

## **THE PEDAGOGICAL STRENGTH OF A CHRISTIAN METHODOLOGY IN PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORIO- GRAPHY**

The kinds of problems intrinsic to historiography and to philosophical historiography in particular are compounded when the question must be settled on how to teach the history of philosophy. For then, if one's methodology for philosophical historiography is defective, simplistic or indecisive on the crucial matters, its exercise in the classroom will botch the philosophical development of a whole new generation.

I am persuaded that the christian stuffings to the philosophical historiography initiated by Vollenhoven<sup>1</sup> provides a prospective student and instructor with important pedagogical advantages. Unfortunately, Vollenhoven's own specialized work in analyzing pre-Socratic fragments<sup>2</sup> and the several doctoral dissertations concluded under his tutelage<sup>3</sup> are poor places to look for models on how to begin teaching the history of philosophy.<sup>4</sup> And to try to press the full weight of Vollenhoven's refined categories down upon the beginning student would be a little bit like encumbering the young David with Saul's professional armour. Critics unsympathetic to the sureness and fine analysis of such a Christian historiographic approach in teaching philosophy have sometimes stigmatized the attempt as putting tools for brain surgery into the hands of high school graduates who are not yet able to identify which person in the room needs the operation.

But on this occasion of honoring my colleague Prof Dr J A L Taljaard, I should like to enunciate what seems to me to be the redeeming principle for teaching christianly the history of philosophy, demonstrate its method with an extended illustration, and then point up the pedagogical strengths of using this christian methodology in philosophical historiography.

### **INCAPSULATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORIO- GRAPHIC STANDARDS WITHIN PEDAGOGICAL NORMS**

The struggle of modern historiography to acquit itself as a science, understood as a technical means for collecting

exact data freed from traditional prejudices, and at the same time to proffer an integrated overview of what is truly happening: that struggle of some 300 years is truly instructive for checking out the task of christian historiography.<sup>5</sup> The Christian may certainly take his cue from the current status of Western historiography, but not his problematics.

A widespread "Pyrrhonism" toward scholastic precepts, as Emile Bréhier puts it, carried on in the flush of Galileo's success, began to forge with Descartes and Spinoza a kind of conceptual iconoclasm which the Scientialistic mind of the seventeenth century thought was "critical."<sup>6</sup> Concern for such "critical rigour modulated in the eighteenth century, under the ruling spirit of "Edify Humanity!" to a passion for dictionaries and compendia of culture — while the overarching historiographic girder of providence got thoroughly secularized into Progress. Subsequent nineteenth century attempts by Hegel and Ranke to assimilate past historians' accomplishments and to raise compilations of accurate detail and visionary optimism (in the face of Positivistic preachments on facticity) to the status of a critically constructed account of what actually took place somewhere: that cumulative (Neo-Idealistic) format became the working legacy of Toynbee and lesser general historians.

For our purposes, I am assuming that the christian historiographic method developed by Vollenhoven for expositing the history of philosophy has biblically reformed the directional set of this history of historiography and basically resolves the structural dilemmas which plagued it.<sup>7</sup>

Rejected is the implicit, soritical argument that for historiography to be professionally respectable it must be "critically" scientific, which entails it must be verifiably empirical rather than speculative, which necessitates one rest with either "technical histories" or, perhaps, the general historian may "add" his evaluative dimension. Instead, I have argued that Vollenhoven's categories have scientific precision and an intrinsically christian bite, which nevertheless encourages the original texts to confront the historian of philosophy in their own terms.<sup>8</sup> Although "evidence" is a crucial constitutive element in every historian's conclusion, "evidence" may never pre-

sume to be a factor in the human historiographer's perspectival apriori, on pain of religious weaseling.<sup>9</sup> Vollenhoven has shown that historiography of philosophy can be "scientific", while rejecting the covertly dogmatic neutrality proposed by the secular scientism which set the stage for so much of modern historiography.

Vollenhoven's tack of examining the development of strictly philosophical matters, within typical philosophical responses to creational meaning, for his history of philosophy, also has the makings of bringing peace to what Gundolf calls the "border feuds" in the history of historiography, as to whether historiography be a special science or essentially philosophy, and to what Bréhier pinpoints as the struggle to relate the historical "fact that" and the philosophical "truth of" certain ideas in the historiography of philosophy.<sup>10</sup> History — the discipline of determining, with systematic exactitude what was "historical" about certain events ensuing in the unfolding of creation and culture — in my judgment, is an inter-relational science, similar to philosophy. The *Gegenstand* of historical investigation — "significant change" or "interlinking formative alteration" — will always give an encyclopedic cachet to historical research; but historical study can be practiced by professional specialists, just like philosophy, without thereby turning, "historical" into a prime (modal) aspect of reality fit for a restricted, special scientific abstraction. It is true that historiography, the chronicling of results achieved by historical analysis, translates — as all writing does which is stylefully opened up — the science product into literature, whether grand or pedestrian, but that does not undo the original scientific precision of historical analysis, blur its inter-relational focus, convert it from history (focused on developmental, interlinking meaning) into philosophy (focused on structural, inter-relational meaning), or suddenly endow it with the character of true revelation!" Vollenhoven's historiographic method incorporates, as I understand it, the sound position that historiography articulates the fallible knowledge of an inter-relational science, which will be denatured if it is dissolved either into an "empirical science" (à la Positivism) or into philosophy (à la Neo-Idealism).

But right now, assuming a measure of settledness on christian historiography of philosophy, with Vollen-

hoven's beginnings as the working method, our question is: how can such a scientifically exacting philosophical historiographic method be made to serve *teaching* the history of philosophy?

The key, I think, is the simple wisdom of incapsulating the scientifically exacting method within pedagogical norms. That does not mean one relaxes scientific precision and uses a meat cleaver instead of a scalpel; but the principle of incapsulation means here that scientific features give way to pedagogical considerations which take a superintending priority.

For example: scientific analysis requires definite categories with fixed meanings, univocal language (not to say jargon), and a proficient expert who executes the complicated examination with refinement, exhaustiveness and dispatch. But good teaching starts with questions that surprise and stimulate wondering in the student; good teaching is playful, earthy, illustrational, until the student's imagination is aroused and he is willing to search-along as an apprentice and begin to research carefully with the repetition that develops skill and analytic precision. Therefore, somehow the firm philosophic historiographic categories of Monism, Dualism and their important varieties, must be clothed in existential flexibility for the classroom. Terms like Universalism, Individualism and Macro-microcosmoi motif must have their colourless scientific mark take on the exciting color of clues leading to new insights. Scientific determinations like Subjectivism, Objectivism and Realism must keep their specially defined, analytic sharpness, but again, adopt a tentative — not hesitant! — approximating elasticity. Teaching the history of philosophy should have the temper of a thorough medical examination and prognosis of the patient's health. But without incapsulation of the historiographic analysis within the pedagogical norms of surprise and apprentice-like detecting, you will only get an autopsy.

Or, to develop the same point further: scientific analysis is in principle conceptually definitive, and its method is satisfied with a patient step by factual step, identifying sort of knowledge. But knowledge that would come across live in the classroom must have the lurch of being by nature unfinished, and at the same time show some silhouetted *Gestalt* integrating the learning in process.

