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ERUDITIO

“A multidisciplinary forum focused on the social consequences and policy implications of all forms of knowledge on a global basis”

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Eruditio Vision

The vision of the Journal complements and enhances the World Academy's focus on global perspectives in the generation of knowledge from all fields of legitimate inquiry. The Journal also mirrors the World Academy's specific focus and mandate which is to consider the social consequences and policy implications of knowledge in the broadest sense. The vision of the Journal encompasses major challenges facing global society and seeks to examine these issues from an interdisciplinary, multi-method and value guided perspective.

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World Academy of Art & Science, 4225 Solano Avenue, Suite 631, Napa, CA 94558, USA.

Editorial office:

University of Florida, Levin College of Law, P.O. Box 117625, 2500 SW 2nd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA.

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Website: <http://eruditio.worldacademy.org/>

Email address: eruditio@worldacademy.org

Editorial: Individuality

The first contribution in this part of *Eruditio* is an article by **Garry Jacobs and Winston Nagan**. The piece is titled [“The Global Values Discourse.”](#) It is based on the authors’ participation in a conference organized in part by the Club of Rome and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, which is a British foundation. The conference was in effect, meant to be a brainstorming session lasting several days in which participants came from diverse cultural and intellectual backgrounds. Central to the theme of the meeting was the idea that humanity confronts a vital values deficit. Greater intellectual and scholastic effort is required to improve the vitality of values in shaping global public policies for the present generation and the future ones. An important guideline for the meeting was the stress on the value of the narrative as a mechanism for accessing the centrality of those values important to the future of humanity. Several other Fellows of the Academy participated in the meeting as well. In this report, the authors present their views and summarize the views of three other participants in the meeting. They readily recognize that this report does not reflect the breadth, richness, and diversity of all the perspectives presented during the meeting. However, the authors thought that this short report had some value for our Fellows and hope that it will stimulate a wider discussion among them.

The article commences with an appreciation of the evolving identification and importance of the individual in global society. The salience of the individual is of course a major theme for our Academy’s current interests. The authors present an evolutionary gloss on the struggles that led to the centrality of the individual in Western civilization. It is a narrative that touches on the Renaissance, the commercial revolution, the demise of feudalism and the revival of learning as a major cultural force. These factors led to the reaffirmation of the individual in the birth of the enlightenment, the development of science and modern democratic ideals. Particular reference is given to the values behind the French Revolution and its affirmation on the rights of the common man, ideas that implicated freedom and equality and spread throughout Europe. These ideas took on a new life in the United States where the emergence of individualism was identified with the American dream.

The expansion and integration of individualism with older cultural traditions represent an ongoing challenge with important prospects for the promotion of freedom and equality. Reference is also made to the importance of evolving self-determination and nationalistic ideals, the challenges of scientific truths and laws, as well as the emergence of the culture of the machine. The paper explores the issue of key values which may shape human future. This brings the authors’ paper to the point of clarifying values, narratives, and collective myths. The paper also examines the issue of transcendental values versus existential values. A clarification of this issue emerges from the Buddhist and Confucian thinking. It was Confucius, in particular, who suggested that we know nothing about transcendental reality and not enough about existential reality.

The focus on values in the existential sense permits us to fast-forward to the emergence of secular values in our time. Here we explore the work of WAAS Fellows in seeking to provide a framework of values rooted in social process and human institutions. These issues are tied to the emergence of contemporary human rights values.

A reference is made to Martin Palmer (ARC) who stresses the importance of values to improve the prospect of responsible choice making. Ian Johnson, a Fellow of the Academy, focused on the relevance of human segmentation and stratification forms that often lead to social injustice. He believes that the clarification of values is imperative for understanding the common good. David Korten provided a comprehensive paper carefully examining a multitude of cosmologies that represent contending visions relating to human values and the future of humanity.

The next article by **Saša Popović and Ljudmila Mila Popovich**, titled [“Economics of Dignity: Growing People from Consumers to Members.”](#) is an original and creative exploration of human-centered welfare economics. The article starts with a reference to Easterlin’s paradox in his paper “The Economics of Happiness,” where he suggests that material wealth is not a sure guarantee of personal happiness. This insight raises important lines of inquiry touching on economics, psychology and the humanities. According to the authors, such an approach brings post-modern economic thought to the equivalent of a post-mortem of classical economic perspectives. Central to this latter perspective is the issue of economic growth reflected in the idea of the gross domestic product. The authors suggest that there are other factors that also influence the satisfaction of the citizen consumer. These factors might include broader values implicating personal development and life satisfaction as perhaps more important than pure wealth for the satisfaction of human life.

The authors then explore the evidence of changing business practices in which the consumer is now somewhat differently understood. Cyber business permits this development. It creates in the consumer a sense that he is connected to a community, although this is a virtual community and is generated by entrepreneurial innovation. Still membership is membership, and the entrepreneur understands that membership implicates loyalty and captures the emotive need to belong. In this sense, the consumer is not only choosing what to consume, but is also involved in a choice of roles. Those roles are adding values but not at the altar of price. They use a very interesting illustration from the Starbucks chain of coffee shops. The Starbucks website includes links to the idea of a shared planet. It is receptive to the consumer’s ideas and encourages a broader connectivity. Other illustrations are given, which demonstrate the dynamics of broader connectivity among people. This suggests that technology is stimulating human interaction and connectivity as important aspects of doing business. This suggests that under our very noses we are transforming humanity and transforming the values of community, identity, and connectivity. This implies that we are tentatively approaching the notion of an economics of human dignity. The interests of the Academy in the idea of a new economics are an important background factor lending substance to this creative contribution.

The third article by **Saulo José Casali Bahia and Craig Hammer** is titled, [“Returning to Vico: The Role of the Individual in the Investigation of the Social Sciences.”](#) The authors focus on the dominance of Cartesian logic in its application to the social sciences. The Cartesian approach is quintessentially scientific in the sense that it seeks to generate objective scientific truths from observation to testing and verification. The authors of this piece examine the work of the Italian intellectual and theorist Giambattista Vico, who challenged the relevance of the Cartesian approach to the study of human affairs. Vico argued that the Cartesian approach was forced to use a degree of reductionism in the study of human relations, which provided scant interests in “verum-factum” and a greater concern for “verum-certum.” Cartesian certainties in this sense simply missed too much of the role of the individual and the mind of the individual in constructing and developing the framework of human relations. The problem with the Cartesian approach is its lack of connection with individual creativity. Vico stresses a point that is peculiarly modern. Regardless of the official standardized Cartesian rules of society, individuals frequently are involved in unofficial rule making that cannot be adequately accounted for. However, a proper understanding of this process will show that at the informal level human ingenuity and creativity create community rules that modern theorists have called ‘the living law of the community’. In short, there is the official scientific law codified in the books, which we may describe as the myth system of scientific rules. There is also alongside the myth system, the actual operational code reflected in the living law of the social participants.

The authors illustrate this with the example of the emergence of “*jeitinho*.” This word is untranslatable but roughly means “knack, twist, way, or fix.” This means that in Brazil there is a myth system

of official law rooted in the constitution. There is also the *Jeito*, which is the behavioral law that fills in the gaps and inadequacies of official law. The authors note that the Cartesian approach has been dominant. However, they acknowledge that Vico was vastly ahead of his time and that the human subjectivities of individuals have a critically important role to play in the construction of cultural, social, and legal rules that implicate an adequate description of human social processes.

The final article in this part of *Eruditio* is **Ullica Segerstrale's** ["The Heart of the Humanities."](#) This article underscores the unfulfilled need globally for a relevant value discourse. In this connection, the author draws attention to the challenge posed for the humanities in fully engaging in this urgent task. Part of the problem is the gravitation of the scientific perspective to the human sciences. This seems to suggest that along with the imprimatur of science, there is a willingness to avoid the value implications of human sciences. The initial challenge that she sees is to bring the humanities and the human sciences closer together in order to significantly enhance the relevance and quality of the value discourse in both areas of inquiry. She draws attention to what she sees as the current crisis in the humanities. This raises questions about the humanities, why they exist at all, and who needs them. She notes that value discourse is generally not part of the self-perception of the scientific perspective. The value discourse generated from the humanities may be politically uncomfortable. It may be that for this and other institutional reasons, the idea of an academic neutrality is a more comfortable fit in the context of the way in which higher education institutions are operating today.

The author raises a crucial question about the issue of knowledge generation and its social and possible policy consequences. Many scientists are deeply committed to the principle that their self-identification as scientists is limited to the production of new knowledge. What happens to the knowledge after it is produced is in effect, not a scientific question but a policy question. Still, in such important areas as managing arms control and the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons, scientists have been forced into a role of advising governments about precisely the consequences of one agreement over another, based on their estimate of the consequences that may flow from such an agreement. The author has provided an important insight into the culture of science and the humanities and the values that are required for the appropriate level of intellectual responsibility of both fields. She concludes her piece with a challenging call to "academic activism." As an editorial gloss, I mention that the Union of Scientists has adopted a human rights framework as an indication of its leadership in science with professional responsibility.

Winston P. Nagan

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The Global Values Discourse

Garry Jacobs, Chair of the Board of Trustees, World Academy of Art and Science;
Vice President, The Mother's Service Society

Winston Nagan, Member of the Board of Trustees, World Academy of Art and Science;
Professor of Law & Director, Institute of Human Rights, Peace & Development,
University of Florida

Abstract:

Values are not merely utopian ideals or empty platitudes. They represent the distilled quintessence of accumulated human experience regarding the foundations for stable social existence and sustained evolutionary progress. Values direct and determine the social process. Humanity's remarkable social advancement in recent centuries can be traced back to its progress in embracing and implementing a core set of universal values. The multiple crises the world confronts today are indicative of a growing gap between the values needed to support continuous social evolution and the retardant and reactionary forces which cling to outmoded conceptions and anachronistic social attitudes. This article explores the central role of values in resolving the crises now confronting humanity.

The founding of the World Academy of Art and Science was inspired by a conviction that knowledge and technology alone are an insufficient basis for human development, unless guided by and subordinated to the pursuit of universal values inclusive of all humanity. The founders were cognizant of the challenges of complexity and interdependence consequent on the increasing flow of goods, services and people resulting from rapid globalization. They recognized that rapid social evolution was undermining traditional notions of sovereignty, giving rise to new conceptions of global responsibility and human rights. Concerned about the social consequences and policy implications of these radical changes, they searched for new principles of global governance based on the common interests and rights of all humanity.

The current crises confronting humanity today reinforce the importance of global values as the essential basis for global social progress. Unregulated markets that serve the few at the expense of the many, undemocratic institutions of global governance, rising levels of inequality, unsustainable exploitation and destruction of our natural resource base, rising alienation of human capital from productive employment and rising levels of social instability are signs of a social fabric increasingly divorced from and insensitive to the welfare and well-being of large sections of humanity. At the root of the multiple crises confronting humanity today is a crisis of values that must be resolved before there can be any hope of lasting solutions to the problems facing humanity.

