrong is an essential preliminary to the sweat-shop or the concentration camp and the death march.

I therefore begin the book, *Being Good*, with a look at the responses we sometimes give when ethics intrudes on our lives. These are responses that in different ways constitute threats to ethics—The death of God, relativism, egoism, evolutionary theory, determinism and futility, unreasonable demands, and false consciousness. After that, in Part II, we look at some of the problems that living throws at us, and in particular the clash between principles of justice and rights, and less forbidding notions such as happiness and freedom. Finally, in Part III, we look at the question of foundations: the ultimate justification for ethics, and its connection with human knowledge and human progress.

**THE COMMON POINT OF VIEW** Usually when a great philosopher, such as Kant, overreaches himself, or seems to do so, we can suspect that there is something true in the offering. In fact, something true was already prominent among the philosophers in the generation preceding Kant.

Let us return to the business of giving and receiving reasons for action, or for attitudes in general. This is an activity that is necessary to us in society. But it is also an activity that seems to require a presupposition. The presupposition is that what I advance as a reason, a reason from my point of view, can be appreciated from your point of view. If this were not so, conversation about practical matters would seem to be reduced to one side saying 'Me, me, me, and the other side saying the same. There would then be no possibility of each side sharing an understanding of the situation, or coming to a common point of view on the factors in virtue of which something is to be done. To achieve cooperation, we need to pursue the issue jointly, to end up 'in one mind' about the solution. Hume put this by saying,

*When a man denominates another his enemy, his rival, his antagonist, his adversary, he is understood to speak the language of self-love, and to express sentiments peculiar to himself and arising from his particular circumstances and situation. But when he bestows on any man the epithets of vicious or odious or depraved, he then speaks another language, and expresses sentiments in which, he expects, all his audience are to concur with him. He must here therefore depart from his private and particular situation, and must choose a point of view common to him with others.*

Our practices of reasoning, then, require us to speak this 'other language' If I expect the world to join with me in condemning someone, I cannot just say that he is my enemy. I have to engage the passions of others by painting him as vicious or odious or depraved: hateful in general.

Fortunately we are capable of the common point of view here described. If we are discussing which car to choose, we can expect shared standards derived from what we want from a car: comfort, reliability, economy, power, and so forth. If you advance a reason for the choice that I do not share, we can go on to deploy general standards for whether such a factor should itself count as a reason. There is no guarantee that we will come to the same conclusion, of course, but there is a guarantee that we might do so. And that is enough to make the conversation a rational option, better than imposition of one solution on everyone, by force or violence.

If we think of ethics in this way, we may retain something from the spirit of Kant's discussion. Suppose someone turns out to have given us a promise that she had no intention of keeping. We maybe doubtful about Kant's ambition of showing that she was un-Reasonable, or in some kind of state akin to self-contradiction. But we may be able to say more than just that we don't like it. We can say, at least, that she could not expect the principle of her action to be appreciated and agreed to, in any cooperative conversation designed to bring all parties to one mind about what she did. At least, she could only expect us to agree if she has some story that does gain a purchase on us, such as the absolute necessity of the promise to our own welfare, or that of others we care about. And if the agent cannot defend her principle in this kind of conversation, then even if she is not wholly un-Reasonable (with the capital letter), she is out of court. She has turned her back on the cooperative process of reasoning with others. She has no concern for the common point of view. We might say that she shows no respect for our point of view. And this is one way of being unreasonable—maybe even unReasonable.

We might also build on our social needs and natures here. Suppose I do an action in some circumstance for some reason. Then the whole activity of presenting my reason for acting to you implies a kind of hope that you will see my reason as having been permissible. I want you to acknowledge that it was all right to act like that, in that circumstance, for that

reason. So long as I need that recognition, I need to seek justification from the common point of view.


We may not care about coming to one mind. We may exclude them, rationalizing our exclusion in terms of their ignorance, or their inferiority in other ways, their perverse standards, or their dreadful desires. We may want only to impose our wills, or not care whether we gain their cooperation by manipulation and deceit. So a procedural approach is quite consistent with Hume's doubts about Reason, as his own way of approaching the common point of view shows. At the back of things there lies a passion: the concern to avoid imposition and manipulation, to be able to reject the charge that their interests have been discounted, and to find just the common standards that enable us to look them in the eye.

These maybe no more than concerns or passions, but they are after all the concerns and passions that enable common humanity to go forward.