Scientific knowledge has a forbidding authority, dissects things and relates abstractly: pedagogically interesting knowledge invites, playfully engages others, provisionally juxtaposes things and carries on quasi-dramatically.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, history of philosophy should not be taught in the way of medieval, disputational indoctrination (*Utrum . . . sit, ad primum, ad secundum, sed contra, respondeo . . . ad primum. ad secundum . . .*), nor in the manner of professional journal articles where you state your concluding thesis first, parcel out your arguments, and close *Q E D*. Nothing is more tedious in the classroom than logical conclusiveness, even if banked by anecdotal persiflage and sophistic wit. So philosophic historiographic analysis of a certain philosophy must bring about limited mastery of its philosophical crux, in its culturally blooded setting, with the kind of simplification that encourages further exploration. Without incapsulation of the analysis within the pedagogical norms of patterning-open-for-further-response, history of philosophy will strike a student as cut and dried rather than as a source to be mined for healing knowledge.

Good teachers in the history of philosophy, of course, come in all kinds of wrappers, and it is true that a sound pedagogical method does not guarantee sound teaching any more than good liturgical principles protect worship from uninspired liturgetes. But it would be a headstart for normative, christian teaching of the history of philosophy, if we became thoroughly conscious and convinced of the fact that the rightful scientific edge of philosophical historiography must be maintained *and bound* by pedagogical norms — this is necessary, legitimate and desirable for professionally respectable teaching of the history of philosophy. While this principle of incapsulation may be simple wisdom, deep imaginative inventiveness is called for to bring it off responsibly with unformed students.

The illustration which follows does not pretend to exemplify a full-fledged model of christian pedagogy, and it does not propose to capture the push-and-pull élan of live persons engaged in classroom learning, the way a Platonic dialogue tries to do it. This somewhat bookish vignette (because written) means to exhibit the integrity and promise of pedagogically incapsulated, christian philosophical historiography, suggesting how one might go

about it in the classroom in a way that avoids the sterilizing stare of manuals meant to help prospective teachers.

**ILLUSTRATION: A CERTAIN PHILOSOPHICAL NEIGHBOURHOOD OF GENETICISTIC, CONTRADICTORY MONISM**

About the time B C when the Lord God Yahweh was teaching the children of Israel that if they do their daily work responsively to His Word they will certainly have an exciting future,<sup>13</sup> over in Egyptland ethnic reflection held a consensus that there is nothing new under the sun. An everlasting, fixed order — MA'AT — kept the overflowing Nile and the third and fourth generations of men in a recurrent cycle with changeless patterns. And it was wisdom, according to the official scribes at Pharaoh's court, to become silent men fitting into that Cosmic, tradition-bound, unchanging Order.<sup>14</sup> In Ye Olde Greece of the same period, there gradually developed among that illiterate and unalphabetic people, a sense that the final lot of mankind, *Moirai*, meant a cursed, implacable Doom.

As Homer came to narrate the syncretistic cluster of myths commonly believed by the Achaeans in the eighth century, the only way to make life meaningful among men under *Moirai* was the way of Cunning Power. Prowess and daring that brought earth-bound *kydos* to the family name, in competitive struggle with a touchy family of limited, superhuman deities (cf initiation of the Olympic games), is what counted. To be sure, during several centuries of civilizational turmoil in the Mediterranean, the Phrygian orgiastic cult of Dionysus captivated many Greek adherents. Boeotian rhapsodist Hesiod also introduced the element of *Diké* — a kind of regular, natural impartial equilibrium — into the heterodox mythology. Even strands of Orphic asceticism began to offer people a priestly alternative. But the Greek mind was originally formed and set by the heroes of Homer's sonorous hexameters, like warrior Achilles maddened by *Até* and *polymechanos* (never-at-a-loss) Odysseus.<sup>15</sup> The basic idolatry behind Archaic, pagan Greek culture was cunning foolhardiness. Its monumental tomb art and regal *kouroi* bespeak the intrepid, measured *hybris* every young Greek admired.<sup>16</sup>

A *polis* economy developed in the Peloponnesus during the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Sparta and Athens jockeyed for power in an uneasy, peaceful coexistence, while Greek colonies started dotting Asia Minor and Italy. Money was invented, trade intensified, wars and rumours of wars began to dominate the news. And it was at this time that certain singular thinkers of Ionia (*idiotai*) speculated on what's behind it all? what is reality like? how is *Physis* set up? what's the point of human life?

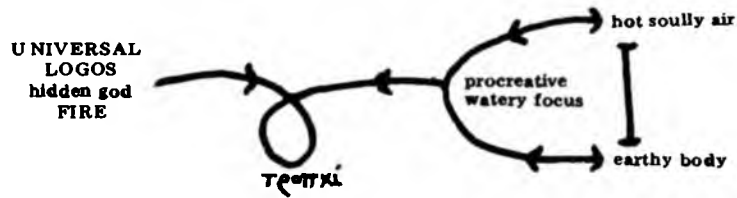
### HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS

Heraclitus of Ephesus (fl 500 B C) was one of those curious Greek thinkers. His abiding thought was that this world is a warring tension that is constantly begetting opposites. This warring process is not subject to *Moirai* but is itself divine, an everlasting, begetting and consuming Fire — Logos!<sup>17</sup> The *hoi polloi* act idiotically, as if an individual could think all by himself; and some *poleis* democratically decide this is right and that is wrong; but actually, whatever is, is right! and each man must simply be attuned to the common Logos-God-*Physis*.<sup>18</sup> The “best men” (*aristoi*) know there is a hidden harmony simultaneously, in the same respect, in all the contradictory transformations of world and cultural discord — salt water kills and gives life, depending upon whether you immerse men or fish in it — and the truth is that basically all things are One (*hen panta einai*), One Universal Law of Natural Warring Tension.<sup>19</sup>

It should be understood that war is the common condition, that strife is justice, and that all things come to pass through the compulsion of strife.<sup>20</sup>

Only when each I is We (cf novel by Zamyatin, *WE* 1920), and We lives *kata physin* with the skill to abide and take advantage of its own universally contradictorily flipping back and forth, utterly permanent Change, is there the justice and hidden repose of final meaning, says Heraclitus of Ephesus, about 500 years before Christ walked the earth bringing shalom (cf figure 1).

TENSIVE NATURE (figure 1)



One should notice the threat this philosophical position of Universalistic Contradictory Monism would pose, let's say, for fifth century B C Athens, where a *polis* majority posited what's law. Heraclitus' perspective relativizes any positive law and makes it possible for a strong man to claim he is in touch with a deeper Natural Universal Law which everyone should follow, superceding particular *polis* laws. Heraclitus' commitment to reality as being constant struggle is not altogether unreminiscent of Homer and Hesiod's attitude; but Heraclitus' affirmation of contradictory transmutation, in the name of Logos, gives the whole flux a much more jurotechnical, opportunistic character than one of bio-physical survival. Also, Heraclitus baldly approves something more than tricky talk and the doublecross to get fame:<sup>21</sup> analytic contradiction is thoroughly legitimate in his mind, because reality is fundamentally at odds, rightly so!

When, as a matter of historical fact, the Heraclitan "wisdom" entered the marketplace of fifth century B C Greece, and his cosmogonic Subjectivism got reoriented to the anthropocentric (not to say "anthropogonic") Subjectivism of *polis* society, the Heraclitan vision served as a cosmo-*polis*-an yeast in various sophists' feisty contribution to the demythologizing of Olympian gods, professionalization of *polis* education, their Individualistic support for demagogic tyranny and gradual undermining of classic Greek society.