Concurrently, we are compelled to recognize the enormous progress humanity has made over the past few centuries in enhancing the values by which we live — the unprecedented freedom consequent of the expansion of democratic forms of governance, the unprecedented security resulting from rising levels of economic development, the greater recognition and

enforcement of human rights, the gradual emergence of principles of a global rule of law and justice governing relations between nations and global society, which until recently were dominated almost exclusively by power politics and military power. Each of these changes is partial and certainly incomplete, but the direction is evident and the will for progress still growing. Thus, we must reconcile our growing sense of dissatisfaction with the absence of values with a perception of their increasing importance. Jasjit Singh attributes this paradox to the fact that aspirations and expectations are rising faster than ground level social realities.¹

The concern for global values, their meaning, and salience have also been a concern for the Club of Rome (CoR). The Club's own interests in rational global economic policy and practice in the common interest represent a challenge to it to better understand what the common interest actually is and what it implicates. Both WAAS and CoR have felt a compelling need for a deeper and wider transdisciplinary inquiry into fundamental questions relating to the values in the global system. Such an inquiry is essential for understanding the present state of the world order to which we have arrived as well as for charting a better collective future for humanity based on universal values for sustaining a world order in the common interest.

Over the past two years, the World Academy and the Club of Rome have been exploring the root causes of the crises facing humanity relating to the international financial crisis, unemployment, growing inequality, ecological destruction, global governance, international security and social stability. It soon became evident that the problems we face are rooted in the ideas and values that underpin the current global system, and the effective lasting solutions to these problems will require fundamental changes in the normative foundations of global society in the 21st century. In order to validate this premise, the Club of Rome convened an eclectic group of 18 individuals from diverse cultural, intellectual and moral frameworks to participate in a two-day workshop in Bristol, UK conducted in association with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) to reflect on the impact of myth, narrative and values on social evolution and to provide insights into the values needed by the global community to support constructive development of all humanity in an increasingly cross-cultural, value/pluralistic world. The group included four Fellows of the Academy, including the authors. Following two days of very stimulating creative discussion, participants were requested to submit answers to the following questions summarizing their insights into the role of values and narrative in the past, present and future development of global society.

1. What are the key stories that have brought us to where we are culturally today and, which have been creative and which problematic?
2. What do you see as being the key values that could shape the future and where would they come from?
3. Which value, e.g. Liberty; equality; compassion — is the crucial one for you? Could you do a brief piece on both why and also on how it has changed its meaning in the last couple of hundred years?
4. Going back to your roots, what were the key stories and values that shaped you? How have these changed? Do they shape the present? If so, how?

These questions produced a number of wide-ranging responses reflecting the professional and cultural diversification of the group. Since the World Academy currently puts a major emphasis on Individuality, our initial contribution provided a perspective of the Academy which focused on the evolution of individuality and its implications for the values fundamental to the global social process. We summarize the central points that we submitted stressing the evolution of a narrative of individuality from a global perspective. In this regard, we suggested that the present is on a trajectory launched far in the past and moving well into the future. To know where we are going, we must first understand where we have come from and how we have arrived at the present. Viewing the past few centuries in the light of four value-based narratives offers important insights regarding humanity's recent achievements, current problems and future challenges.

The Rise of the Individual

The rise of the individual has been the dominant story in Western civilization over the past few centuries and has in recent decades spread to encompass almost all of humanity. With rare exceptions, such as a brief period in ancient Athens, throughout history the individual has been subordinated to the collective and compelled to conform to the beliefs, behaviors and actions endorsed by the collective. This was especially true during the Middle Ages in Europe where the Church suppressed education and literacy and imposed a common dogma throughout the continent. The emergence of the modern conception of the individual can be traced back to the Italian Renaissance, as Augusto Forti discusses in his paper in *Eruditio* Issue 1, Part 1, when the commercial revolution in the great Italian city states broke the stranglehold of feudalism, and the revival of classical learning restored freedom of thought in art and literature. The Reformation, Enlightenment, birth of science and the rise of modern democratic ideals marked further stages in the progressive emergence of the individual in Europe.²

For present purposes, it may be sufficient to consider the human narrative that emerged from the French Revolution, which played out with most dramatic results across the Atlantic in North America. The Revolution marked a definitive stage in the rejection of traditional feudal values and class structures and the affirmation of the rights of the common man. It challenged the notion that birth, blood, heredity and class status were forever fixed. It affirmed the fundamental value and, therefore, rights of every human being. Although it was quickly followed by a new aristocratic class structure in Napoleonic France, the spirit of freedom and equality spread far and wide throughout Europe.

The ideals of freedom and equality born in Europe but stifled by the inertia and resistance of centuries of social, cultural and religious structure found freer play and greater scope in the North American wilderness. Millions of nameless, impoverished immigrants escaping social, political, economic and religious persecution discovered a new world where they were free to start afresh and create a life for themselves liberated from the inherited traditions, social prejudices, religious intolerance and quixotic circumstances of European history.

The American Dream is not so much the story of a nation or a system as a narrative about faith in the value and power of the individual. The nation came to embody a faith of mythic

proportions in the capacity of the individual human being, who was liberated from tyranny and constraining social conditions he faced in Europe and given the opportunity to act independently and achieve almost anything. The heroes of the American dream were pioneers, explorers, inventors, and entrepreneurs, — self-made men and liberated women — ordinary people like Lincoln born in log cabins and self-educated, incessant inventors like Edison, resourceful men of industry like Ford. British historian Paul Johnson recorded that during the late 19th century, penniless European immigrants landing in New York and living in slums rose to middle-class status in an average of 7 to 77 weeks based on the strength of their own capacities and effort. America symbolized the rise of a dominant middle class politically, economically, socially and culturally. The idea that any and every individual could escape the fickle fortune of birth, blood, class, caste and attain middle class levels of security, comfort, leisure and status spread around the world and became a dominant motif of the last half century.

Freedom inevitably carries with it both positive and negative expressions, freedom for progress and for destruction, freedom of the oppressed to determine their own future and freedom for the strong and advantaged to exploit and dominate over others. The result depends on the idealism and self-restraint with which it is exercised. Of the three ideals of the French Revolution, only liberty took strong root in America. The interpretation of freedom widely associated with egoistic individualism was strongly influenced by circumstances and experience in early America, so it is important to liberate the value of freedom from the limitations arising from its natural evolution in society. Freedom in the New World meant freedom to act individually without encumbrance and with minimal responsibility for the welfare of the collective.

The extreme emphasis on freedom made legitimate the individual pursuit of self-interest to the exclusion of all concern for community. Individuality was largely subverted into egoistic individualism, a creed of every man for himself. The excesses of Neoliberalism illustrate the obvious dangers of affirming the value of freedom in isolation from the other two. The excesses, which arise from a culture of individual freedom are not an indictment of the value of the individual, but rather of the particular variety of self-centered, egoistic individualism, which has been its first form and remains its dominant expression in the world today.

It is probably inevitable that some may regard the emphasis on the individual as an imposition of a Western cultural bias. While the modern forms of individuality described here have certainly been more prominent in the Occident in recent centuries, the case is rapidly changing. The younger generation in India today is reminiscent in many ways of the generations born in America before 1940, when the quest for education and material achievements broke down many of the traditional bonds of family life. India's ancient cultural tradition has always affirmed the ultimate right of the individual to pursue his own religious or spiritual path, which is why the country worships God in so many forms, embraces such a wide variety of spiritual disciplines, and reveres its greatest spiritual individuals — the Vedic rishi, the yogi, sage and Mahatma — as embodiments of divinity.

But the issue of cultural differences remains an important one and hopefully will be a source of humanity's future salvation. For all the apparent superficial similarities between Mumbai, Moscow, London and New York, deep-seated cultural differences still underpin

and differently shape the expression of values. It is likely that as human rights, democracy, education and prosperity spread through the rest of the world, the form which individuality takes will be quite different from the extreme form now prevalent in the West. If so, that may be humanity's salvation. It is not by rejecting the individual but by defining his/her rightful place that humanity is likely to arrive at the most fruitful future. The West has much to learn from Asia in that regard.

Self-Determination and Nationalism

The rise of individualism during the 20th century coincided with the rising aspiration of suppressed peoples everywhere for self-determination, resulting eventually in the end of colonial empires following World War II, the spread of democracy in successive waves throughout Europe, Asia and Latin America, the resurgence of Asian power, and the evolution of international institutions designed to represent and safeguard the interests of the nation-state. These historical facts give expression to a belief system centered on the value of the nation-state. Creating larger self-governing aggregations of people based on common language, history and culture marks the definitive end of political and military imperialism. At the same time, nation-states jealous to protect and advance their own interests in comparison with those of other people have given rise to a competitive global security system and a competitive economic system that pose serious impediments to global governance. Competitive nationalism was the principal cause of the two world wars. As Jasjit Singh has eloquently argued, it has given rise to a global security system in which each nation is responsible for its own self-defense. This is the reason why nations spend \$1.5 trillion annually on defense, why nuclear weapons states refuse to give up weapons whose use would be a crime against humanity, and more states strive to acquire these weapons, why small arms trade proliferates and why in the name of democracy, we persist in affirming the validity of a highly undemocratic United Nations system. So too, we are prevented from adequately addressing the global financial crisis because of a competitive monetary system; and from responding to the ecological threats to earth because of an economic system in which nations compete for access to scarce resources.

The storyline behind the present global system can be summarized by the use of the word 'sovereignty'. In current conception, 'sovereignty' refers to the rights of nations represented by their governments, not the rights of people within nations or of humanity as a whole. In practice, the claim to sovereignty is applied with equal self-righteousness by democratic and autocratic governments, whose authority for representing their people is subject to debate. It is applied by a few powerful nations on behalf of the entire unrepresented humanity or in direct contradiction to the rights and interests of other peoples. As we have argued elsewhere, it is necessary to alter our fundamental conception of the source of rights throughout the world and weave a new narrative which embraces and assigns a rightful place to the individual, the community, nation-state and humanity.³

The emergence of the European Union acquires great significance in this light as the most serious endeavor thus far for a group of mature nation-states to overcome their centuries-old rivalry, prejudices and sense of separateness to forge a political and economic union based on social and cultural inclusiveness. This marks the attempt to write a new narrative for the human community. The whole world has a tremendous stake in the success of this enterprise.

Natural Law*

In Europe, the rise of individualism was also associated with the rise of science and the search for an objective standard of truth liberated from the dogmas of religion. Natural law was frequently cited by early political idealists as a basis for affirming the rights of man, for framing democratic forms of governance and new legal concepts founded on objective principles. But, as science expanded its discovery of the laws of the physical universe, a strange alchemy has occurred. Material science founded on universal mechanical laws of nature has come to reject or discard the most sacred elements of our humanity — denying the existence of free will other than as a product of chance or uncertainty; denying the existence of individual uniqueness, other than as the result of genetic mutation; denying the essential reality of all that is immaterial; and thereby according greater reality to a mud pie or plum pudding than to patriotism, idealism, romantic love, goodness, Plato's Symposium, the Mona Lisa, Hamlet, or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In a world governed by impersonal laws of nature, human choice has no real place. Consciousness is merely a freak accident. Nature affirms only the value of the species, not that of the individual. In attempting to discover the truths of the world around us, science has arrogantly rejected and discredited the collective psychological knowledge and spiritual wisdom of humanity acquired over millennia.

Science applied to society has led to an unquestioned faith in mechanism, which undermined the principle of individuality from which modern science rose. If society like nature is merely a giant machine, then all we need to do is discover the laws by which it works. Applied to governance, it gave rise to state socialism. Applied to economics, it gave rise to Newtonian laws that place inordinate faith in self-governing social institutions such as free markets (glorified social Darwinism). The Cartesian divorce between the scientist and observer, the separation of man from nature, has also driven a wedge between humanity and the social mechanisms it has devised to promote its welfare. David Korten's classification of cosmologies is an important reminder that science has become the prevailing religion of humanity.⁴ The old religions based their claim to authenticity on scripture and teaching. The new religion bases itself on a materialistic metaphysic that is equally blind and intolerant of diverging opinion, yet wields far more power than any religion ever did, and therefore, is potentially far more dangerous.