The question of foundations is still open, however, for a common point of view can sometimes seem like a myth. Suppose you have a piano on your foot, which is hurting you. From your point of view your hurt dominates the situation, and gives you urgent and sufficient reason to get the piano off your foot. How can I share that point of view? I cannot myself feel your pain, or be motivated as you are by that pain. From the standpoint of those who are hurting or dispossessed it can seem like the most awful cant if we who are in comfort come along and reassure them that we share their point of view. 'I share your pain' is the sentimental drivel of the talk show.

What we can do is to take up the reasons of others and make them our own. We do not merely understand the man who gives as his reason for moving the piano that it was hurting his foot. We can also take his hurt as our motivation. His discomfort can become our discomfort—not in our foot, but in a desire to alter the situation for his benefit. For good people it is very uncomfortable to be in the presence of someone in pain and not be able to do anything about it. In this case, what is activating us is empathy or benevolence, not any kind of procedural rule on discourse. It is contingent how far we internalize the pains and problems of others. When they are near to us, either by ties of kinship or even just by physical proximity, we tend to be more disturbed than when they are far away. In all this we seem to have the operation of the passions, rather than the operation of Reasons. In this sense, the foundations of moral motivations are not the procedural rules on a kind of discourse, but the feelings to which we can rise. As Confucius saw long ago, benevolence or concern for humanity is the indispensable root of it all.



SERVICE—THIS IS THE TRUE JOY OF LIFE: BEING USED UP FOR A **PURPOSE** RECOGNIZED BY YOURSELF AS A MIGHTY ONE. BEING A FORCE OF NATURE INSTEAD OF A FEVERISH, **SELFISH** **LITTLE** **CLOD** OF AILMENTS AND GRIEVANCES, **COMPLAINING** THAT THE WORLD WILL NOT DEVOTE ITSELF TO MAKING YOU HAPPY. I AM OF THE OPINION THAT MY **LIFE** BELONGS TO **OTHERS**, AND AS LONG AS I' LIVE, IT IS MY **PRIVILEGE** TO DO FOR THEM WHATEVER I CAN. I WANT TO BE THOROUGHLY **USED UP** WHEN I DIE, FOR THE HARDER I' WORK, THE MORE **I LIVE**...LIFE IS NO BRIEF CANDLE TO ME. IT IS A SORT OF **SPLENDID** **TORCH** WHICH I HAVE GOT HOLD OF FOR A MOMENT, AND I WANT TO MAKE IT **BURN** AS BRIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE HANDING IT ON TO **FUTURE** GENERATIONS. 

GEORGE  
BERNARD SHAW

A system of thought is something we live in.		

A MUCH-NEEDED ANTIDOTE

Objective rationalism, particularly that of the Bauhaus, provided a much-needed antidote to the sentimentality and gratuitous eclecticism found in nineteenth-century mass production, visual communications, and architecture. Linked to functionalism, objective analysis formed the basis of problem-solving methods to generate functional design solutions to improve the quality of daily life. Expanded more recently to include systems design, this attitude has done much to elevate the quality of design thinking.

Linked to the ideal of the objective clear-sighted designer is the ideal of value-free universal forms. Perhaps a reaction to the frequent political upheavals between European nations, especially World VVar I, early modernist designers hoped to find internationalist design forms and attitudes that would cross those national, ethnic, and class barriers that had caused such strife. In addition, a universal design—one design for all—would be appropriate for the classless mass society of industrial workers envisioned by early twentieth-century social reformers.

But passing years and different national contexts have brought different results from the application of these modernist design paradigms. **The myth of objectivity unfortunately does much to disengage the designer from compassionate concerns.** Strongly held personal convictions would seem to be inappropriate for the cool-headed objective professional. Functionalism is narrowly defined in measurable utilitarian terms. Too often this means serving the client’s definition of function—generally profits—over other concerns, including safety, the environment, and social/cultural/political/environmental impacts.

Universalism has brought us a homogenized corporate style that is based mainly on Helvetica and the grid, and ignores the power and potential of regional, idiosyncratic, personal, or culturally specific stylistic vocabularies. And the ideal of value-free design is a dangerous myth. In fact **all design solutions carry a bias, either explicit or implicit.** The more honest designs acknowledge their biases openly rather than manipulate their audiences with assurances of universal “truth” and purity.