And one should not overlook the crushing pessimism lurking in Heraclitus' fragments, despite their almost militaristic bravado and racist elitism that sounds their particular, Greeky spirit. There is no mediator for Hera-



clitus; no redemption for man is conceivable in Heraclitus' philosophical framework, except that he be tossed from his individual, provincial frying pan of warring contrasts into the universal Fire of constant contradictory harmony. When you realize that Heraclitus was figuring these things out in the dark of Asia Minor shortly after Daniel was given dreams from Yahweh in Babylon about the fall of civilizations foreign to His Rule, and about the same time as Zechariah was receiving visions at night straight from the Lord and Nehemiah was building up the little tumble down wall of Jerusalem, ending his diary entries at night so plaintively, "Please think well of me, O my God! for the little things I've been able to do for You," then you understand why the apostle Paul, after passing through Heraclitus' hometown 600 years later could refer to such patterns of thinking as *atheoi* (Ephesians 2:11-22) and plead with Christians not to lose their minds that way but to get their whole consciousness truly new in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1-24).

A lot of philosophical water has gone over the historical dam in Western Europe by the time the Dominican Eckhart (c 1260-1327), with his Master's degree in theology from the University of Paris, began to preach in Strassbourg and Köln around 1314 A.D. "Church Fathers" like Clement and Origen from Egypt and Augustine from Africa had struggled in the first centuries after Christ's resurrection to keep the christian faith intact while they fitted its dogmas together with the great reflection of Graeco-Roman humanity. The church headquartered at Rome had developed a world-wide establishment which officiated as the veritable custodian of Western civilization, and for a millenium almost totally dominated human life. Worship services on Christmas and Easter in a twelfth or thirteenth century cathedral — overwhelming height inside, massive statuary in stone, gold-brocaded vestments in processions, with incense, stained glass coloured light, mellifluously haunting plainsong crescendoing at the high point of the raised host and celebration of the mass, thronged by the whole countryside — epitomized incantationally the power and glory forever and ever of the church.<sup>22</sup> Only its priestly rites guaranteed you as a man a heavenly eternity; so you were utterly beholden to it. And it was this "Mother" church which had given her blessing, officially and unofficially, to the habit of supplementing Platonic philosophy with the insights of supernatural revelation.

That certification, approval, program of the Roman church — call it what you will — to join the analysis of pagan minds with the truths made specially known by Scripture, led to its being the unquestioned method of educated leaders. The spirit of reinforcing the church's Latin theological deposits by combining to it the ancillary results of autonomous "natural reason" in order to arrive at a cumulative, definitive synthesis of truly authoritative knowledge on all matters — world, man and God included: that driving spirit formed the Scholastic mind which controlled Western philosophy unchallenged from John of Damascus (c 726 A D) till William of Ockham and the Black Death plague of 1348-50. Thomas Aquinas formulated a commonplace, an assumed framework, when he wrote *gratia non tollat naturam, sed perficiat*.<sup>23</sup> The fact that "the Philosopher" who got "graced" became Aristotle rather than Plato in the thirteenth century hardly batted a bishop's eye.

#### ECKHART OF STRASSBURG

German professor Eckhart called into question the administrative hold of the Roman church and its ritual upon the salvation of men.<sup>24</sup> He began breaking down the Scholastic mentality by using the unheard of formula — "*Die Meister sagen gemeinhin . . . Doch ich sage . . .*" — subtly recalling the way Christ corrected the tradition-bound Pharisees. He sidestepped the barriers of reasoned argument and the ecclesiastically wielded authority of Grace by claiming that his exposition of Scripture even went beyond Grace, passed all understanding, because it brought naked truth straight from the heart of God (*ein unbedahtiu wârheit, diu dâ komen ist ûz dem herzen gôtes âne mittel*).<sup>25</sup> And he did all this not as a rabble rousing son of the Church but as respected Vicar General of his order in Bohemia, from the pulpit with pungent, mystifying sermons in the vernacular.

God is divine, and once upon a time God created creatures. When the creating holy Trinity made man in their likeness, God sparked the soul to be His equal, everlasting, active counterpart. Only through man's active soul, an image of God, are creatures prepared for becoming and acting Godly.<sup>26</sup> That means, says Eckhart, in the beginning there was pure Divinity (*gotheit*) with nothing doing. Out of this utterly empty fulness of Divinity, God

(*got*), of course, creates. Divine God is continually creating creatures who reproduce and re-create, after their fashion, like Him. It's clear that Father God, with the conceiving Spirit, gave birth to His only begotten Son out of His own reproducing, ever-generating Divinity. So you could say, in a way, God comes to be more and comes to be less, God becomes and even passes away! depending upon His begetting or the begoing of His handiwork. Especially when I who mirror God in the flint-like power of my soul (*vünkelin, kraft*), able to unite all sorts of creatures into One by my activity: when I as God's image (*Bild Gottes*) return to God, in a sense, go beyond God back into the hidden, inner abyss of Divinity from whence I came, then an epiphany of eternity passes, and Godhood is all in all . . . <sup>27</sup>

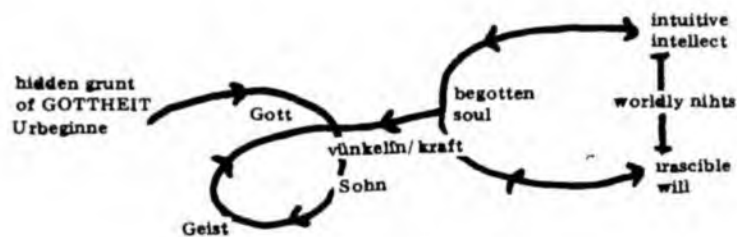
Can you not simply be astounded at the staggering truth — even if you don't understand it — preached Eckhart, of man's being "born again" by the fructifying Spirit of God?! When a man is really "regenerated" in the wholly spiritual, uncreated power-point of his soul which emanates from the Spirit itself, that man is begotten Son of God by the unique power of the eternal Father, as truly as Father God ceaselessly begets his eternal Son in Himself.<sup>28</sup> In fact, when you deny yourself and empty yourself of everything creatural, lose your will completely, for God's sake, so that your own knowledge becomes the purest ignorance, a dark unconsciousness, then God — who abhors a vacuum — shall wholly fill you. You will blend with God into Godhood when you forsake and are purged of the divisive life contrasting, for example, happiness and sorrow: when you become dead to the whole world in your soul, then you become singlemindedly alive in Being, in the eternal Being where you were before your creation.<sup>29</sup>

So the soul resembles God when it achieves a perfectly immovable disinterestedness (*unbeweglichiu abgesehenheit*): a mere conduit for Divinity.<sup>30</sup>

The authorities say that God is a being, an intelligent being who knows everything. But I say that God is neither a being nor intelligent and he does not know either this or that. God is free of every thing and therefore he is everything.<sup>31</sup>

God in his Godhood, Divinity, is the inexhaustible source of meaning, the Origin (*Urbeginne*) our intuiting-soul (*Vernunft*) must shatter in if it would be taken up in untrammled *Abgescheidenheit*. Therefore man must expugn God-knowledge and Godhood-distracting godliness ruthlessly out of his inner life and outer deeds and become perfectly nothing! so that the fishhook of Divine love may make you more free — even though you twist and turn — the more you are caught. Trust God, who is a God of the creating present (*God ist ein got der gegenwerticheit*), to turn even your sin into what's better for you.<sup>32</sup> If this all sounds like a contradictory mystery, said Eckhart, don't worry your head about it. Remember that those who try to gain their life shall lose it and those who lose it disinterestedly shall find it for ever and ever, directly flowing in the heart of God (cf figure 2).