The Rise of the Machine

The rise of science was associated with a growing faith in mechanism, technology, and the power of the machine. Modern science was born in Europe during the Enlightenment and reached its creative heights of original thinking on the continent. But the adoption and application of science for physical processes gained their greatest traction in America where land was abundant, labor was in short supply and new means were urgently needed to quench the growing needs and aspirations of a rapidly growing and fast rising population. The inventor and the engineer have always been revered in America. Labor-saving devices such as the washing machine and processed food liberated women from drudgery at home, enabling them to seek employment and pursue careers earlier and in greater numbers than in any other

*The term 'natural law' here refers to the laws that emerge from the material world of causal relations. This is distinguished from the natural law used in legal discourse which focuses on the normative dimension of natural law.

country. The working women became a symbol of the liberated feminine gender, liberated from the traditional role model as a subservient housewife. The faith in science-based mechanism was embodied in America's invention of the atomic bomb, the race to the moon, and the personal computer revolution. Technology was perceived as a liberating force and answer to all problems.

Humanity has a strange propensity to become enslaved to the instruments it creates for its advancement. Technology can dominate social existence and enslave as well as liberate. Technology in the factory is making human labor dispensable and converting employment into a privilege rather than a fundamental right. So too, a blind faith in the wisdom of the impersonal marketplace can destroy social integrity and undermine human values. So completely have we accepted this voluntary bondage that we regard as legitimate almost any scientific quest and any technological invention regardless of its impact on humanity. We do not even hold scientists responsible for the consequences of the technologies they invent.

Physical mechanism has its social counterpart. The quest for impersonal principles governing physical nature has also given rise to unprecedented creation of new forms of social organization rooted in practical arrangement rather than tradition and culture. America, in particular, exhibited a remarkable capacity for organizational innovation. Freed from the inertia of centuries-old traditions, generations of Americans were compelled to fashion new types of organization adapted to the changing times and circumstances. Both the strengths and weaknesses of American society can be traced to the replacement of traditional social institutions with the rapid proliferation of new types of social organization. On the positive side, the American constitution and democratic political institutions, land-grant colleges and universities, mass production, telephone networks, stock and commodity exchanges, motion picture and television studios, international credit card systems, overnight courier delivery, community colleges, and the emerging social organizations of the 21st century — the Internet, world wide web, global retailers such as Amazon, social-networking — not all of them were invented in America, but these and countless other organizational innovations were adopted in the United States more rapidly and extensively than anywhere else to transform the way work is done, people interact and communities are organized.

Every positive has a downside. The rise of impersonal organizations for a highly mobile, uprooted population also contributed to the breakdown of family and community relations, and rising sense of isolation and loneliness. Fifty years ago, John Galbraith prophesied that the modern corporation would replace the family as the basic unit of American society. In doing so, it has liberated individuals from the limitations of a particular family background but also deprives them of close social and psychological relationships and cultural inheritance. Organizational know-how has replaced community and social culture as the bond between people and communities. Physical isolation, social alienation and psychological loneliness have grown dramatically as a result. An inordinate faith in organization, technology, money and markets has reduced social existence to a mechanism for connecting discrete and separate parts, replacing the organic concept of living cultural community with impersonal social machinery. The gains in productivity and efficiency have been offset by the loss of human relationships, collective responsibility and cultural enrichment. Ironically, the culture founded on the value of the human being is in danger of dehumanizing society.

In sum, the rise of individualism has been closely associated with the Reformation, democratic revolution, spread of education, and unprecedented economic prosperity of the modern age. Ironically, the very movement that was apparently intended to liberate our humanity has done much to dehumanize society, replace culture with mechanism, impersonal organization, competitive nationalism, and a rational science striving to apply Newtonian laws of nature to human life. The age-old struggle between the individual and collective is approaching the end of an evolutionary curve. After a long history of collective tyranny, a world view emerged, which justified a new form of state tyranny in the name of freedom, of which Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and Chinese state socialism have been exemplary models at the national level and which the present United Nations Security Council exemplifies internationally. The old ideal of individualism affirms itself today as a social version of Darwin's survival of the fittest. The inalienable democratic ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness have become a front for governance by plutocracy and a justification for the wholesale pursuit of selfish self-interest. The nexus between corporations and government is compounded by the fact that it transcends national boundaries, enabling multinational businesses to leverage their independence to compel national governments to compete for their favor and yet remain beyond the pale of national law. The faith in free markets has become a justification for unbridled greed and unconscionable inequality. The greatest tragedy of the modern era is that for the first time in history humanity possesses the capacity to meet the needs of all human beings, and yet we stand enslaved and helpless witnesses to a system run amuck.

Key Values Shaping our Future

What are the key values that could shape the future and where would they come from? The three great values of the French Revolution can form the basis for a powerful new narrative of human evolution. One of the great challenges humanity faces today is how to reconcile unprecedented freedom with greater social equality and community in full affirmation of the value of the human being. Faith in impersonal mechanism has to be replaced by institutions dedicated to the rights, dignity, welfare and well-being of all humanity. Every existing legal concept, institution and policy has to be revamped to reflect the new values. True democracy has to be established locally, nationally, internationally, in fact, as well as in word, replacing the prevailing political system of power and privilege. Plutocracy has to be supplanted by true political and economic democracy. Economic democracy must come to mean not merely the freedom to work, but the guaranteed right to access to gainful employment opportunities, education, medical care and economic security. The sovereign sanctity of the nation-state — a relic of a previous age — has to be supplanted by a conception that recognizes the legitimate rights of people at all levels from local communities to the global human community. Individuality implies rationality, for the domination of the collective is characterized by blind conformity to social norms, which leave no scope for true rationality. The superstition of blind conformity has to be outgrown in all its forms, scientific and academic as well as religious and ideological. A shift is needed from faith in money and technology for their own sake to faith in human beings and an effort to maximize the welfare and well-being of all. A competitive culture based on selfishness and greed needs to embrace the psychic values of goodwill and self-giving.

These changes cannot be brought about by a return to collective domination over the individual, as state communism and state socialism attempted, or even by a compromise between opposing ideologies. The collective has demonstrated time and again its disregard for the integrity of the individual. Nor can the change be achieved by according unlimited freedom for individuals to pursue their own personal benefit. The contradictory principles have to be reconciled at a higher level and converted into mutually supportive complements. That requires a new narrative, a new image of individuality and society for humanity to aspire for.

The dichotomy has to be bridged between man and nature, the individual and the collective. The conscious individual is nature's most remarkable creation, the representative peak of humanity, who embodies and gives expression to his cumulative endowments and future aspirations. The individual is the catalyst and leader of the evolution of society, the representative of society and not merely a lone, isolated person. It is not by subordination of the individual but by an evolution of culture from egoistic individualism to true individuality, from selfish egoism to identification of the individual with the common good of the social collective and of humanity as a whole that the dichotomy can be reconciled. The true individual, described by Jung, Maslow and others as one who is self-actualized or self-realized, is conscious of him or herself as part of the community, one with humanity, and aspires for the good of all, not merely for their own personal benefit and salvation. That is a story worth writing. Aspects of this narrative are found in the work of Harold D. Lasswell and Myres McDougall, Fellows of the World Academy, in their study *Jurisprudence for a Free Society: Studies in Law, Science and Policy*.⁵

Narratives and Collective Myths

Idealistic proclamation of universal values is a relatively recent mode of capturing the essence of cultural wisdom and emerging aspirations of humanity. Traditionally, values have been embedded in the form of myths and complex narratives containing within them doctrines and formulas around which social life is to be organized. The story behind myths may generate doctrines encoded in both ideology and counter-ideology. Again, the stories behind ideology and counter-ideology suggest that in the social process, there is often a contestation about the very values behind myths and narratives. In addition, symbols possess an immense power to convey human understanding and comprehension. We could say that myths and narratives are generated as signs and symbols, which also implicate myths and counter-myths, ideologies and counter-ideologies. The concepts of myth, narrative, symbol and sign, are an ongoing issue about the values that should guide our global society in ways that avoid destruction and enhance a brighter human prospect.

Transcendental vs. Existential Values

The problem of values invariably implicates sacred and secular issues. In general, religion stresses the importance of the transcendent spiritual life and the importance of this life for the nurturing of the soul in the next life. This seems to imply that values are largely important for transcendental rather than existential experience. Buddha thought it was a waste of time to contemplate the absoluteness of deity and was searching for a way out of suffering in the here and now with his famous Eight Fold Path of Virtue. To some extent, he was making

a break with the values for transcendental purposes only. For Confucius, humanity has not yet learned to know life. If it does not know how to live, why be concerned about another life before you know how to live this one. Hence, the sage wisdom 'live one life at a time'. This carries the implication that in doing good in life, one is not doing it for a reward in the next life; one is doing good for good's sake. That is a challenge for altruism. One of the most important insights that Confucius generates is his insistence that social good emerges from human interaction from micro-social family ties to ties that are community-wide. In these relationships, decorum, humanity, uprightness, tolerance, and sincerity are paramount values. His additional focus on etiquette, dress, and style was a way of making morality a component of civilization enhanced by the polite style. Confucius' aspirational personality type emphasized the expression of human nature in terms of a golden mean, which was balanced, tempered and under control. He saw this in the gentlemen scholar. The fundamental values that we can distill from his legacy include intelligence and learning, the high value of labor, the importance of life, the value of good manners, an avoidance of extremes, and sensitivity in human relations to the principle of reciprocity. In this latter context, Confucius does not endorse the Christian view of returning good for evil. He instead requires that evil be repaid with justice. The Confucian idea of rooting morals and ethics in human interaction and reciprocal relationships is an idea that is also reflected in the African principle of Ubuntu. In effect, people realize their moral value in relation to other people.

Secular Values in Our Time

Let us fast track from Confucius to the modern age. Modern anthropologists have tended to view values as essentially related to the fulfillment of human existential needs rather than transcendental aspirations. As the social sciences developed, leading figures, using anthropological insights, effectually defined politics as the authoritative allocation of values. And operational politics reflected the objective of dominant interest groups to get the most that they could out of those values. The evolution of human perspectives began to focus on the content of the values, the institutional mechanisms by which they were produced and distributed, and an appraisal of what this actually meant for still higher values that focus on equality, fairness, and dignity. The concept of values and needs was well developed in the psychological literature by Maslow's idea of hierarchy of human needs:

1. Physiological — hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, warmth
2. Safety/Security — out of danger, order, law, stability
3. Belongingness and love — affiliate with others, be accepted
4. Esteem — to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition
5. Self-Actualization — realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences

During the 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt, the American President, made a critical linkage between the value of liberty and the value of economic deprivation. According to Roosevelt, necessitous human beings have their freedoms diminished by economic necessity. Later, he spelled out his vision in the Atlantic Charter, which Churchill joined in support. In the Charter, he stated the values implicated in the war aims for which the allies were fighting.

He brilliantly couched this in terms of four aspects of liberty: freedom of speech and expression (political freedom), the freedom of conscience and belief (confessional freedom), the freedom from want (economic freedom), and the freedom from fear (basic security).