Abstraction, modernism’s revolutionary contribution to the visual language of art and design, further distances both designer and audience from involvement. Stripped of imagery, self-referential abstraction is largely devoid of symbols and disconnected from experience in the surrounding world. It is cool and low on emotion. Abstraction is predictable in application, polite, inoffensive, and not too meaningful—thereby providing a safe vocabulary for corporate materials. Imagery, on the other hand, is richly loaded with symbolic encoded meaning, often ambiguous and capable of arousing the entire range of human emotions. Imagery is difficult to control, even dangerous or controversial, often leading to unintended personal interpretations on the part of the audience—but also poetic, powerful, and potentially eloquent.

TENDENCY TO AVOID POLITICAL DIALECTICS

The modernist agenda has conspired to promote an apolitical attitude among American designers, design educators, and students, building on the pragmatic American tendency to avoid political dialectics. American designers consistently take European theories and strip them of their political content. Of the various strains of modernism, many of which were socially concerned or politically revolutionary, American design either chose those most devoid of political content or stripped the theories of their original political idealism.

More recently we have seen a strong interest in French literary theory. But its original element of French contemporary Marxism has been largely ignored in the United States, perhaps rightly so. The American political environment is far different from the European; European political dialectics may not be appropriate to us. Yet we cannot assume that no political theory is needed to ground our work—all designers need an appropriate framework to evaluate and assess the impact Of their work within its social/ethical/political milieu. Perhaps an appropriate evaluative framework would be different for each individual, reflecting our strong tradition of American individualism.

Designers must break out of the obedient, neutral, servant-to-industry mentality, an orientation that was particularly strong in the Reagan/Thatcher 1980s, and continues to dominate design management and strategic design. Yes, we are problem-solvers responding to the needs of clients. But we must be careful of the problems we take on. Should one help sell tobacco and alcohol, or design a Ronald Regain presidential memorial library for a man who reads only pulp cowboy novels? **Design is not a neutral, value-free process.** A design has no more integrity than its purpose or subject matter. Garbage in, garbage out. The most rarefied design solution can never surpass the quality of its content.

A dangerous assumption is that corporate work of innocuous content is devoid of political bias. The vast majority of student design projects deal with corporate needs, placing a heavy priority on the corporate economic sector of our society. Commerce is where we are investing time, budgets, skills, and creativity. This is a decisive vote for economics over other potential concerns, including social, educational, cultural, spiritual, and political needs. This is a political statement in itself, both in education and practice.

ART IGNORES THE ISSUES TOO

Postwar American art has greatly ignored the issues as well. The self-reference of abstract expressionism and minimalism has been largely divorced from external conditions. Pop art embraced materialism more than it critiqued it. The more recent postmodernist ironic parodies have been full of duplicity and offer no program as antidote to the appalling paradigms they deconstruct. Nevertheless recent years have brought a new involvement by artists in the social/political environment around them. A recent book, *The Re-enchantment of Art*, advocates a second postmodernism, a reconstruction

that moves beyond the detachment of modernism and deconstruction. Suzi Gablik, the author, wants an end to the alienation of artists and aesthetics from social values in a new interrelational audience-oriented art.

There are signs that this is happening. Issue-oriented art has been spreading like wildfire among graduate students in the fine arts. At Cranbrook Academy of Art and at a number of other design schools, fine arts students are attending our graphic design crits, eager to learn design methods for reaching their audiences. Fashion advertising is beginning occasionally to embrace issues—perhaps humanistic content is good for sales. Witness Esprit, Benetton, Moschino. That these clients are prepared to make social advocacy part of their message signals both a need and a new receptiveness in their audiences. Graphic design is a powerful tool, capable of informing, publicizing, and propagandizing social, environmental, and political messages as well as commercial ones. But are many graphic designers prepared to deal with this type of content?

Undertaking the occasional piece of compassionate graphic design as a relief from business as usual is not the answer here. The choice of clients or content is crucial. The most fortunate can find a worthy cause in need of a designer with the funds to pay for professional design services. Unfortunately, good causes often seem to have the least resources in our present economic system. Is it possible to

An individual can march for peace or vote for peace and can have, perhaps, some small influence on global concerns. But the same small individual is a giant in the eyes of a child. If peace is to be built, it must start with th individual. It is bulit brick by brick.

johann christoph arnold

shape a practice around nonbusiness clients or introduce social content into commercial work? The compassionate designer must plan an ethical practice strategically—and be an informed, involved citizen in a Jeffersonian participatory democracy, agile and flexible, prepared to turn the tools of visual communications to a broad spectrum of needs.

AN END TO DETACHMENT?