GENERATING GODHOOD (figure 2)



No wonder the Church of Rome anathematized Eckhart's writings two years after his death.<sup>33</sup> There is always a party-politics side to heresy, and the Franciscans were out to get Dominican Eckhart, who had defended himself point by point in 1326 (not in German, of course, but in church Latin); but the basic philosophical perspective informing Eckhart's sermons, if adopted, would unhinge more than the churchified society of thirteenth century Europe. Its Contradictory Monistic Geneticism conflicts sharply with any Structuralistic position, for example, Thomism or Utilitarianism. Eckhart's position cannot stand to think of (the christian) life, let's say, in terms of so many right and wrong deeds, so many credits and so many debits, about which one can take specified, hierarchical steps to get settled: life is a constant struggle of back and forth, an ongoing process *by nature*, so that every gain and loss is radically relativized — our life is simply, only, and finally a Becoming. So one should not

expect a systematic theology in the neighbourhood of Meister Eckhart. At most a theogonic odyssey of God with man in tandem, an attack, perhaps, on official christendom, and a deep-going, mystifying, unsettling . . . conservatism.

There is an unrelenting, muted stridency within Eckhart's pastorally warm sermons, because he assumes at bottom that change is the order of the day and one has to be caught up in the unpredictable yet rigorous process of flurrying activity that somehow demands renunciation if you want to be in touch with what's real. So there is agitation. But the call for continual return to a more simple, undifferentiated, unified Oneness acts steadily. However, that too is deceptive, because the call to return to Oneness is deeply anti-institutional. Eckhart's perspective has no compunction against dissolving church, state (or even "God"! ) into the stream of ever creative and recreative Divine Love and Power. Eckhart's Objectivism stops him short of being satisfied with "personal experiences" of purgation or rapturous God-union: the juro-technical quality of *Abgescheidenheit* (a balancing, professional, umpire-like disinterestedness) — which gives God his God status!<sup>34</sup> — is a norm he posits that human subjects must meet. But that Objectivistic horizon is small comfort for the Church, since Rome has no monopoly on dispensing *Abgescheidenheit* as it did have on specifying the supernal (sacred) truths of a Realistic philosophy, which one needed in order to be saved.

It is noteworthy that Eckhart's basic philosophical conception and the whole set of his, to be sure weary-of-Scholasticism temper, is *not* conducive to all the quietistic mysticism that cropped up in Germany at the decline of the fourteenth century; such introverted, ecstatic theoreticism takes its conceptual inspiration from a different neighbourhood (like that of much sixteenth century Spanish mysticism), for Eckhart's commitment to surging, parturient activity does not brook the state of interiorized contemplation as ideal. Yet how woefully sad, it seems to me, when all is said and done, that christian believer Eckhart broke the back of the gospel, subverts the communion of saints, and puts stumbling blocks in front of any wouldbe believers, all by joining his love for God to and under a Geneticistic Contradictory Monistic misconcep-

tion of reality. Because Eckhart sees the estrangement of man from God not as a call to men for a change in direction to obedience through Jesus Christ but as a necessary return in ontic structure of man directly to God, a biblically envisioned reality is ruled out. There can be no sense of creaturely man's being covenanted to the merciful, just and faithful Yahweh fully revealed in Jesus Christ and attested to by the Holy Scriptures: God is fundamentally a hidden God who discloses his whereabouts like a man in the dark who happens to clear his throat.<sup>35</sup> Sin is not something historically subsequent to creation that can be rectified and healed: for Eckhart, evil is a furtive feature of creatureliness somehow, so that it becomes either/or between Godhood and creation for man. And man is not an adopted serving son of God, through faith, thanks to the Grace of the Lord: instead, thanks to his soul's *vünkelfn* (empowering spark), man is wrenched into the superhuman task of unending mediatorial work, making him a Christ actually, and therefore burdening him like a Sisyphus in an everlasting chain of Becoming perfect. Eckhart's genial sermons of encouragement have a permanent, disconcerting edge underneath, and his "Book of Divine Comfort" is spiked with wormwood.

An utterly different Spirit than the absorbed piety of Eckhart's sermons wells up out of a tract like *Il Principe* by Machiavelli (1469-1527) 200 years later. Times have changed from the day of Giotto where solid gold-leaf or a heavenly blue background graced the statuesque figures in a fresco with sanctified stillness. Now Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca have been introducing Florentines to a more turbulent world with three-dimensional, open space perspective, and Botticelli has canonized the pagan ethic of *kalok'agathon* for the Medici with winsome, wispy, gentling finery, not in the name of the Church. An authoritative Christendom promising security where moth and rust do not corrupt had lost its unquestioned control of men's hearts and minds. It's true, there seemed to be continuing attempts to keep a hybrid of grand humanism and Roman (catholic) culture intact: Cola di Rienzo tried to reinstate at Rome the good old Roman days while the pope was in and out of Avignon, but too many longed for *il papa's* return; even Boccaccio, master of the vernacular, spent the last years of his life, after he got to know bookish Petrarch, finishing up his

*Latin* writings; and Castiglione's influential eulogy of the courtier covered over its idolatry of refined sensuality with a quasi-spiritual, Neo-Platonizing sheen. But the "christian" to such syntheses became more and more a transparent veneer for outright Humanism.

In fact, a Spirit foreign to any biblical christianity began to excite European society in the fifteenth century. A bald desire to enhance Human dignity by striving with Faustian ambition for secret knowledge and occult power, with the use of cabala writings and magic if necessary, anything, to let man exploit this-here (*diesseitige*) Nature and achieve *humaniora*: this syncretistic spirit drove the deeply anti-synthetic-christian Renaissance mentality onward — this-here *saeculum* is what counts!<sup>36</sup> If wandering Franciscan friars want to preach sermons on the mount for the birds, let them go their harmless way. If the powerful Roman church wants to play politics, then it will have to use the rules of the secular game. No matter which, Christianity as a distinctive way of cultural salvation is passé: we men must pull ourselves up by our own godless boot-straps and give birth to a culture worthy of Man's chameleon-like potential for divinity

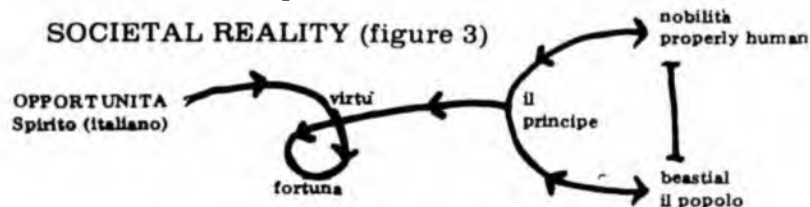
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#### **MACHIAVELLI OF FIRENZE**