From a global point of view, the needs-based focus of the anthropologists and the values-ideas of the social scientists came to be expressed in the form of a political morality for the global community. And these were expressed as values relevant to this earthly life rather than to a subsequent spiritual transcendental existence. It is from these roots that there emerged the United Nations Charter, one of whose specific goals was the commitment to the universality of human rights values, although these values were not defined in the Charter itself. Subsequent to the adoption of the Charter, the UN set up a Committee to draft a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That draft came in record time, and its values had gravitated from the idea of a non-enforceable moral obligation to the status of a juridically enforceable obligation and a part of the positive law of the global community. The Universal Declaration is formulated in terms of rights, but carried some complexity about the nature of these rights (moral vs. legal). More importantly, however, at the back of the rights on the Declaration are identifiable values and institutions that are specialized in whatever degree of efficacy to the production and the distribution of these values.

Values and Social Process

The central importance of values to policy-making is highlighted by a perspective which recognizes values as one essential element in an integrated social process, as described by Lasswell and McDougal, both former Fellows of the World Academy of Art and Science. To give values a foundation of social realism, we may describe the Global Social Process as comprising the following:

Social Process = People + Values + Institutions + Resources

Lasswell postulated eight fundamental values driving the social process:

1. Power — The making of decisions enforceable by severe deprivations or high indulgences; making and influencing community decisions.
2. Enlightenment — gathering, processing and disseminating information and knowledge.
3. Respect — Freedom of choice, equality and recognition.
4. Well-Being — Safety, health and comfort.
5. Wealth — Production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; control of resources.
6. Skill — Acquisition and exercise of capabilities in vocations, professions, and the arts.
7. Affection — Intimacy, friendship, loyalty, positive sentiments.
8. Rectitude — Participation in forming and applying norms of responsible conduct.

The above approach may have some value for this discourse because it comes in a form directly related to the policy-making arenas of concern to the World Academy of Art and

Science and the Club of Rome. The approach outlined above provides us with eight value categories and provides us with a marker, which targets the institutions that control and regulate the production and distribution of these values. It has an added element, namely, that rather than isolating economics from society and social realism shows that economics can influence every other value, and every other value may have an influence on economics. That is an important insight for the CoR. Second, the values identified here are those that had emerged from the secular give and take of global politics. These values have extraordinary traction, although in the area of economics this has not been widely recognized in recent decades due to the strenuous but failed attempt of neoliberal economics to mimic the objectivity of natural sciences. According to this perspective, human beings do not invent values; we simply present the formula or the relevant myth and the accompanying narrative relevant to our time. The importance of the categories of values is their clear connection to identifiable institutions whose efficacy may well be questionable at this time. This approach provides a pointer to focus on critical inquiry into institutions crucial to human progress, and with a possibility of recommending reform or improvement.

Human Rights Values

Finally, we conclude this segment with reference to the secular values expressed in the most recent work by the Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen. Sen conceptualized the basic values in terms of basic human capabilities that are important for a democratic society. These include life, bodily health, bodily integrity, sense, imagination, thought, emotion, practical reasoning, affiliation, other species players, and control over one's environment. Sen's capabilities/values catalog has some overlapping affinity with Maslow's, and the human rights values identified by Lasswell and McDougal. The problem with Sen's categories is the difficulty of identifying fairly precise institutions specialized to the production and the distribution of his capabilities values. For example, if life is valued, then all human institutions are implicated in it. That is too vast. However, Maslow's needs hierarchy and Sen's human rights perspective may serve as the foundation for generating policies and devising institutional mechanisms to implement them on a global basis.

Viewing Maslow, Sen, and the human rights values in the historic context of Confucius' insights, we see that the overriding moral values implicated in all the values and institutions are the dignity and worth of the individual human being on a global basis. The human rights angle with its focus on universal global dignity presents an important challenge for providing the normative guidance for the future of political economy of the world community.

Other Important Perspectives

It is not possible to do justice to the richness of thoughts exchanged during and after the conference. Important contributions came from Martin Palmer (ARC), Ian Johnson and David Korten (CoR).

Palmer noted that his values are rooted in Christianity, Marxism, Socialism, and Chinese culture. His values seem to suggest the pragmatic side of communication and interaction in which human beings can be persuaded to be responsible choice makers. This means having people examine their own narratives to learn from them and to sometimes liberate from them.

His contribution is a challenge to the fatalism of apocalyptic futures or those that predict an inevitable nirvana. Ian Johnson initiated his discourse by focusing on the pernicious reality of human segmentation and stratification. This compels us to recognize that in society, we still give credence to the ubiquitous symbols of the “we” and the “other.” He reminded us that this outcome is reflected in such tragedies as the killing fields of Cambodia. Applying these insights to economics, we emerge with a code of “dog eat dog,” driven in part by the corporatization of economics. Current free market ideology conspires to enhance individual interest and depreciate the common good. How can we escape from this dilemma? This brings us to the importance of value clarification.

Johnson stressed the importance of individual roles and responsibilities, the need for a new compassion that is global, the importance of working against the trust deficit, the question of whether our institutions undermine our faith in them, and how we handle diversity. He finds it difficult to provide a priority of values regarding, for example, liberty, equality, and compassion. He sees some importance in human rights and concludes that indeed global values matter.

Korten submitted a more comprehensive paper examining the implications of three alternative cosmologies on humanity and its relationship with nature: cosmos as a grand machine, cosmos as the rule by a distant patriarch, and cosmos as an integral spirit. He projects the third cosmology as more conducive, sustainable to arriving at a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature and cosmos.⁶ This view emphasizes the unity between the cosmos, nature, and spirit, the unity of all beings, and the idea of the pervasive action of a conscious intelligence shaping the destiny of the universe.

Korten objects to an exclusive anthropocentric focus on human rights on the grounds that it leaves out a crucial dimension that is currently coming to the fore in the controversies surrounding Rio+20 — the recognition that Earth is sacred and that our survival as a species depends on balancing our concern for human rights, property rights, and corporate rights with a corresponding concern for the rights of nature. The framing challenge before us as a species is to reconcile the rights of nature, human rights, property rights, and corporate rights. He believes that they are properly viewed as a hierarchy of rights and that the rights of nature must come first, because we humans are derivative of and imbedded in Nature. Without Nature, we do not exist. As living beings, our rights are derivative of the rights of nature. Human rights in turn come before property rights because property rights are a human creation and have no existence without humans and no purpose other than to serve the human and natural interest. Corporations are a form of property, and their rights exist only as a derivative of property rights. Stressing the incestuous relationship between corporations and politics, which transcends national boundaries, he argues that our current global civilization gets the order exactly backward. We give corporate rights precedence over the property rights of individuals, property rights precedence over human rights, and human rights precedence over the rights of nature. And we are paying a terrible price.

These ideas do not exhaustively represent the insights drawn from humanity’s past development of the plethora of creative suggestions regarding a more viable basis for its future progress. But they do go far to highlight the importance of a serious systematic inquiry into the values that underpin social evolution and the compelling need for an evolution of those

values to keep pace with the rapid strides in technology, globalization and social power. For, all participants agree on one point, that the overall purpose of the global social system must ensure security and support the fulfillment of all human beings in a sustainable manner. The values behind global human rights are an important narrative providing normative guidelines for human progress. This discourse about clarifying the narratives, the myths and the values of global society in the 21st Century is projected to be continued. We, the Fellows of the World Academy, hope that this discourse will attract the interest of many distinguished Fellows of our Academy and that it continues to be a major point of emphasis in our programs and related interests.

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Economics of Dignity: Growing People from Consumers to Members*

Saša Popović, Associate Fellow, World Academy of Art and Science;
Associate Professor, University of Montenegro

Ljudmila Mila Popovich, Junior Fellow,
World Academy of Art and Science; University of Colorado at Boulder

Abstract:

According to Richard Easterlin's paradox, laid out in "The Economics of Happiness," material wealth does not necessarily guarantee and equate with a sense of personal happiness.^{1,2} This intriguing conclusion challenges researchers to explore a fascinating intersection among Economics, Psychology, and Humanities.[†] It is bringing postmodern economic thought to a post mortem of classical economy, whose core measure of economic growth — gross domestic product — will have to be reevaluated as a determinant of people's prosperity in order for us to identify more indicative and reliable value drivers in the 21st century. Along with the GDP, the vital constituent of contemporary capitalism and the modern consumerist society — consumer him/herself — is being reevaluated not by conventional criteria such as personal income and personal consumption, but by personal development and life satisfaction as new benchmarks of people's sense of fulfilment central to the notion of wealth.

It is that need for personal development and fulfilment that has caused the economic subjects to gradually shift from the role of mere consumers to that of members, as best registered in the fastest-growing domain of cyber business. The possibilities for membership in the virtual business communities add a note of dignity and freelance entrepreneurship to the old-fashioned consumer. While the internet technology is taking business-making to ever-higher possibilities of global techno-networking, it is, nonetheless, the conventional values such as membership loyalty and the need for belonging to and sharing with a community that inform and define today's most progressive economic relationships.

We are exploring here the most advanced and the trendiest business-making of the so-called dot com (.com) businesses, network marketing companies, and the culture-based business networks in an attempt to identify the determinants of today's experience of economic wealth both in its intangible as well as in conventionally tangible assets.

The concept of membership is becoming the prevalent mode of doing business, sharing information, as well as participating in communal activities. Whether you are invited to become a valued member of your favorite grocery store, your favorite coffee shop, your favorite airline, bookstore, etc., it is not only about the preferred treatment that you get such as discounts, promotional gifts, having priority service, or first-hand information about the newest products and upcoming sales, but the fact that you are joining a community which

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† Interdisciplinarity is no longer an academic fad but a pressing methodological need in our attempts to account for and address the demands and needs of an integrating individual in the integrating world.

vies for your participation in communal events. These happenings and gatherings are geared toward *servicing* the local or broader community by charitable work, donation drives, and other forms of what is called *giving back to the community*.² The drive here is to move away from the concept of consumer, a “targeted,” reactive individual with a choice of goods, towards the concept of a member, a proactive individual with a choice of roles. The key idea is that of *adding value* — not only adding more value for the money you spend but also adding value to your community through the business, and consequently, through the business community you choose to join and partner with, which, in turn, adds value to your life by providing an opportunity to serve others through that partnering. In any case, the issues of value rather than price and the role of a member rather than a consumer are put in the forefront. We were seeking to understand, in particular, the socio-economic and cultural phenomenon of the most advanced of the technological spheres of human economic activity — e-business — only to find out that it is driven by such very traditional values, which are, nonetheless, through that technology realized with a certain twist. Cyber business is of particular interest not only because it is the fastest developing but also because it is socially most interactive and vibrant. This sphere of interactions in the form of *ethereal business* is economically most *graceful*, because it exerts minimal physical effort with maximum reach for its ability to access the entire globe.