How does one educate graphic design students with an understanding of design as a social and political force? Can a political consciousness be trained? Can an educator teach values? The answer is probably no in the simplistic sense. However, the field of education has a well-developed area referred to as values clarification that offers many possibilities for graphic design educators. Too often we take individuals with eighteen years of experience and strip theta of their values, rather than cultivate those values for effective application in design practice.

In teaching, these issues must be raised from the beginning for the design student. This is not something to spring on the advanced student after their attitudes have been fixed on neutrality. At the core of this issue is the content of the projects we assign from the very first introductory exercise. Most introductory graphic design courses are based on abstract formal exercises inherited from the Bauhaus and the classic Basel school projects.

The detachment problem begins here. These projects either deal with completely abstract form—point, line, and plane, for instance—or they remove imagery from context. The Basel graphic translation projects, so effective in training a keen formal sense, unfortunately use a process of abstractional analysis, thereby stripping imagery of its encoding symbolism. (I have to admit to being guilty of this in my assignments in past years.) Divorcing design form from content or context is a lesson in passivity, implying that graphic form is something separate and unrelated to subjective values or even ideas. The first principle is that all graphic projects must have content.

The type of content in each assignment is crucial. It is disheartening to see the vast number of undergraduate projects dedicated to selling goods and services in the marketplace devoid of any mission beyond business success. Undoubtedly all students need experience in this type of message and purpose. But cannot projects cover a broader mix of content, including issues beyond business? Cultural, social, and political subjects make excellent communications challenges for student designers.

Project assignments can require content developed by the student that deals with public and personal social, political, and economic issues and current events. The responsibility for developing content is a crucial one; it counteracts the passive design role in which one unquestioningly accepts client-dictated copy. On a practical level, we know how frequently all designers modify and improve client copywriting; many graphic designers become quite good writers and editors, so closely is our function allied

to writing. In a larger sense, however, self-developed content and copy promotes two important attitudes in a design student.

One is the ability to develop personal content and subject matter, and an interest in personal design work, executed independently of client assignments. This method of working is much like that of fine artists who find their reward in a self-expression of personal issues. Second is the challenge to develop subject matter stimulates the design student to determine what matters on a personal level. A process of values clarification must go on in the student before a subject or attitude to that subject can be chosen. And the breadth of concerns chosen as subjects by fellow students exposes each student to a wider range of possibilities.

CLARIFICATION THROUGH CRITIQUE

The critique process for issue-oriented work can be a very effective forum for values clarification. This is particularly true of group critiques in which all students are encouraged to participate, rather than the authoritarian traditionalist crit in which the faculty do all the talking. In evaluating the success or failure of a piece of graphic communications, each critic must address the subject matter and understand the design student’s stated intentions before weighing a piece’s success. This expands the critique discussion beyond the usual and necessary topics of graphic method, form, and technique. Tolerance as well as objectivity are required of each critique participant in that they must accept and understand the student’s intended message before evaluating the piece.

For instance, two fundamentalist Christian students recently brought their religiously oriented work to our Cranbrook graphic design crits for two semesters. It was a challenge—and a lesson in tolerance—for the other students to put aside their personal religious (or nonreligious) convictions in order to give these students and their work a fair critique from a level playing field. It was quite remarkable—and refreshing—to find us all discussing spirituality as legitimate subject matter. This has held true for many other subjects from the universe of issues facing our culture today. These have included local and global environmental issues, animal rights, homelessness, feminism, and reproductive choice.

The point here is content. As design educators, we cast projects almost as a scientist designs a laboratory experiment. The formula and the variables conspire to slant the results in one direction or another. The project assignment and the project critique are powerful tools that teach far more than explicit goals, and carry strong implicit messages about design and the role of designers.

Design history also offers a rich resource for understanding the relationship of form and content to sociopolitical contexts. We all know how often works from art and design history are venerated (and imitated) in an atmosphere that is divorced from their original context. By exploring the accompanying

cultural/social/political histories, students can see the contextual interdependencies and make analogies to their own time.

Am I advocating the education of a generation of designers preoccupied with political activism, a kind of reborn sixties mentality? I think rather what I have in mind is nurturing a crop of active citizens, informed, concerned participants in society who happen to be graphic designers. We must stop inadvertently training our students to ignore their convictions and be passive economic servants. Instead we must help them to clarify their personal values and to give them the tools to recognize when it is appropriate to act on them. I do think this is possible. **We still need objectivity, but this includes the objectivity to know when to invoke personal biases and when to set them aside.**

Too often our graduates and their work emerge as charming manikins, voiceless mouthpieces for the messages of ventriloquist clients. Let us instead give designers their voices so they may participate and contribute more fully in the world around them.