Machiavelli witnessed firsthand the governmental instability of his native polis, Renaissance Florence. The Medici bankers pulled political strings there like an Alcmeonidae dynasty, warding off papal assassinations, till Savonarola got them expelled and faced the city with theocratic hours of decision for four straight years, till he got himself burned at the stake in 1498. Then Machiavelli became Secretary of Defense for the ensuing republic and served thirteen years, until he was exiled by the returning Medici, who were recalled to stave off French domination. Out in the country Machiavelli wrote *Il Principe* (about the same time as Luther's theses, 1517) and shamelessly dedicated it to the junior Lorenzo Medici in power, fishing for a portfolio in the new Florentine administration —

By nature most people are evil, says Machiavelli; therefore, if you mean to rule people well, jockeying the masses off against the privileged elite, you must learn yourself how not to be good and use that knowhow when

necessary.<sup>37</sup> A good prince will also realize and cope with the basic reality that armed men prevail over unarmed men: force determines what happens.<sup>38</sup> Yet things are more complicated than brute power and survival of the strongest, because reality is structurally a process wherein whimsical *fortuna* and the freely willing abilities (*virtù*) of man intersect in an uncertain, unpredictable coexistence. Time is essentially an indifferent well of constant circumstantial Opportunity, whose crest a good prince knows how to ride to more power and whose flipflop lapse he knows how to adapt to — in whatsoever stadium he be therewith to take advantage.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, an unsettled, factional tension of interests is permanent: war is unavoidable; sustained progress is impossible; peace is actually an illusion; and the prince maintains his precarious, fulcral civic post in the dynamic balancing of societal powers only by fortuna-ted cunning (*una astuzia fortunata*)<sup>40</sup> (cf figure 3).



The watchword for Machiavelli's prince, since this is the way the world is actually set up, is: deceptive, impetuous force (*essere gran simulatore e dissimulatore*).<sup>41</sup> Rule by fear rather than by devotion; keep the populace off-balance, astonished, watching the unexpected results of your foxy, apparently generous, yet truly stealthy, leonine deeds. Be pious and humane, yet be able to switch immediately without compunction to ruthless, irreligious cruelties if necessary, ever mindful that a reputation for being magnanimous will cover a multitude of doublecrosses. The ability to take the least evil option, put the best face on it for the public, and carry it off with a flair, adapting to the most contrary winds of fortune: such *prudenzia* marks a good prince.<sup>42</sup> Cesare Borgia, son of pope Alexander VI, epitomized for Machiavelli a true prince of a man, a ruler who redeemed his ferocious escapades by a megalopsychic ambition for the glory of Italy (*L'animo grando e la sua intenzione alta*).<sup>43</sup> What distinguished Cesare Borgia from the run-of-the-mill villany of the day was the fact, in Machiavelli's judgment, that he lived by the law of *virtù e prudenzia*.



A man must trust only his own power, but might is not *virtù* unless it show the quality of *gloria*. Cunning must disclose refinement, cruelty must be done with the clean-cut character of excellence (*bene usate*). Strength that even gains control is not enough in Machiavelli's world: the deed of strength must have the quality of virile forcefulness, the aura of great achievement — its craftiness must be heightened by a sleight-of-hand, daredevil, brilliant *kalokakon* guile, or the princely action lacks the prerequisite for lasting *areté*.<sup>44</sup> And action of such quality is not out to achieve results just for the individual prince, but expects all principalities to be conjoined as One to liberate Italy from the barbarians.<sup>45</sup> Although one must remember that the last chapter of *Il Principe* goes with the fawning dedication, a commitment to *la virtù d'une spirito italiano . . . la virtù italica . . .* the superior Italian race . . . is genuine there, visionary, and historically trenchant, as well as nascently fascist.

Our largely Individualistic, Subjectivist-ridden day easily overlooks these last points and misreads Machiavelli to be simply justification for cynical, power-play politics out to aggrandize things for your own interests. But Machiavelli's political philosophy has the stature of (Socrates') Objectivism, and is not on a par with the old sophists' strong-arm Subjectivism. The fact that Machiavelli would recommend intrigue, bluff and slow poison rather than hand-to-hand combat or a hatchet job is not just a Renaissance idiosyncrasy. Machiavelli's thought assumes human life has more to it than visceral and manipulative activity; if that further horizon of controllability constituted by style, intelligence and courtier breeding — which holds for every controlling subject — if that objective horizon is disobeyed, then you do not have a Prince on your hands, but only a meaningless, brutal or boorish villain. Machiavelli's final law for men to follow is not skill or success but *Opportunità*: an openness-to-be-formed, an optionability-to-be-controlled, an availability of means-to-be-exploited and mastered. *Opportunità* is really Machiavelli's god — you are for or against *Opportunità* — and you live by that Word of technical formableness if you want to have *to eu zén*.<sup>46</sup>

It is partly this technical Objectivism which accounts for the durability and fascination of Machiavelli's position for so many post-Renaissance political opportunists,

who usually cheapen the quasi-deified *Opportunità* circumstantially into a matter of pragmatic trickery. Machiavelli got at the creational reality that power is the basic ingredient of sound political action, that camouflage, timing and undisclosed alliances rightly belong to diplomacy and policing the body politic, and that decisive, forceful response to culture-making choices is normative for men in God's world. But Machiavelli puffed that discovery up into a hideous idol. The fact that his idol of princely power came dressed with a hint of Macrocosmic *virtù* (*la virtù italica*) conned secularized modern statesmen into applying machiavellian principles so long as it was done for the SUN NEVER SETS on the British empire, LA GLOIRE de la France or Deutschland UEBER ALLES. Along with the dressing, however, came the inevitable militarism, cut-throat expansion policies and forming of uncertain power blocs.

The fact that Machiavelli's Contradictory Geneticistic Monism has a decidedly secular Spirit gives its fix on reality a specially heartless character. Machiavelli's *prudenzia*, for example, is not like Scholastic Structuralistic Thomas' juro-analytic casuistry, applying universal precepts to individual cases in order to insure an infallibly good act in Nature that supports the legislature of Grace.<sup>47</sup> Machiavelli's prudence is a gutsy ponce on rough and tumble breaks in a stream of continuously changing, helter-skelter, irregular activity; and the prince is not only not subject to any law but in an amorphous, *exlex* fashion simply shadowboxes *fortuna* to gain advantage — there is no law but seizing Opportunity with grace. And note well, Grace is no longer understood as a gift of God, blessing from Yahweh, but is taken to be merely the quality of expert, human sureness. There is no Prince of Peace mediating Machiavelli's setup: only aggressive princes of proficient deception (=grace!).

Machiavelli's perspective, historically, has been a mixed curse. Machiavelli contributed to the emancipation of political life from ecclesiastic hegemony; his conception normally works integratively in society, unifying and centralizing quite conservatively powers at variance, and therefore has helped prevent anarchy in societal crises. But the thrust and very build of Machiavelli's conception is deeply diabolical: legal commitments are ways

of fighting your neighbour; the state is not a continuing entity but simply a temporary instrument of Higher Force which does well to act both as a lion and an angel of light in the endless pursuit of . . . not happiness, not survival, but of continuing, unstable, equalizing, restless tension! That is, there is no room in Machiavelli's philosophy for forgiveness, for amnesty from the consequences of sin, for magistrates to exercise a most holy calling before God of setting crooked things straight.<sup>48</sup> Instead, Machiavelli affirms the bad news of turmoil and the groaning for redemption of frustrated men as itself good! thereby turning the truth into a lie and the lie into a hopeless yoke of ceaseless and permanently endless striving.