An example comes from Starbucks, a chain of coffee shops, which is developing coffee drinking into a communal ritual exactly by emulating the ways of the cultures in which coffee drinking is a way of catching up with the community and getting involved in the lives of others while sharing yours. The Starbucks website (www.starbucks.com) features special categories and links such as Community and Starbucks Shared Planet. The business is also trying to make the site more personalized for the members by adding a link at which you can share your ideas with the rest of the Starbucks community and call that space your own: MyStarbucksIdea.com. And not only does the Starbucks website position itself as a community space but further stresses and caters to the need for greater and broader connectivity by adding links for interface sites such as Facebook, Twitter, as well as YouTube. Our examples come primarily from the Western, developed countries for the reason that they have designed the most extensive virtual outreach to their customers, but also for the reason that exactly those globally-expanding corporations are incorporating and depending on basic traditional values. And while they are co-opting in that sense and incorporating for the sake of self-promotion, they, nonetheless, have to open a space within their organization for input from the local people. Consequently, these corporations can be influenced from within by the multitude of members who do business with them. Most importantly, one of the ways in which the members have been exerting influence in this particular case, has been over the issues of fair trade, organic growing, and healthier nutrition choices.

In order to understand the inner workings of e-business, its marketing driving force as well as its ethos, we turn to the idea of community, as it is the most traditional notion and a human need that is guiding this form of virtual interaction. The traditional need for a sense of belonging is at the core of such modern community, which is, as it has always been, driven by *communion* and *communication*.³ In these modern cyber communities, communion — the

‡ Examples of community-oriented businesses abound and proliferate daily. Coffee shops feature mini art exhibits of local school children. Independent neighborhood shops organize food and clothing drives as well as charitable work. Grocery stores offer matching donations for local schools, charities, hospitals.

sharing of information, ideas, ethereal space, and wealth — is realized via virtual communication that allows for an unprecedented global reach. And while it fulfills the need to connect to other humans on a broader scale, it offers and maintains a loose sense of belonging which preserves one's need for individual freedom at the same time. And that is the twist to the modern sense of bonding and belonging that technology provides — to maintain a sense of potential anonymity, freedom, and mobility that did not exist to that extent in conventional communities. If we visit the website of the worldwide credit card company MasterCard,[§] we can see how far the idea of community, communal participation, and member involvement is taken. Among other engaging links, MasterCard website includes one called Corporate Citizenship in which customers and employees are members who can find various significant ways to “make a difference” in the local and global communities.

Thus, a modern economic subject is becoming a *nomadic member* trading, doing business, and working from anywhere on the planet as long as s/he has a computer and a modem or a cell phone (The cell phone magnate, Sprint, features commercials for doing business on a beach with the newest phone technology). Technology is increasingly working on improving mobility and freedom of choice, such as having the option of working from home as an employee; running a whole e-business operation from one's living room; accessing the internet in a private setting for joining e-communities of similar music interests; for philanthropic missions, dating needs, shopping needs, investment searches, medical support and so on. The alienation that the industrial development brought about gave rise to nostalgia for belonging and now technology is gratifying it in new ways by allowing people to cluster around their needs, desires, and interests with other humans from the entire globe rather than just from their immediate surrounding. And it does so by satisfying the push and pull of such modern clustering need — the double-bind of wanting to belong and yet not to be fully integrated but preserve a sense of one's freedom. Virtual Communities are safe that way; they preserve such nostalgic longing while providing a sense of non-committal belonging — a wireless connectivity without rooting.

What about Easterlin's paradox then, with which we started the paper, that says that exactly in developed countries, which have the luxury of utilizing the technological advances on the broadest scale, the sense of personal happiness may not be the highest? We are now using technology in ways that emulate the communal connections of the countries with more sense of communal support that generally consider themselves happier. It is through human relations that we seek fulfillment and gain sense of wealth, and the networking technology is trying to satisfy exactly that need for higher and now broader connectivity among people. Easterlin's paradox is at its core again a communal issue; it is indeed in connection to and in comparison with others that the sense of being well-off / a sense of well-being is constructed and experienced.

Easterlin points out that we increasingly compare ourselves with those with whom we come in closest contact, and asks: “Imagine your income increases substantially while everyone else's stays the same — would you feel better off? The answer most people give is yes. But now, let's turn the example around. Think about a situation in which your real income stays the same, but everyone else's increases substantially — then how would you feel? Most

§ See http://www.mastercard.com/us/company/en/corporategiving/community_involvement.html

people say that they would feel less well off, even though their real level of living hasn't, in fact, changed at all."⁴ Social relationships as value determinants are particularly important in the Economics of Happiness, which takes off from the fundamental understanding of economics as a set of systematized means of managing and regulating human needs. While Easterlin examines the social practice of comparison and competition as a means of gauging one's sense of being well-off, Amartya Sen foregrounds the importance of interpersonal relations as a means of development of human capital. Sen registers a certain shift in the development of modern economic systems at the turn of 21st century from the hard-core, "blood, sweat, and tears" approach to a more liberal/liberating approach to economic growth.⁵ Accordingly, Sen conceptualizes what he calls a *civil* rather than a political economy and arrives at that concept exactly by emphasizing the role of interpersonal relations and importance of expansion of human capabilities. Sen expounds: "The expansion of human capabilities, thus, have both 'direct' and 'indirect' importance in the achievement of development. The indirect role works through the contribution of capability expansion in enhancing productivity, raising economic growth, broadening development priorities, and bringing demographic changes more within reasonable control. The direct importance of human capability expansion lies in its intrinsic value and its constitutive role in human freedom, well-being and quality of life."⁶

In order to address the question of quality of life, E.F. Schumacher was one of the first to oppose GNP as the measure of wealth.⁷ He studied village-based economics in Burma based on human needs out of what he witnessed in his research, and developed Humanistic Economics or Buddhist Economics.⁸ In his seminal work of radical rethinking of modern economy, *Small is Beautiful*, Schumacher inverts the aggressive capitalist motto of "Big is Better." Countering this materialist slogan, Schumacher countered modern economics that established consumption as the sole purpose of all economic activity. According to his Humanistic Economics, consumption should be a means to human well-being, but the aim would be to achieve maximum well-being with minimum consumption. Schumacher's vision ultimately aims at more time secured for and devoted to personal fulfillment, particularly through artistic creativity.

Expansion of human capabilities (the need for which is answered by the flood of self-empowerment, self-improvement and a wide range of how-to literature) allows one to feel more as an informed economic participant who understands that one is not only a consumer but as well a producer who adds value. Of the highest value are people themselves, human resources and actualization of human potential through and in social relations. On that path of self-empowerment, participation in a business community seems to give the highest sense of value. Ethics of new business-making come not from an institutionally-proscribed code of conduct or interest-based etiquette, but rather come from the place of self-actualization and a sense of responsibility to self and others that creates wealth — investing with people and investing in people — *growing people*. We use the expression 'growing people' to mean simultaneously:

1. a growing number of people as in rapidly developing numbers

[¶] The studies of village economies have brought about major re-thinking of economics and concepts that had global effect. In addition to Schumacher's economics, Muhammad Yunus' Grameen (meaning "off the village") micro loans could be an example of such a globally effective idea that was conceived on the smallest scale. Indeed, these are economic ideas and plans suitable for what was named by Marshall McLuhan as "global village." See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962). Indeed, it is our understanding that the notion of global village is particularly relevant here for our discussion of traditional values and needs that guide most modern technologies of global reach.

2. people maturing from *reactive consumers with a choice of goods to proactive members with a choice of roles*
3. developing human resources and providing conditions of dignity and freedom within which people continue to develop themselves.

Out of this understanding of the importance of growing people rather than growing goods, successful businesses are committed to continually developing their employees by trainings and workshops that exceed the immediate needs of their job responsibilities. Such businesses invest in, for example, motivational and self-development seminars, leadership training, and personality and temperament evaluation workshops. The most prominent business leaders cross over into and become the most prominent motivational speakers, life and success coaches, and educators. Such people are proven business masters who have evolved into prestigious humanistic servants. Theirs is a rather *holistic approach* to developing people, which tries to develop the whole person and starts from the premise that a happy employee, who has a sense of belonging to an enterprise in which s/he feels cared for and valued as a human being, is in every way a more productive employee.”

The notion of *value* is then taken to mean not only the price of goods, their use and worth, but also a set of beliefs that determine not only such value of goods but also the value of human capital and of human relations in economic exchanges. This exactly is the domain of *Economics of Dignity* as that which deals with the priceless; it deals with that which cannot be measured in price and use but is rather that which adds value and meaning to all other values; that which adds value to everything else yet itself is priceless — the human in the fullness of his/her potential. This is the domain of human *esteem*.

MasterCard Corporation understood all too well the notion of priceless value when it launched a series of by-now-very-well-known *Priceless* commercials. In a particular commercial entitled “Lessons”, a boy is going through various morning activities with his father. As the two are getting ready for the day and doing grocery shopping, the boy is naming the value of the items they are using or buying. By the end of the commercial, we understand that he was, in fact, pondering the value of their shared moments by concluding: “Helping your dad become a better man — *priceless!*” In this commercial, it is of utmost significance that the transfer of knowledge in the form of life lessons going from son to father is indeed learned poignantly in the traditional context of the father-son relationship, and yet the modern son is the one voicing the message of the lesson, and thus imparting the knowledge onto the broader community.

All humans have an intrinsic need to be respected and to have a sense of significance. The need for esteem is the *belonging need* of a human to be accepted and valued by others. It is through a line of work and activity of one’s choice that we gain recognition, a sense of contribution that creates a feeling of significance, acceptance, and value. In *Economics of Dignity*, we move from consumption to actualization, participation, and contribution, to adding value to self in order to participate, with dignity, in the exchange of values with others. The spirit of reciprocity in adding value is the key focus of, for example, George Fraser’s vision for successful networking in the Black Community (www.frasernet.com). Fraser, a businessman,

** Such approaches to business running and development are directly indebted to Abraham Maslow’s work on self-actualization in Transpersonal Humanistic Psychology out of which Leadership Studies and Transpersonal Business Studies evolved.

speaker, educator, and leader of this culture-based on-line networking project sees education, marketable skills, and relationships as the key measuring components of a successful individual whose goal is that of adding value to self and consequently, to his/her African community which, in turn, returns and multiplies the value of its individual members.

Social entrepreneurship, in particular, network marketing businesses (Amway or Nuskin, for example) with affiliate on-line system and profit-sharing revenue model are opening new spaces for individual opportunity; for a self-driven, freedom-based, and yet collectively fulfilling economic interaction and exchange. These collective enterprises offer a sense of communal support system by motivation, encouragement, and training in leadership and networking skills to a freelance fledgling business person. It bridges the consumer to a member and an employee to a small-scale entrepreneur. Unlike in a traditional company, where an employee does not have much control over how fast s/he can get to the top, in the network marketing businesses, there is a sense of the open opportunities for advancement on one's own terms and at one's own pace, directed by one's motivation, all of which create a whole new mentality.^{††} Additionally, one gets to decide if they will focus solely on their own individual sales and/or their network development as a side job or if the business venture will be their sole focus.^{‡‡}

This possibility for accelerated mobility on the ladder of success and increased physical mobility facilitated by technology contributes to a sense of individual freedom while, at the same time, it enables greater connectivity and promotes a sense of shared mentality in a group of the similar-minded. And while a nomadic aspect to the modern economic participant allows him/her to preserve a sense of freelancing it simultaneously allows him/her to form affiliations with and gain supportive memberships in multiple communities. Thus, this free-associative system caters to the traditional need for belonging, which has caused, in turn, the position of the economic subject to be re-evaluated and to shift gradually from the position of a mere consumer to that of a participating member. Such position maximizes a sense of individual contribution, development of individual skills and productive ability, and equality of opportunities for profit sharing in a system that is starting to walk away from the hard-core mentality of one-upmanship and to turn more towards a communal sense of sharing of wealth in the sense of profit as well as well-being.