Originally published in Design Renaissance: Selected Papers from the International Design Congress, Glasgow, Scotland, 1993; Jeremy Myerson, editor.

# First things first MANIFESTO 2000

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

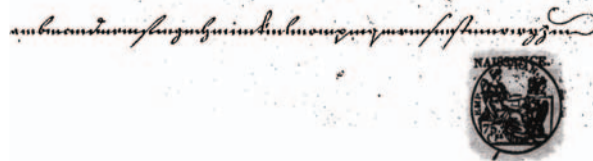
Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession's time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things *unessential* that are at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly *uncomfortable* with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. *Unprecedented* environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programs, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

We propose a reversal of priorities in favor of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication—a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running *uncontested*; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.



Jonathan Barnbrook  
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Simon Esterson  
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Milton Glaser  
Jessical Helfand  
Steven Heller  
Andrew Howard  
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J. Abbott Miller  
Rick Poynor  
Lucienne Roberts  
Erik Spiekermann  
Jan van Toorn  
Teal Triggs  
Rudy VanderLans  
Bob Wilkinson



THE PEOPLE V. THE CORPORATE COOL MACHINE

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I  
TRUE COST

*In the global marketplace of the future, the price of every product will tell the ecological truth.*

2  
DEMARKETING

*It's time to unsell the product and turn the incredible power of marketing against itself.*

3  
DOOMSDAY MEME

*The global economy is a doomsday machine that must be stopped and reprogrammed.*

4  
NO CORPORATE "I"

*Corporations are not legal "persons" with constitutional rights and freedoms of their own, but legal fictions that we ourselves created and must control.*

5  
MEDIA CARTA

*Every human being has the "right to communicate"—to receive and impart information through any media.*

The next revolution—World War III will be waged inside your head. It will be, as Marshall McLuhan predicted, a guerrilla information war fought not in the sky or on the streets, not in the forests or around international fishing boundaries on the high seas, but in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, TV and in cyberspace. It will be a dirty, no-holds-barred propaganda war of competing world views and alter native visions of the future. We culture jammers can win this battle for ourselves and for planet Earth. Here's how. We build our own meme factory, put out a better product and beat the corporations at their own game. We identify the macromemes and the metamemes—the core ideas without which a sustainable future is unthinkable-and deploy them. Listed in the left-hand column are the five most potent metamemes in the culture jammers arsenal.

**MEME WARFARE**—not race, gender or class warfare—will drive the next revolution.

**ONLY THE VIGILANT CAN MAINTAIN THEIR LIBERTIES**, and only those who are constantly and intelligently on the spot can hope to govern themselves effectively by democratic procedures. A society, most of whose members spend a great deal of their time not on the spot, not here and now in the calculable future, but somewhere else, in the irrelevant other worlds of sport and soap opera, of mythology and metaphysical fantasy, will find it hard to resist the encroachments of those who would manipulate and control it.

Aldous Huxley was on the spot in the foreword of his revised 1946 edition of *Brave New World*—which, perhaps more than any other work of twentieth-century fiction, predicted the psychological climate of our wired age. There's a clear parallel between "soma"—the pleasure drug issued to citizens of BNW—and the mass media as we know it today. Both keep the hordes tranquilized and pacified, and maintain the social order. Both chase out reason in favor of entertainment and disjointed thought. Both encourage uniformity of behavior. Both devalue the past in favor of sensory pleasures now. Residents of Huxley's realm willingly participate in their manipulation. They happily take soma. They're in the loop and, by God, they love it. The pursuit of happiness becomes its own end-there's endless consumption, free sex and perfect mood management. People believe they live in Utopia. Only you, the reader (and a couple of "imperfect" characters in the book who somehow ended up with real personalities), know it's Dystopia. It's a hell that can only be recognized by those outside the system. Our own dystopia, too, can only be detected from the outside—by "outsiders" who did not watch too much TV when they were young; who read a few good books and then, perhaps, had a Satori-like awakening while hiking through Mexico or India; who by some lucky twist of fate were not seduced by The Dream and recruited into the consumer cult of the insatiables. Although most of us are still stuck in the cult, our taste for soma is souring. **THROUGH THE HAZE OF MANUFACTURED HAPPINESS, WE'RE REALIZING THAT OUR ONLY ESCAPE IS TO STOP THE FLOW OF SOMA, TO BREAK THE GLOBAL COMMUNICATION CARTEL'S MONOPOLY ON THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING.**