The forthright secularity that breathes through every inch of Machiavelli's philosophy has continued since his day to direct the mainstream of Western civilization. So the godless Spirit of trusting human ability for the Way, the Truth and the Life of generations to come has mustered a majority consensus among cultural leaders now for almost half a millenium. The thought of Copernicus and Galileo, partly because they were concerned to rhyme it with Scholastic church dogma, helped settle the pristine, anti-synthetic-christian temper of Renaissance thinkers into a less revolutionary-appearing mould, where one paid unconditional allegiance to "Reason" in matters of this world but could still honor God for the next. Such a compromise soothed the historical conscience of many, but it only insured the increasing hold on men's hearts by the idol of secularity. God brooks no other god next to Himself, and if men persist in their willfully God-less ways, He often silently leaves them to their own forlorn devices.

The restless history of Rationalism betrays just such a vaunting, woebegone, secularizing development. "Reason" is the fiction concocted by men who, ignoring God and his Word, outfit creaturely human understanding with final, universally binding and absolutely certifying apriori's that guarantee truth and reliable meaning to everyone following it. "Rationality" thus assumes the status of God's Word.

When post-Renaissance men took up the belief that a mathematically honed rationality would introduce the indubitable truth in philosophy (eg Descartes), they were

optimistic that Reason would also insure tolerance in ethics (Spinoza), lead to a politics safe from "religious wars" (Locke), and solve all kinds of problems from physics to theology (Leibniz). But the seventeenth-century Scientialistic reason seemed to reduce human affairs to what could be measured, and presumed as if whatever did not fit the rectilinear pattern, say, of the formal gardens in Versailles somehow was beyond the pale of civilization. The Aufklärung sensibility, however, confessed a more popular, socially intimate Reason as saviour of society. The middle generations of the eighteenth century championed taste (Shaftesbury), sentiment (Rousseau), a sceptical, latitudinarian urbanity (Hume), and encyclopedia-type education (Diderot) that belied the ruinous, bankrupt superficiality at work behind their generation's rococo makeup. In the Enlightenment one could become enthusiastically secular, and therefore thinner as a man.

An Idealistic reason, which Kant professed, seemed to be a conservative hiatus in the worship of rational Baal: the certainty of science was contained to make room for faith . . . in ethical noumena (*ideas* of God, immortal soul, plenary world) which could serve as North stars for men in uncharted waters, if they chose to be critically human. But Fichte, Hegel, Schelling and others left behind the Emersonian tones of oversoul and speculative, pious transcendentalism and built altars to a brave new world of unlimited "freedom," German university scholarship and an utterly Romantic Humanism. Then the sobering, hard facts of machines, coal dust and the industrial slave world of misery Dickens and Zola saw replaced the fantastic reaches of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the "Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge and Delacroix' heroic turbulence. In the nineteenth century of philosophy A D men by and large served positive, scientifically-determined bits of knowledge. It was a very tough-minded, professional universe of thought; but thinkers like Comte, Feuerbach, Herbert Spencer, J S Mill and Freud prophesied that this time — if men will only shuck their mythical prejudices and we can make our scientifically reasoned method foolproof — we shall achieve a rational millenium of sweetness and light, liberty and balanced personalities.

It was in the shadow of such a Positivistic Reason-god, offering quantified certainty and scientifically guaran-

teed security, that Western man really began to lose his cultural roots, daily life bearings, and disintegrate into aimless atoms of unrelated, specialized activities. It is also in this setting of hard-core secularity that a big figure like Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) began to make his contribution.

### CASSIRER OF BERLIN, OXFORD AND YALE

Physical facts are known by observation and experiment that ends in your getting their measurements and in determining their causal relations, says Cassirer.<sup>49</sup> But Positivistically spirited thinkers dogmatically miss two points: (1) factual truth is not a matter of mental duplication of simple sense data impressions, because senses themselves are a viable form of the human spirit and even resultant sense-fact knowledge always depends upon the act of (subjective) judgment;<sup>50</sup> and (2) historical facts and the living reality of language, for example, are simply not "natural" phenomena and cannot justly be treated like external, inert, unhuman affairs.<sup>52</sup>

Support for (1) comes from the very nature of science, says Cassirer. It was not until Renaissance philosophy, Galileo and Kepler converted "space" as a substantial substratum and "being" as an objective entity into a mathematical function and form of human knowing activity that there existed for thought the universality required to order empirical occurrences into a logically controllable continuum of apodictic verity, ie, scientific fact-knowledge.<sup>52</sup> And these necessary, mathematical concepts, which deal with sub-sensible reality, do not derive from experience, but are, rightly so, mental apriori's of the human subject.<sup>53</sup>

Support for (2) hangs together with that historically important functionalizing of substance, says Cassirer, because even though science is the highest possible attainment of human culture, our veritable Archimedian point of constancy,<sup>54</sup> there is more to the universe than is dreamt of in mathematical categories. In fact, mathematical-physical science is to be defined in terms of the unifying general, human cultural activity, not vice versa, and the realm of meaning and *human* life is much more important and original than any brute world facts or "being".<sup>55</sup> What mankind needs above all, says Cassirer,

is self-knowledge. That means we need even more than a critique of Reason: it means a critique of culture. "Our objective is a phenomenology of human culture,"<sup>56</sup> a rigorous exposition of the polydimensional ways we men perceive, constitute, yes, construct reality. That makes me an idealist, says Cassirer, I know.<sup>57</sup> So what?

Cassirer is also, knowingly, a committed "Subjectivist." That is, for him, "objective," "intrinsically necessary," is a proper designation for whatever is culturally configured. Is the English language or great art of the ages any less "universally valid" than scientific concepts? he asks. Whatever free, formative activity man exercises, thereby revealing his self-contained, human endeavor, is unquestionably valid, holds utterly objectively!<sup>58</sup> When man says, "Let there be!" then there "is," and that is the only kind of "objectivization" that counts. Or did you suppose "things" were in the saddle and ruled mankind?! Man is lord over reality. Of course there are "subjective" (=naturally personal, expressive) and "objective" (=consciously explicated, significant) poles oscillating within human consciousness;<sup>59</sup> but any form of human consciousness — and that includes the mythical mode of active presence in the world — is "objective" and normative simply because it is an "authentic function of the human spirit."<sup>60</sup>

Kant was too timid. In pivotal chapters Nos 76-78 of his epochal *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, says Cassirer, Kant held back from going all the way in dissolving *Dinge an sich* into regulative Ideas of practical *Vernunft*; he still allowed *das Uebersinnliche* to be an objective possibility for grounding the *Erscheinungen* with which *Verstand* must reckon. And Kant waffled dialectically on whether Nature could be completely understood in terms of mechanics or had to be fundamentally purposive; he affirmed *Naturzweck* as a regulative Idea of reflective *Urteilskraft*, as a *heuristic* principle for investigating the particular laws of Nature, yet he recommended we explain products and happenings of Nature, *selbst die zweckmässigsten*, as mechanically as possible!<sup>61</sup> We should finish Kant's Copernican revolution: "things" and "the physical world" are *theoretical constructs*, and what we call "reality" and experience is a dynamic *spiritual life* which bears the stamp of inner necessity and hence of objectivity."<sup>62</sup> And it is the ideal possibility of this spirit-

life, with its autonomous, rich symbolic form creativity, says Cassirer, not "mere actuality," that should engage us as men.<sup>63</sup>