The concept of sharing brings us to a paradox, if it is a paradox, with which we would like to address and complement Easterlin's paradox. We posit here that *a happy individual is not a consuming individual but a giving one*. To Easterlin's question: "Imagine your income increases substantially while everyone else's stays the same — would you feel better off?" to which he says most people answered with yes, we would add: yes, but not for very long. There is a unique sense of alienation that arises at the moment when one realizes that one is unable to share events, activities, and a certain way of life with friends and family of lesser means. A giving individual is happier because logically s/he realizes the power in giving and the power in discovering that one is capable of giving. It is in the act of sharing instead of

^{††} The new business mentality that comes with a sense of no limit to one's advances can be particularly liberating in the economies which have been government directed and controlled. Network marketing businesses have become a sweeping economic phenomenon in economies in transition as well.

^{‡‡} Modern marketing networks have their model and prototype in Islamic business-making originating in Al-Andalus, Spain. The Islamic systems were characterized by contracts relied upon by merchants, who would buy and sell on commission, with starting funds loaned by investors or with money invested jointly by merchants, who were often Muslim, Christian and Jewish. Such business partnerships created and promoted bonds of kinship that enabled very effective trade networks to form over huge distances. It is important to note here that not only was a unique trading system created; it also showed the power of commerce to bridge communal divides.

hoarding that deeper satisfaction is found — at the individual as well as any organizational level. It is in and through social relations that our sense of wealth and well-being is reflected back to us and multiplied; it is in the eyes of the other that we see our esteem; it is in a productive community that we grow and prosper.

Consequently, the role of Economics of Dignity is, on the one hand, to record an already-present shift in economic needs and attitudes as well as to track certain development trends. On the other hand, it simultaneously charts, by means of intuitive understanding and creative envisioning of interdisciplinarity, a cutting-edge space of socio-economic interaction and fulfilment by taking into account a whole spectre of economic, social, psychological, and spiritual needs of the individual and the collective in an attempt to honor human potential to its fullest.

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Returning to Vico: The Role of the Individual in the Investigation of the Social Sciences*

Saulo José Casali Bahia

Member of the Board of Trustees, World Academy of Art and Science;
Professor of Law, Federal University of Bahia, Brazil; Federal Judge, Brazil

Craig Hammer, Associate Fellow, World Academy of Art and Science;
The World Bank, Washington D.C.; Senior Teaching and Research Fellow, Institute for
Human Rights, Peace and Development, Levin College of Law, University of Florida

Abstract:

*This article deals with the discussion about the extent to which methods of investigation of natural sciences can be cross applied to the social sciences, and takes the point of view of the Italian political philosopher, rhetorician, historian, and jurist Giambattista Vico. In 1708, Vico pointed out key distinctions between what he thought to be appropriate methods of analysis for the social and natural sciences and the role of the individual as an important variable in his book *De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione*. He believed in the superiority of maieutics to Cartesian logic in the application of the social sciences. To meaningfully investigate the social sciences, Vico explained that reductionist thinking was too limited; he suggested that there ought to be allowance for forms of knowledge beyond which the Cartesian process can surface. This is the path to the *verum-factum*, which is a form of comprehension achieved through truths held in the human mind as opposed to *verum-certum*, or certainties achieved through the Cartesian approach of unpacking what is true through empirical observation. Vico's analysis also provides an interesting explanation on where individual investigation fits the absence of credible rule-making institutions. For example, Brazil — a former Portuguese Colony — saw generations of Brazilians avoiding rules and precedents set by the Portuguese authority, which was oppressive and abusive. Human creativity was used to circumvent the rules, and created a culture of informal rules, which were adhered to instead of the rules that were codified.*

There is an old discussion about the extent to which methods of investigation of the natural sciences can be cross applied to the social sciences. There is a universe of argumentation on this question, which we will not attempt to replicate here. Rather, our goal is to highlight an individual point of view on the subject, that of the Italian political philosopher, rhetorician, historian, and jurist Giambattista Vico.

In 1708, Vico pointed to key distinctions between what he thought to be appropriate methods of analysis for the social and natural sciences in his *De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione*. Importantly, he suggested that this process was not necessarily about the sciences themselves; rather, it hinged on the role of individual conception.

*The views expressed are those of the authors and do not represent those of The World Bank Group or its Board of Directors.

In taking up ways of knowing generally, as well as how we might understand the natural and social sciences in particular, Vico pointed to the role of the individual as an important variable. He reminded us that we ignore the lessons of the ancients at our peril — Vico eschewed reductionist thinking for the Greek and Roman traditions — and encouraged us to rely on rhetoric as a tool which we might use to comprehend the social and natural sciences.

Vico clearly believed in the superiority of maieutics to Cartesian logic in the application of the social sciences. The Cartesian method describes the world through observation, to point to what is systemic and predictable; it comprises precise labels and descriptions that can explain processes and point to results. But Vico argued that this method cannot meaningfully be applied to social sciences.

In the *De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia* (1710), Vico famously argued that:

[...] to introduce geometrical method into practical life is 'like trying to go mad with the rules of reason,' attempting to proceed by a straight line among the tortuosities of life, as though human affairs were not ruled by capriciousness, temerity, opportunity, and chance. Similarly, to arrange a political speech according to the precepts of geometrical method is equivalent to stripping it of any acute remarks and to uttering nothing but pedestrian lines of argument.

Vico's masterwork, *Scienza Nuova*, was an extremely forward-thinking treatise which cut across all the social sciences. To meaningfully investigate the social sciences, Vico explained, reductionist thinking is too limited; he suggested that there ought to be allowance for forms of knowledge beyond which the Cartesian process can surface. This is the path to the *verum-factum*, which, Vico explained, is a form of comprehension achieved through truths held in the human mind as opposed to *verum-certum*, or certainties achieved through the Cartesian approach of unpacking what is true through empirical observation.

This is an important distinction; Vico explains that knowledge of the *verum-factum* can only extend to what an individual has him- or herself created, from buildings and computers to math and science. The role of the individual and the importance of individual investigation are thus central to what is a priori truth. This is in sharp contrast to the Cartesian approach of searching out and documenting what is objectively 'true'.

In explaining the process of human investigation and the role of the individual, Vico may have been channeling Aristotle, who in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, draws a line between *phronesis* (practical wisdom, which *cannot* be extrapolated into general laws) and *episteme* (knowledge through scientific method, which *can* be extrapolated into general laws).

To make these notions a bit more palatable, the social sciences prefer designations like 'credible' and 'not-credible' or 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable'. This leaves room for the *sensus communis*. As Aristotle suggested in *Topics*, the consensus consists in "those opinions accepted by everyone, or by the majority, or by the wise and among the wise, by all or most of them, or by those who are the most notable and having the highest reputation."

Consensus is an exercise in aligned individual creativity. It can agree and comport with or disagree and diverge from a rule-making authority. Vico makes the point that individuals have long taken the process of investigation into their own hands to achieve rules that are

more credible and acceptable. Vico recognized this as a pattern across societies: that as individual minds form, a series of similar fundamental priorities for civil life takes shape. His *Sinopsi del diritto universale* — essentially the common denominator of his *De universi juris uno principio et fine uno liber unus* [1720]; *De constantia iurisprudentis liber alter* [1721]; and *Notae in duos libros* [1722] — posits that all law comes from God as *diritto* — essentially a divine meta-architecture of truth and related rules — which is interpreted (either correctly or incorrectly) by individuals, rendering it *legge*. Vico focused on the consistency with which God’s providence has surfaced by different individuals’ acceptance of natural law and the execution of civil law; he complemented this analysis with a review of how various societies have interpreted these rules.

Vico’s analysis also provides an interesting explanation of where individual investigation fits the absence of credible rule-making institutions. For example, Brazil — a former Portuguese Colony — saw generations of Brazilians avoiding rules and precedents set by the Portuguese authority, which was oppressive and abusive. Human creativity was used to circumvent the rules. This divergence from what was then authority became normative, and helped to create a culture of informal rules which were adhered to instead of what was codified. A term of art was even ascribed to this behavior: the “*jeitinho*” (in English, “an untranslatable term that corresponds roughly to a ‘knack’, ‘twist’, ‘way’ or ‘fix’,” according to Rosenn, 1971). Under the *Diritto universale*, the rules are set by the people, and what their consciences dictate.

Ultimately, Vico’s views on the impracticality of Cartesian logic for the social sciences have not dissuaded generations of scholars from attempting to apply reductionist thinking to the field. The human commitment to so-called ‘geometric thinking’ is indeed strong. A particularly problematic result is legal positivism, which holds that the law is a closed system, logically organized, with hierarchical rules — essentially distilling law into a set of simple concepts to be combined and recombined to suit particular circumstances. Another byproduct is legal realism — a rejection of the positivistic conception of the scientific method — which holds that a legal decision will be made only by the discretionary power of the decision-maker. This approach glosses over the need for rationality, and generally rejects the role of consensus established between participants in a discourse as too close to positivism.

Virtus in medium est explained the ancients. Vico saw that the humanist tradition could accommodate logic, but suggested that meaningful investigation by individuals could be achieved through triangulation of theological, philosophical, and philological investigations to surface knowledge given through divine providence, through use of imagination and creativity (as opposed to Cartesian analysis), and by analysis of history, perhaps man’s ultimate source of knowledge. This seems like a reasonable middle ground between the dogmatic conceptual approach of the positivists and the hyper-contextual empirical subjectivism of the realists.

Vico was a man centuries ahead of his time whose genius was sadly not recognized by the majority of his contemporaries. In a crushing bit of irony, positivism ruined his funeral: the Marquis of Villarosa (who posthumously published Vico’s autobiography) relates that at Vico’s funeral, a dispute broke out among attendees as to which group was permitted to carry Vico’s coffin to his final resting place; precedent was cited, rules were reviewed, but no clear

answer was ascertained, and so the attendees simply abandoned his corpse.

Thankfully, Vico's genius was eventually recognized, and his insights have since achieved more reverential treatment. His emphasis on the role of the individual in the world — as not just a part of it, but as constantly transforming it — has taken our conceptions of what it means to investigate the social sciences at a far higher level.

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The Heart of the Humanities

Ullica Segerstrale

Fellow, World Academy of Art and Science;
Director, Camras Scholars Program, Illinois Institute of Technology, USA

Abstract:

Having enjoyed a leading academic position, the Humanities have increasingly been on the defensive against the dominant and unified natural sciences. In this situation, what could unify the Humanities and strengthen their social position? An obvious strategy would be to respond to an urgent global need for value discourse. The Humanities are in the perfect position to address those aspects of the human experience that the natural sciences are simply unqualified to handle, such as moral values, human understanding, aesthetics, and ethics. Drawing on their rich heritage and hermeneutic skills, the Humanities could try to identify some important values or principles that seem to have traditionally characterized them, and thus reconstruct their own underlying common core, or “heart” — just as the sciences are seemingly united around a particular (limited) “scientific attitude”. This core value would help unite the academically heterogeneous Humanities (or Geisteswissenschaften or “Human Sciences”). Thus united, the Humanities might assume a role as the obvious leader of a needed general social discourse about values (which social goals do “we” want to pursue, and why?), and claim their rightful status as a socially indispensable counterpart to the natural sciences.