Next time you're in a particularly soul-searching mood, ask yourself these simple questions:

**WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR ME TO MAKE A SPONTANEOUS, RADICAL GESTURE IN SUPPORT OF SOMETHING I BELIEVE IN? DO I BELIEVE IN ANYTHING STRONGLY ENOUGH?**

**WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR ME TO SAY, THIS MAY NOT BE NICE, IT MAY NOT BE CONSIDERATE, IT MAY NOT EVEN BE RATIONAL—BUT DAMN IT, I'M GOING TO DO IT ANYWAY BECAUSE IT FEELS RIGHT?**

**DIRECT ACTION** is a proclamation of personal independence. It happens, for the first time, at the intersection of your self-consciousness and your tolerance for being screwed over. You act. You thrust yourself forward and intervene. And then you hang loose and deal with whatever comes. Once you start relating to the world as an empowered human being instead of a hapless consumer drone, something remarkable happens. Your cynicism dissolves. Your interior world is suddenly vivid. You're like my cat on the prowl: alive, alert and still a little wild. Guy Debord, the leader of the Situationist movement, said, "Revolution is not showing life to people, but making them live." This desire to be free and unfettered is hard-wired into each one of us. It's a drive almost as strong as sex or hunger, an irresistible force that, once harnessed, is almost impossible to stop. With that irresistible force on our side, we will strike. We will strike by smashing the postmodern hall of mirrors and redefining what it means to be alive. We will reframe the battle in the grandest terms. The old political battles that have consumed humankind during most of the twentieth century—black versus white, Left versus Right, male versus female—will fade into the background. The only battle still worth fighting and winning, the only one that can set us free, is *The People v. The Corporate Cool Machine*.

**FIRST WE KILL ALL THE ECONOMISTS** (figuratively speaking). We prove that despite the almost religious deference society extends to them, they are not untouchable. We launch a global media campaign to discredit them. We show how their economic models are fundamentally flawed, how their "scientifically" managed cycles of "growth" and "progress" are wiping out the natural world. We reveal their science as a dangerous pseudo-science. We ridicule them on TV We pop up in unexpected places like the local business news, on commercial breaks during the midnight movie, and randomly on national prime-time. At

# NIKE

COMMERCIAL-SPEECH CASE

By Tony Mauro  
www.freedomforum.org  
01.13.03

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the same time, we lay a trap for the G-8 leaders. Our campaign paints them as Lear-like figures, deluded kings unaware of the damage their deepening madness is doing. We demand to know why the issue of overconsumption in the First World is not even on their agenda. In the weeks leading up to their yearly summit meetings, we buy TV spots on stations around the world that ask, “Is Economic Progress Killing the Planet?” Bit by bit we maneuver the leaders into a position where suddenly, in a worldwide press conference, they are forced to respond to a question like this: “**MR. PRESIDENT, HOW DO YOU MEASURE ECONOMIC PROGRESS? HOW DO YOU TELL IF THE ECONOMY IS ROBUST OR SICK?**” Then we wait for them to give some pat answer about rising GDP And that will be the decisive moment. We will have given our leaders a simple pop quiz and they will have flunked. This escalating war of nerves with the heads of state is the top jaw of our strategic pincer. The bottom jaw of the pincer is the work that goes on at a grassroots level, where neoclassical dogma is still being propagated every day. Within university economics departments worldwide, a wholesale mind shift is about to take place. The tenured professors who run those departments, the keepers of the neoclassical flame, are as proud and stubborn as high-alpine goats, and they don’t take well to being challenged. But challenge them we must, fiercely and with the conviction that we are right and they are wrong. At critical times throughout history, university students have sparked massive protests, called their leaders on their lies and steered nations in brave new directions. It happened on campuses around the world in the 1960s, and more recently in Korea, China and Indonesia. **NOW WE HAVE REACHED ANOTHER CRITICAL HISTORICAL MOMENT.** Are the students up to it? Can they chase the old goats out of power? Will they be able to catalyze a paradigm shift in the science of economics and jam the doomsday machine?