So Cassirer's vigorous, Neo-Idealistic Subjectivism approaches the world through man's creative *Wirklichkeit*, defining world and man in terms of human cultural functionality. There is a

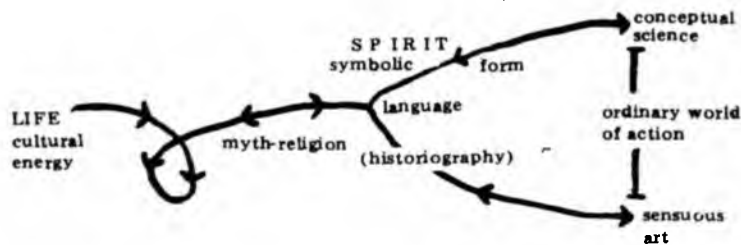
system of human activities, which defines and determines the circle of "humanity." Language, myth, religion, art, science, history are the constituents, the various sectors of this circle.<sup>64</sup>

Not only science, but language, myth, art and religion as well, provide the building stones from which the world of "reality" is constructed for us, as well as that of the human spirit, in sum the World-of-the-I. Like scientific cognition, they are not simple *structures* which we can insert into a given world, we must understand them as *functions* by means of which a particular form is given to reality and in each of which specific distinctions are effected.<sup>65</sup>

And these various species of symbolic form, better, formative cultural energy, are in perpetual strife, says Cassirer, as conflicting forces in extreme opposition. Sophisticated scientific thought busy classifying the "relations" of things in a methodologically deterministic way contradicts and would suppress mythical feelings, characterized by an elemental, physiognomic sympathy with life in a deep kind of uncritical, primitive way; and art may appropriately claim to be "perhaps the most durable and intense pleasure of which human nature is capable," but striving for such sensuously concrete spirit life rules out formal, structural elements like language needs to be a vehicle for careful thought.<sup>66</sup> Yet these oppositions, and even an inherent polar tension, an "inner contradictoriness" that shows up in each specific symbolic form itself, does not sunder but only reinforces the dynamic unity and eruptive, living force of Human cultural, formative power.<sup>67</sup> *Human life* is a single (harmonious contradictory) process, Cassirer believes, of *becoming culture*.

In contrast to the holy exclusivity practised by so many Dualist analyses of creation's fabric, the thrust of inclusiveness found in Cassirer's Geneticistic Monism makes a happy impression. He delineates an interwoven order to the jumble of symbolic form moments;<sup>68</sup> he makes a special point of affirming mythic consciousness as a permanent, legitimate configuration of the human spirit;<sup>69</sup> and he takes pains to show how, in varying stages of being "posited," "internal antitheses" of sensuous-spiritual/being-meaning/life-spirit (=tropai!) permeate commonly and determine together our structurally different "modes of seeing," viz, myth, language, art and historiography (although science seems to have exorcized the dialectic from its rarefied realm of pure signification)<sup>70</sup> (cf figure 4).

COSMOGONIC HUMANITY (figure 4)



The trouble with this acute depiction comes when the mesh of symbolic forms itself is declared "a mobile order" and the differing levels of consciousness are interpreted ontogenetically as begetting one another dialectically.<sup>71</sup> The trouble comes when the origination of cultural activity is sought in "the *ultima ratio*, the power of the miraculous and mysterious." Life itself, and keeps receding till one agrees that man "remains a *homo absconditus*," and the circle of symbolic forms remains unbroken as a constantly recurring, continually changing "dynamic equilibrium" of circling, coexistent contraries in contradictory unity.<sup>72</sup> The trouble comes because the wages of a Contradictory Geneticistic Monism are an introvertish darkness as to source, an uncertain threat as to whether the concatenated framework enveloping everything will have the resilience to surprise us once more with its protean manoeuverability; and always there is that logically irreproachable, inevitably necessary reversion to the hidden rootage — replenish the vita-



lity of culture with elemental formative energy — an everlasting shadow that plagues development . . . nevertheless, affirmed!<sup>73</sup>

Always above the sound of cultural strife and excitement Cassirer keeps his eye fixed on Humanity, not so much on so many men or “the individual consciousness” as on “the universal subject.”<sup>74</sup> When individual Goethe coins new language as poet, his “single act of speech flows again back into the great river-bed of language itself, yet without being entirely lost,” maybe even altering the current as a whole “in its direction and intensity, in its dynamics and rhythm.”<sup>75</sup> So individuals and their acts serve the cosmic Cultural process as tiny centers of formative energy microcosmically duplicating and contributing, at different loci, to the One main activity. Men, for Cassirer, are monadic eddies or little springs pointillating the huge maelstrom of Humanity, that is, the great Culture-forming which shall make us free indeed!

Human culture taken as a whole may be described as the process of man’s progressive self-liberation. Language, art, religion, science, are various phases in this process. In all of them man discovers and proves a new power — the power to build up a world of his own, an “ideal” world.<sup>76</sup>

The fact that this great mission of Man is Utopia — in Cassirer’s own words! — only stirs man alive “and endows him with a new ability, the ability constantly to reshape his human universe.”<sup>77</sup>

Such faith in Humanity is an old-time religion, and Cassirer’s volumes are an exceptionally grand confession of it. Anyone whose vision is shaped by the biblical Word of God, however, sees immediately that the Cultural King in Cassirer’s procession has no clothes on. The stirring and intricate, probing and insightful Culturalism of Ernst Cassirer is a no-god made by a man’s hand, and those who feel secure with such a brilliant man-made “god,” says Psalm 115, will become like it (Psalm 115:4-8): busybusy, principled, little old-style idealists aware of tradition, open to innovation, toughened by Positivism, curbed from Romantic excess, but incurably sold on building, through ups and downs, advances and reverses, a richer and more noble Babylon in the hearts and lives of mankind. This particular idol worship allows no sabbath

rest (not for disciples of Heraclitus, Meister Eckhart or Machiavelli any more than for those who follow Cassirer). There is no opening for the Holy Spirit's healing, Christ's reconciling, the Lord God's establishing the beginning of *His* gentle Rule upon the earth (cf Isaiah 65:17-25): only an unceasing, combative (cultural) imperialism proper to this Geneticistic Contradictory Monistic universe of thought. There is no opening for the Holy Spirit, because Cassirer's favourite hymn, so to speak, would be, "Dwell in me, O blessed Cultural Activity ..."

Evaluation of Cassirer's contribution makes a Christ-believer sad. Babel was no shucks as architecture either. Cassirer rightly latched wrongly onto the *coram Deo* response-ability peculiar to man in creation's covenant to praise the Lord. Cassirer saw that man's glory did not have the transparent muteness of moon and stars, plants and animals; there is indeed a *tete-a-tete*, reflexive play inside man's initiative and action in the world. Because Cassirer rejected grounding man's cultivating task in the body of Jesus Christ as *pou stó* he tried to affirm the cultural task itself unconditionally. He had the insight not to champion culture to the exclusion of nature and not pretend to evolve culture out of a continuum with nature; but Cassirer's attempt to relate culturing man and an original nature in a contradictory, polar union in which culture becomes the saving revelation of nature which becomes the source of life for culture<sup>78</sup> will not do either, because such a position confusingly reads cultivating man back into a cosmic, general nature and then anti-nomically reads that very nature out of man's culturing activity. From a biblical point of view, this world-bound position of Cassirer damns man to a restless, everlasting search for completion and final meaning that cannot help but be frustrated, because it's like the quest as an earthling for the holy grail — it would disappear as holy if you found and touched it.