The Need for a Value Discourse

I believe most people would agree that mankind is facing a major crisis. The crisis has to do with values. Particularly, in the industrialized countries there seems to exist a value gap of sorts, a gap that when discovered is quickly filled with more activity or technological gadgetry or video games. Where is the world going? It seems that as we are being more and more rushed and pushed along by ever emerging technologies, there is less and less time to think and reflect — for everybody. And this is happening on a global scale. Meanwhile, one can really perceive a change of tradition when it comes to things that an earlier generation considered important. The style of media has changed. Strange things are happening now, with people willingly giving up more of their privacy (or not so willingly — think, for instance, of Facebook and its default privacy settings, which need to be actively changed to really make the account private).

In this situation, we need to ask a question about values. What are the basic values important for human existence? Which values should we follow in key decisions on matters that affect groups of people or have a global impact? Which values do we want to emphasize in the education of new generations? Instead of letting things just happen, we need to do something.

I agree with the German social philosopher Jurgen Habermas, who for a long time has observed this kind of phenomenon. He makes an important distinction between two kinds of

rationality: instrumental rationality and value rationality. Our modern societies are functioning mostly at the instrumental rational level — finding means to satisfy certain goals. But what is badly needed is a discussion about what the goals ought to be — what ends do we think are rational from the point of view of human values. It is this kind of discourse that Habermas sees as currently “dominated” by power and politics, and also more indirectly by the instrumental considerations connected to science and technology. To be able to have a free discussion, or “rational discourse”, then, what is needed is a situation where different voices can make themselves heard in a democratic way as they are presenting their arguments (which are always expected to be justifiable). No power pressure is allowed; what wins is simply “the better argument”. Only with this type of model will we be able to have a fair and open discourse about where the society should be going, or about the values that individuals think ought to guide society.¹

Why the Humanities is the right place

Now, is there such a place, even hypothetically, for this kind of discussion? It would need to be a place which is not obviously dominated by social or political power interests, a place where discourse is the typical form of interaction, and where human values in various forms represent an accepted and natural topic of discussion. I would say that on the face of it, the Humanities look like a very good fit! Not only do they have a long tradition of discussion and disputation, but they are a veritable treasure trove when it comes to identifying important candidates for values, since they have the ability to draw on among others the Classical tradition, the Renaissance Humanist tradition, and the Enlightenment.

Right now, however, the Humanities are in their own kind of crisis, both in terms of identity and of legitimacy. What are the Humanities, and why are they classified together under this name? Is it a matter of tradition that certain fields “count” as the Humanities, or is there some shared intellectual approach or agenda? What good are the Humanities? Why do they exist? This latter question was being debated in March this year at a huge forum at Abo Akademi University in Finland where I happened to be visiting giving a crash course for doctoral students in the Human Sciences. The title was (in Swedish), “*Vem behover Humanvetenskaperna?*” Who needs the Humanities? I had expected the speakers to ardently extol the virtues of the Humanities, but I cannot recall many interesting things that were said. The speakers seemed uninspired. The attitude soon became defensive rather than assertive. Some afterwards concluded this had been a real non-discussion. A student later told me that a similar sense of lack of legitimacy is being conveyed by their professors in different subjects, and that the students had internalized this general feeling from them!

But could this value discourse not take place in some other branch of academia?

Why, for instance, is science not having one? A big obstacle for sure is that science is concerned with knowledge (episteme) and is dependent on the State and most recently industry for funding. A value discourse is not part of the standard scientific self-perception. What counts in science, and what is rewarded, is a contribution to knowledge. Science’s distancing of itself from values has a long tradition. In fact, we know that value concerns were actively eliminated from the discussion in at least one early academy, the English Royal Society founded in the 1660s. In exchange for sponsorship by the King after tumultuous political

times, that society had to promise not to “meddle” with politics, metaphysics, religion, and a whole list of other things.

Being ethical or even careful to correct your own errors before you publish is not formally rewarded in science. The first discoverer gets the credit, not the runner up, even if he/she has taken time to check (for the benefit of all) that his/her product is error-free. So scientists take their chances. Competition does encourage sloppy research, because it is more important to be first rather than a conscientious second. Moreover, science is increasingly being steered from the top — the funding agencies. For example, look at the intense push for nano research recently from the United States’ National Science Foundation.

The same goes for the results of the research. There has typically been no Hippocratic Oath for scientists when it comes to the results of their research, which has been at the base of a number of controversies, especially in the United States. Also, until recently, government grants in the United States were given based solely on the intellectual merits of the research proposal. Lately, though, any submitted proposal requires a justification for both intellectual and social merit. Note, however, that the social merits are not typically required to be of the broad “benefit for humanity” type, but rather at the level of giving employment to a few graduate students, or having a particular limited impact. Also, I am not sure that the proposal writer is required to explicitly consider the potential harm his/her research may cause. The situation is getting trickier as the involvement between industry and science becomes increasingly entangled.²

The Responsibility of Scientists – A Recurring Issue

This moral/ethical limitation of science, though, has been keenly felt by some scientists, who have attempted to redefine the situation and actually introduce concerns about the consequences of scientific research. There were, for instance, the atomic physicists after World War II, and those who sought a moratorium on “recombinant DNA” research (the beginning of genetic engineering) in 1974. The consideration of hypothetical consequences resulted in enhanced lab security with regard to E. Coli. Also, after World War II, an earlier generation of human geneticists practiced self-censorship in the form of a UNESCO statement in 1952, which discouraged the pursuit of anything but medical genetics. (Before the war, various traits of human groups and races had been compared).³

The “nature-nurture” controversies in the second part of the 20th century, again, were interesting examples of some scientists attempting to actively introduce moral/political concerns into science. It was done, however, in the form of individual scientists accusing other scientists of racism and sexism. The critics said that sociobiology, IQ research and similar fields ideologically influenced “bad science”; they saw themselves as weeders. Additionally, weeders felt that they had to personally weed out bad science so that it would not cause harm merely by being around. Planters, traditional scientists, responded by just dismissing these critics as “Marxists” and went on doing what they saw as useful research.⁴

This general division of scientists into two camps seems to be continuing. In 2011, a philosopher, Heather Douglas, suggested in an article in *The Scientist* that when it comes to foreseeable consequences of their work, scientists ought to be held responsible for the same standards of responsibility as ordinary citizens. Some liked what she said, but others severely

attacked her in an online “blog” exchange about her article. Her point was, in fact, seen as “illegal” self-censorship by some traditional scientists. For them, science was supposed to produce useful knowledge, while the responsibility lay with the user of this knowledge.⁵

Science Out of Bounds

Now, the question is who made this point about useful knowledge? That was the Englishman Francis Bacon, who in the 1600s imagined an idealized international scientific community, where scientists would be accumulating useful knowledge together. He was the one who coined the expression “knowledge is power”. But this “father of empirical science” (at least in the English tradition) was not a naïve inductivist — he also warned about a set of “idols” that may corrupt the scientific mind: idols of the cave, idols of the tribe, idols of the market place, and idols of the theater. He had in mind natural science, which equals “science” in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and largely saw science as fact-gathering, based on which more universal statements could be made and laws and theories developed.*

Bacon may have worried primarily about distorting the mind of the individual scientist, but he, in fact, addressed some basic problems that science as a community has later tried to cope with by establishing a set of “scientific control systems”: peer review of grant applications, referee review of submitted journal manuscripts, and the ultimate control over the replication of results. These systems are supra individual and agreed upon by scientists. They do help clear out some potential garbage (but not all), and therefore, help guarantee relatively reliable knowledge. These systems, combined with the implicitly shared system of norms for science, as well as the reductionist method and the very nature of the studied material (“it doesn’t speak back”), make for a shared sense of science for natural scientists. (It is not perfect or shared in detail, but perhaps one could say, for instance, that most scientists would have little difficulty agreeing that a particular piece of research would not count as science). Most importantly, scientists believe that there are underlying, universal patterns or laws, and are set to finding them. This ambition is an important part of the scientific attitude, as is the confidence that the production of useful knowledge is a socially important and justly rewarded activity.†

In fact, science is so important today that it is used as an arbiter also with regard to issues that go far beyond it. In the minds of many people, factual statements are taken as automatically implying value judgments. This was seen, for instance, in the sociobiology debate that raged in the last quarter of the 20th century with regard to biological facts about humans. (For instance, findings about sex differences between males and females have created and continue to create great upheaval in the United States, largely because it is

* In books such as *Novum Organum*. Incidentally, although I am here using the terms ‘science’ and ‘scientists’, nobody did so in the 1600s. Science was called ‘natural philosophy’ and scientists ‘natural philosophers’.

† Part of the scientific attitude involves what the “father of sociology of science”, Robert Merton, called the “ethos” of science. This is an interesting model of an attempt to extract from the historical material about an academic field and its underlying values. Merton derived his famous four basic norms through reading primarily such things as various documents, letters, and autobiographies. Sociologically, scientists are described as if they followed a set of four principles keeping them on the right course. These form the acronym CUDOS: Communalism (public sharing of information, not keeping things private), Universalism (paying attention solely to the merit of someone’s science, not considering nationality, sex, or other characteristics), Disinterestedness (dedication only to finding the truth, not considering other interests of various kinds), and, finally, Organized Skepticism (willingness to abandon cherished views in favor of new scientific evidence). (R. Merton: “The normative structure of science”. In R. Merton, *The Sociology of Science*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1973. pp. 267-278). In practice, of course, scientists do not always follow these norms; they act more as general guidelines. Still, there is something to these principles. At the very least one might claim that if norms of this nature were not followed, science as we know it might have a hard time existing. Today, however, it seems that these norms are being increasingly deviated from or modified as science gets more involved with industry, patenting, and proprietary knowledge, see reference in Note [2].

believed that any suggested sex differences will have dangerous social implications — at the psychological, moral or policy level).⁶

But even more ironically, even when it comes to such obviously humanistically relevant questions as “What does it mean to be human?” the initiative today seems to be with the sciences. This question is being examined in relation to a number of different research topics today, for instance, such things as “Can robots have human feelings?” or “What types of human enhancement are acceptable for us to still call something human?” When the genome project was finished in 2000, lots of people were led to believe that humanity had found out “the very essence of humanity” (or however James Watson and other promoters formulated it at the time). But the question is rather, what does it mean to be human? What is really the human essence? These are the kinds of things that humanists have been pondering about for a long time. (In this case, a political scientist of the old school, youngish Francis Fukuyama, in his *Our Posthuman Future*, tried to tackle these and other matters of technological progress in relation to humans).⁷

And the value discourse about human nature continues today, promoted by scientists! Much has been made recently of such things as altruism and cooperation as being behaviors that are deeply grounded biologically and evolutionarily — say, based on hypothetical “altruistic genes”, or through the physiological mechanisms of empathy and mirror neurons — and demonstrable, say, by comparative primate studies and laboratory experiments. This has been argued by scientists for the last forty years or so.[‡]

Regaining the Initiative

OK, so altruism and cooperation are possible, and now we know the infrastructure or mechanism for it, too. Good. But their biological basis does not necessarily point to the value of these behaviors, or legitimize them. This must be done on other grounds, and those grounds lie outside the sciences. Today, however, we may have veered into treating natural explanations as important value arguments because of the power of science (“it has been scientifically proven”), and the relative weakness — or unassertiveness — of the Humanities and of organized religion, and perhaps because of our tendency to take science over-seriously as a guideline for action.