**A CORPORATION HAS NO SOUL, NO MORALS.** It cannot feel love or pain or remorse. You cannot argue with it. A corporation is nothing but a process—an efficient way of generating revenue. We demonize corporations for their unwavering pursuit of growth, power and wealth. Yet let’s face it: they are simply carrying out genetic orders. This is exactly what corporations were designed—by us—to do. Trying to rehabilitate a corporation, urging it to behave responsibly, is a fool’s game. The only way to change the behavior of a corporation is to recode it; rewrite its charter; reprogram it. In 1886, the U.S. Supreme Court brought down a decision that changed the course of American history. In *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad*, a dispute over a railbed route, the judge ruled that a private corporation was a “natural person” under the U.S. Constitution and therefore entitled to protection under the Bill of Rights. The judgment was one of the great legal blunders of the century. Sixty years after it was inked, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas said of Santa Clara that it “could not be supported by history, logic, or reason.” With Santa Clara, we granted corporations “personhood” and the same rights and privileges as private citizens. But given their vast financial resources, corporations now had far *more* rights and powers than any private citizen. In a single legal stroke, the whole intent of the Constitution—that all citizens have one vote and exercise an equal voice in public debates—had been undermined. In 1886, we, the people, lost control of our affairs and sowed the seeds of the Corporate State we now live in. There is only one way to regain control. We must challenge the corporate “I” in the courts and ultimately reverse Santa Clara. It will be a long and vicious battle for the soul of America. Will the people or the corporations prevail? In the next century, will we live and work on Planet Earth or Planet Inc.? The critical task will be for each of us to relearn how to think and act as a sovereign citizen. Let’s start by doing something so bold it chills the spine of corporate America. Let’s make an example of the biggest corporate criminal in the world. Let’s take on Philip Morris Inc., getting the truth out, applying pressure and never letting up until the State of New York revokes the company’s charter.

**THIS IS HOW THE REVOLUTION BEGINS:** a few people start breaking their old patterns, embracing what they love (and in the process discovering what they hate), daydreaming, questioning, rebelling. What happens naturally then, according to the Situationists, is a groundswell of support for this new way of being, with more and more people empowered to perform new gestures “unencumbered by history.” The new generation, Guy Debord believed, “would leave nothing to chance.”These words still haunt us. The “society of spectacle” the Situationists railed against has triumphed. The American dream has devolved into exactly the kind of vacant obliviousness they talked about—a “have-a-nice-day” kind of happiness that close examination tends to disturb. If you keep up appearances, keep yourself diverted with new acquisitions and constant entertainments, keep yourself pharmacologized and recoil the moment you feel real life seeping in between the cracks, you’ll be all right.

Some dream.

If the old America was about prosperity, maybe the new America will be about spontaneity. The Situationists maintained that **ORDINARY PEOPLE HAVE ALL THE TOOLS THEY NEED FOR REVOLUTION.** The only thing missing is a perceptual shift—a tantalizing glimpse of a new way of being—that suddenly brings everything into focus.

After years of equivocating over the meaning and value of commercial speech, the Supreme Court has added to its docket a case that could force it to give commercial speech a narrower definition or else broader First Amendment protection.

On January 10, 2003, the Court agreed to review Nike Inc. v. Kasky, an appeal of a controversial California Supreme Court ruling that said the athletic shoe company could be sued for false advertising for the statements it made seven years ago in defense of its labor practices.

After news reports and columnists accused the company of tolerating sweatshop conditions at the Asian factories where its shoes are made, Nike fought back with press releases, advertisements and letters to the editor that refuted the allegations.

California activist Marc Kasky sued Nike over its responses, invoking state laws that prohibit false or misleading advertising and fraudulent business practices. Nike replied that its statements in the debate over its labor practices were completely protected by the First Amendment.

But the California Supreme Court sided with Kasky, finding that Nike’s statements fit the U.S. Supreme Court’s definition of commercial speech because they were aimed at affecting the buying choices of potential customers. “Speech is commercial in its content if it is likely to influence consumers in their commercial decisions,” the California ruling stated. “For a significant segment of the buying public, labor practices do matter in making consumer choices.”

Having defined the Nike statements as commercial speech, the California court said there was no First Amendment bar against applying the business fraud laws to the statements. Under the U.S. Supreme Court’s precedents, commercial speech is accorded less than full constitutional protection, though the precise level is under debate. If Nike’s speech had been defined as noncommercial, there is little question that it would be immune from being sued under the business fraud laws...

We live in an unpeaceful world, and despite constant talk about peace, there is very little. So little, in fact, that when I told a close friend about this book, *Seeking Peace*, he suggested it was not only naive to write on the topic, but even somewhat perverse.

No one will deny that violence affects public life everywhere around our globe, from current hot spots such as Iraq, Chiapas, Northern Ireland, East Timor, and the West Bank, to the streets of our own decaying cities. In personal life too, even in the most “peaceful” suburbs, unpeace is often the order of the day—in domestic violence, in unhealthy addictions, and in the destructive tensions that divide businesses, schools, and churches.

Violence hides behind the most respectable facades of our supposedly enlightened society. It is there in the turbines of greed, deceit, and injustice that drive our greatest financial and cultural institutions. It is there in the unfaithfulness that can erode even the best “Christian” marriages. It is there in the hypocrisy that deadens spiritual life and robs the most devout expressions of religion of their credibility.

Humanly seen, it may indeed seem perverse to write a book on peace. Yet the need for peace cries to heaven. It is one of the deepest longings of the heart. Call it what you will: harmony, serenity, wholeness, soundness of mind—the yearning for it exists somewhere in every human being. No one likes problems, headaches, heartaches. Everyone wants peace—freedom from anxiety and doubt, violence and division. Everyone wants stability and security.

Some people and organizations (the International Fellowship of Reconciliation comes to mind) focus on striving for global peace. Their goal is the attainment of political cooperation on an international scale. Others (like Greenpeace) seek to promote harmony between human beings and other living things, and a consciousness of our interrelatedness with the environment.

Others look for peace by modifying their lifestyles: by changing careers, moving from the city to the suburbs (or from the suburbs to the country), cutting back, simplifying, or otherwise improving their quality of life. Then there is the young man who recently returned home to my community from abroad: after a “wild ride” of fast money and promiscuous relationships, he yearns to be able “to wake up in the morning and be at peace with myself and with God.” Still others seem to be at ease with the lives they lead; happy and fulfilled, they claim they are not searching for anything. Yet I suspect that below the surface, even these people do not possess perfect peace.

While working on the book, *Seeking Peace*, I came across an ad with a picture of a woman on a dock. Curled up in a lawn chair, she is gazing out over a lake toward a brilliant sunset. The ad reads: “A dream job. Beautiful kids. The best marriage. And a gnawing feeling of absolute emptiness.” How many millions share her unspoken fear?

At a certain level, we are all in search of life as the Creator intended it: a life where harmony, joy, justice, and peace rule. Each of us has dreamed of the life where sorrow and pain do not exist, of the lost Eden for which (the Bible says) all creation groans.

*Johann Christoph Arnold*  
SEEKING PEACE

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PEACE HAS  
NOTHING TO DO  
WITH PASSIVITY  
OR RESIGNATION.  
IT IS NOT FOR THE  
SPINELESS OR  
SELF-ABSORBED,  
OR FOR THOSE  
CONTENT WITH  
A QUIET LIFE.  
PEACE DEMANDS  
THAT WE LIVE  
HONESTLY  
BEFORE GOD,  
BEFORE OTHERS,  
AND IN THE LIGHT  
OF OUR OWN  
CONSCIENCE.  
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COME WITHOUT  
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MEANS TO SEEK	
HARMONY WITHIN	
OURSELVES, WITH	
OTHERS, AND	
WITH GOD.	<div>only when you have made peace within yourself will you be able to make peace in the world.</div> <div>RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM</div>

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this journal, a collection of essays, was created as part of master of fine arts graphic communication program. instructor: fiona mcgettigan spring 2003. designer: kathrny kelley


Truth Reality Value Culture Journal	DESIGNER INSTRUCTOR INSTITUTION DEPARTMENT PROGRAM	Kathryn Kelley Fiona McGettigan University of Houston Fine Arts, Master of Fine Art Graphic Communication	2003
Think Introduction	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Simon Blackburn Cuomotype Futura Light	1.01
Taxonomy of World Views	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Frank Marango Futura Medium Condensed Dyadis ITC	2.01
Domination Humans Philosophical EssaysAuthor	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	FCS Schiller Adobe Garamond	3.01
Economic Domination and the Function of Art	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Steven Conway Adobe Garamond	4.01
History Truth Postmodernism	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Keith Windschuttle Futura	5.01
Drained People Who Wanted More	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Johann Christoph Arnold Dax Metalworks	6.01
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Being Good	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Simon Blackburn Metalworks Adobe Garamond Cuomotype	8.01
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First Things First	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	AIGA Porcelain Adobe Garamond Metalworks	11.01
The Road to Hell	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Milton Glaser Metalworks Cuomotype	12.01
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Seeking Peace	AUTHOR TYPEFACES	Johann Christoph Arnold Adobe Garamond Futura Cuomotype	14.01