My point is that it is the Humanities, not science, that would seem to be the natural place for discussion about what kinds of issues and values, society should have (and impart to the next generation). In fact, I believe this is exactly something that should be recognized and socially rewarded as an important social function of the Humanities (in addition, of course, to the traditional scholarly research of the Humanities).

So, I would like to say: “Hey, Humanities, get your act together and figure out how you can speak together with a strong voice! You are part of an academic institution which is not yet totally dominated by government funding agencies or private industry (unlike science),

‡ In the 1960s, the British evolutionist William D. (Bill) Hamilton (“Darwin of the 20th century”) was able to mathematically demonstrate that altruism as a behavioral trait could in fact be a product of evolution. (This would happen if the beneficiary of an altruistic act had genes in common with the donor - in other words, typically, but not necessarily, a relative. This was explained in a popular manner in *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins, a book that was much misunderstood and even thought to be advocating human selfishness!). Since the 1980s, “evolutionary game theory”, beginning with Robert Axelrod and William Hamilton’s “The Evolution of Cooperation” (*Science*, vol. 211, 1981, pp. 1390-1396) has explored various situations under which cooperation would be the natural chosen “strategy” both for humans and animals. For more details on Hamilton and his scientific quest, see U. Segerstrale, *Nature’s Oracle: The Life and Work of William D. Hamilton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a recent discussion of empathy and the role of mirror neurons, see Frans De Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature’s Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009).

and you have a long tradition of deep thought and self-reflection. Don't forget that Humanities is the place science emerged from. It was only later that science became more specialized and deliberately shed its connection to ethics and social values (a connection still visible, for instance, during the scientific movement in early modern England)." The Humanities need to regain their rightful place as equal partners with the natural sciences. They possess and can generate knowledge and discourse that are complementary to the natural sciences — in other words, furnish the part of the social discourse about the human experience that is currently missing.

Abandoning the “Two Cultures” Talk

All this “Two Cultures” talk, existing ever since 1959 and C. P. Snow's famous book *The Two Cultures*, has been particularly detrimental to the Humanities. This kind of talk has only re-emphasized the socially favored position of the natural sciences after the Second World War and, conversely, led to various protests and “anti-science” movements and attempts to undermine science (e.g., the Ideologiekritik of the Critical School of the 1960s and 1970s, and later various postmodernist, constructivist and relativist criticisms). More recently in the “Science Wars” in the mid-1990s, some declared science as nothing but a myth, comparable to tribal beliefs, not having any special epistemological status. This treatment of science actually made some natural scientists nervous with regard to research funding and students' interest in science, but also because a deep belief was being threatened.⁸

I believe that this Two Cultures talk has to stop. It was probably something of a flip statement already from the beginning and ever since, it has invited wrong attitudes on both sides. Snow may or may not have seriously suggested that the Humanists should learn thermodynamics; in any case, the Humanities should simply stop comparing itself to the natural sciences because it can't win or assert itself that way. The situation is pre-rigged from the beginning. Humanists should instead be doing what they ought to be doing, and what they can do well, and that is to assert themselves in an area that is legitimately their own. And that area has to do with the human experience and with values — especially those values that we consider important and wish to perpetuate and promote. Those need to be identified and agreed upon, and the Humanities can help in this regard.

The Two Cultures talk just leads to silly one-upmanship or one-downmanship, such as Humanists saying that science cannot function without relying on language and agreement about the meaning of words. See! Language and hermeneutics are prior to science! (I know how great some humanists and social scientists felt listening to a guest lecture by Karl-Otto Apel in Helsinki in the 1970s). Or because Kuhn said that paradigms change, science has no foundation but is just a Colossus on clay feet! See! This means they are not more scientific than the social sciences! (This was the reaction of many humanists and social scientists in the 1970s against the smugness of the natural sciences). And later there was the postmodern claim that science is nothing but a story. And so on, in every new attempt to put down natural science.

The Humanities in charge

When it comes to proposing potential candidates for values to consider for the future social discourse, the Humanities have a treasure trove of resources: all the heritage from the

Classics to the Renaissance to the Enlightenment — and more, including important teachings from other cultures and the great religions. The Humanities are, in principle, able to draw on so many traditions. One way to go might be to collect examples from literature, say, and stories from history — maybe in a form similar to Biblical parables. Because the human mind indeed seems particularly receptive to story-telling (as cognitive scientists have found). Story-telling works as a mnemonic. Also social psychology knows the worth of a single vivid example, because it sticks in the mind much better than any “scientific-seeming” statistical overview.

Is there within the humanities some tradition similar to the one in the natural sciences, that is, one striving for unity around some common principles? I believe that finding universal principles and values would be important for two reasons. Not only could this be the subject of discussion in a further social discourse (as suggested above), but they would also be important for the Humanities themselves, helping them present a unified front in their attempt to reclaim their academic status in relation to the natural sciences. The answer is yes. I am thinking in the first place of the Enlightenment tradition and the idea of Reason — which of course is typically regarded as the thing that makes us uniquely human in the first place. There is the idea of value rationality. As mentioned, the Humanities could help foster a type of rational discourse, which would lead to the identification and selection of a set of core values that we want to pursue and implement in such things as education. Maybe another set of values could be identified, relating to things that we do not appreciate and that we find harmful and want to discourage? This may, in fact, be easier to agree with.

I believe that the Humanities needs to organize itself as a complement to natural science and speak with a wise voice when it comes to such things as what it means to be human. The sciences are currently making inroads into the human sciences, “explaining” everything — even the understanding that is going on among people (empathy, mirror neurons). All this is fascinating, but it cannot compensate for the feelings and experiences that individuals have and can describe, and which lie by definition outside science, because they are subjective and individual.

We cannot leave the initiative to the natural scientists, because the scientists are simply not trained to take on all types of discussion about what it means to be human. As noted, scientists are by definition operating in an explanatory, universal law-seeking mode.

At the same time, because scientists are so visibly successful in their own realm, the debate may easily end up taking place completely within the scientific realm between “liberal” and “conservative” scientists rather than between scientists and humanists (or completely within the realm of the Humanities), and this may easily be regarded as the discussion.

A Small Excursion: The Problem of Terminology

Incidentally, what is the reason for certain fields to be classified as belonging to the Humanities? Is it stemming from some now obsolete old tradition? Is it merely a convenient administrative category for “everything that is NOT natural science or engineering”? And what is the reason for certain fields to be counted as belonging to the Humanities, rather than the social sciences? (History, for instance, sometimes counts as a social science. In any case, the social sciences are typically mixed up with Humanities by many natural scientists

and engineers...). But to take things further — and this is important — *Wissenschaft* in German and ‘science’ in Europe has a much broader meaning than ‘science’ in the English/Anglo-Saxon tradition, where ‘science’ means exclusively Natural Science. In that tradition, there is no place in ‘science’ for the *Geisteswissenschaften*, which in Europe counts as part of science. And how do we translate *Geisteswissenschaften*? ‘Human Sciences’, perhaps, or Humanities? In England and America, social science, which is sometimes partly admitted to the scientific club, is in its own category, ‘Social Science’ — that is, not part of ‘science’, which is strictly natural science. Also, what does it actually mean to be a humanist? Is it only someone who studies the Humanities or the Human Sciences? Would it be possible to count as a humanist anybody who calls him/herself a humanist — from whatever academic field he/she happens to come (including science)? I believe that there needs to be a serious parallel discussion about terminology — enough to clarify what one is talking about. Still, the important thing here is the discussion about values, which I will now return to.

Values for the Humanities

The Humanities have quite a menu of potential values to pick from. Are there perhaps some major types of values that one can identify? Well, there is the value of individuality, creativity and initiative — this is a celebration of the uniqueness of individuals and their expression of that uniqueness. Then there is the value that comes from belonging to some kind of entity — the value of identity (actually necessary for supporting the strong sense of self that can lead to the independent individual expression just mentioned). And then there are values that have the capability of being “universalizable” and agreed upon, in principle, by all. For instance, Christianity has a set of such values, codified as the Ten Commandments.

I realize that it may seem difficult for some humanists to imagine working on value identification and value consensus. Many humanists may be attracted to the Humanities rather than the natural sciences exactly for the reason that these are not like the natural sciences. These persons would not be thrilled by universal patterns or truths, but rather take a delight in the opposite — the out-of-the ordinary, the unique. They would emphasize the multifacetedness of human nature, human creativity, and the power of the unique individual. To the extent they could agree about these kinds of general criteria, it would seem however that a set of general principles could emerge.

I have suggested that the Humanities would consider taking on the momentous task of helping humanity identify its most important and enduring values by providing suitable value candidates and potential criteria for selection and other preparatory measures for a serious discourse about values. How can such a discourse be conducted in practice? One of the aims for sure would be to reach a broad consensus. Is this possible for people in such a widely disparate area as the Humanities? What gives me hope that some fundamental values (for the Humanities, for humankind) can actually be agreed upon is a recent study by Harvard Professor Michelle Lamont of the consensus forming process on peer review panels for grant proposals. She has documented how there in these complicated discussions emerges a wish to reach consensus and how an interesting moral type of spirit appears to prevail (as a complement to the discussion about the proposals’ technical merit). I myself have had a very similar experience from sitting on a number of interdisciplinary grant review panels at the National Science Foundation in Washington.⁹

An Invitation to Academic Activism

There is an interesting suggestion for reforming the social sciences that could be adapted for the Humanities. Bengt Flyvbjerg, a Danish social scientist, has suggested that the trouble started with the very wish to imitate the natural sciences. The social sciences should never have been brought into this losing proposition! He goes one interesting step deeper, all the way back to the ancient Greeks and their view of virtue. The natural sciences initially chose to pursue a quite limited perspective — Plato’s idea of episteme (theoretical knowledge), which they saw as the most important virtue, rather than valuing the broader set of virtues suggested by Aristotle — episteme, techne, and phronesis — that is, a wider spectrum of what it takes to lead one’s life as a human (techne is know-how, the set of skills possessed by artists, architects, engineers, etc.; phronesis is sometimes translated as “prudence” — social know-how, how to go about things to achieve a certain goal).¹⁰

Since under the current model the social sciences will really never be able to measure up to the natural science model because they deal with unpredictable human beings, Flyvbjerg suggests that they reconsider what model they should actually be following. What do the social sciences want to accomplish, and how can they get there? Flyvbjerg suggests that the social sciences choose Aristotle’s virtue of phronesis instead of Plato’s limited episteme, that is, reflexive and strategic goal-oriented action. Phronesis can be defined as “deliberation about values with reference to praxis”. It considers all kinds of factors, including the very practical question of how to achieve one’s goal in the view of prevailing power relations, which is the typical problem for social scientists wanting to affect society. As it is now, their research may just be ignored.

This idea is rather militant and I like it. It may also be applicable to at least part of the Humanities. And to those younger humanists who want to do something, but have so far been caught up in the postmodern trend, I would like to say the following: you have taken on a very difficult and challenging task, which is largely epistemological. You of course want to be radical and innovative, but you are, after all, following in the footsteps of your postmodern mentor. How much more radical can you be? How would it be to start a new paradigm instead, a paradigm emphasizing values and ethics rather than epistemology, and try to tackle this huge challenge of helping identify candidates for values, leading a social discourse, and engaging in consensus building around fundamental values? You would help the Humanities rise to their rightful place as complementary to the natural sciences, and re-emerge as not only socially useful but socially indispensable. How about that, Francis Bacon? Eat your hat, C. P. Snow.

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