Put briefly: Cassirer blindly misidentifies culture as creation and thus makes man God. His Neo-Idealistic Spirit affects modesty in not promising results, just the methods to work at results, and he is genuinely serious about redeeming man from barbarism for an abundant life. His philosophy does offer a loosening correction to much Positivistic dogma, as well as some protection against the technocratic death in Pragmatism and defeat-

ism in Existentialism. Cassirer gives fruitful leads on the interrelational differences and order of formative/aesthetic/lingual/logical activities. But irremediably evil, centrally infecting all his analysis, is the fact that he turns the glorious *theatrum Dei* of creation into a *tohuwabohu* and mindlessly (*eskotisthé hé asynetos autón kardix*, Romans 1:22) appropriates for human credit, in the Name of Cultural Task, the cosmic saving work of Jesus Christ.<sup>79</sup>

Culture is a tremendously powerful idol because it corrupts something so close to the heart of man (Satan reserved it for the hardest temptation to Christ; cf Matthew 4:1-11). Cassirer's active Cultural Imperialism should put us on guard who mean to make earnest with a new-style Reformation, lest we be seduced by a twentieth-century impatience to covet and fight to get God's kingdom (methodologically) in the hand rather than in the bush. — I do not imply the biblical alternative is jumping off a pinnacle of the temple to make your personal testimony of trust in the infallible Word of God, and let culture go at that! But it is still true: those who would save their life through cultural activity shall lose it, and whoever picks up his inescapable gift of cultural activity *for Christ's sake* (in the spirit of I Corinthians 7:31, *hós mé katachrómēnoi*) — able to let it go! — shall truly find life in his Covenanted, creaturely cultural task, and may expect with joy an obedient pilgrim-culture to be established by the Lord God Himself! who in Jesus Christ and through the workings of the Holy Spirit is specially faithful to the generations who stay close to Him (Psalm 148:11-14).

#### **PEDAGOGICAL STRENGTHS OF THIS REFORMATIONAL CHRISTIAN METHODOLOGY**

One mark of normed teaching is simplification, and *sound simplification* characterizes the christian philosophical historiographic method I have illustrated. You face a student with a text and say, let's find out now, from the text, what the temper of the times were, and how did he think his world fit together, what did he recommend we live for, what's final in his book? You look inductively in the text for answers to your interview. Where are you, Cassirer, in the garden of our Lord God? ("Oh, walking up and down throughout the whole earth, very very busy studying civilization, a personal and universal view ... ") What do you think of Jesus Christ, Machiavelli? ("I

can't see him because the ruthlessly powerful Church obstructs my view . . . ") Meister Eckhart, what time is it historically? ("A time to throw stones and a time to pick up stones, a time to love and a time to hate . . . ") Who are your friends, Heraclitus, and who are your enemies? ("Much learning does not teach understanding, otherwise it would have taught Homer and Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Hecataeus . . . ")

That is, when you begin teaching the history of philosophy, of course you disguise your scientifically precise categories in a story-telling, narrative type of way. But the point is, you focus the student's attention in on the nub of the philosophical matter; you don't just let them wander down the primrose path strewn with stones, smelling the flowers. Beginning students who don't know precisely what to look out for get lost, or simply take down and scholastically mouth whatever the teacher tells them. With four or five interview questions, you can get them listening, looking, detecting themselves, as co-workers with the instructor, what counts for the philosophical text in front of them. And it is not mickey mouse or special pleading to find out whether a given thinker be Dualist or Monist in his view of man and the world, is he a Universalist, Individualist or something else, are you a Subjectivist, Objectivist or Realist — Herschel Baker noted:

The history of ideas, like the history of music, is astonishing for the virtually infinite variations and permutations of a few basic factors. That thousands of tunes have been written from the twelve tones of our scale is no more astonishing than that for about twenty centuries men have been working out combinations and developments of perhaps half a dozen basic ideas.<sup>80</sup>

That's right, and to be vague about the basic components of a philosophy — which is always formed by a certain constellation of leading ideas that constitute a committed perspective — serves no one in teaching the history of philosophy.

"Should you hammer away at the basic categories in the abstract and then apply them only when you know what they mean? or do you start reading Kant and then figure

out whether and what categories make sense?" That is a question like whether one should learn declensions, conjugations and the *der-die-das-die* paradigm first or should you begin sounding out *Vater unser* — which comes first, chicken or the egg? The answer is neither. The key to stop christian learning from becoming rote is to see the confessional depth to one's fundamental, working categories.

I ran for cover once during a summer cloudburst in Florence to a tiny storefront doorway. Suddenly another figure raced there for refuge, a gaunt fellow with large, yellowed teeth and scraggly hair. Come to find out, he was an enthusiastic follower of Giordano Bruno, great Italian Renaissance philosopher (c 1548-1600). The rain streamed down as he waxed eloquent in our cramped shelter on the truth of Bruno's philosophy. To counter my objections he began to shout, *Iddio è nel tutto. Poggi! Poggi!! Tutto è il Dio!* The smallest drop of rain is God! And as he shouted, hooked teeth close in to my face, gesticulating madly at the torrential, pounding rain, literally pouring down upon us, I understood what he meant. Since that day wet to the skin, Universalism, *understood christianly*, has never been for me a bookish term.

One should get an initial, skeleton understanding of the concepts and then see them grow flesh-and-blood meaning in the body of a philosopher's writing. It takes time to get a feel for these carefully circumscribed problems, and one does well not to *start* learning the history of philosophy by reading Cassirer or Kant or a complex modern thinker: but after years of experience you can almost sense the philosophical neighbourhood you are likely in after reading only a few chapters attentively —

Beginners would be helped to do disciplined christian analysis in the history of philosophy if they could be led to search, within a single text, for the thinker's answers to these basic questions, and reach tentative conclusions on the quite definite crucibles in which the answers seem to take shape. That's a simple way to start — not that every text has a worked out philosophical systematics! The more sure-footed a teacher is, the more representative or pivotal or influential a text he will select for the com-

munal investigation and research, knowing his students' abilities.

Another mark of normed teaching is opening up things provocatively. Next to its sound simplification — pointing precisely to the philosophical crux you must examine — the christian method of doing philosophical historiography I have illustrated has builtin for use in teaching a *panoramic sweep and relational pregnance*. Every time you approximate a given thinker's typological slant and *Zeitgeist*, immediately every other thinker you have ever met in that neighbourhood, throughout the ages, comes to mind, and sparks of recognition, insight and questions start to crowd the classroom; and everything you know about that certain period of history from its art and fashions, music, wars and social conditions, becomes grist for filtering down to illuminate the Spirit gripping the text.

For example, in connection with the neighbourhood of Geneticistic Contradictory Monism, this method spurs you to notice and ask: Would Hobbes be in the same ballpark with Machiavelli, or would their neighbourhoods just be close enough so they could talk over the backyard fence? Does this mean Hegel and Lenin are really bed-fellows, with essentially the same structure to their thought? — so people don't need to be mystified that Hegel got picked up by "dialectical materialism," and it's very true, obvious! what Peter Viereck mentioned in 1949 that fascism and (Soviet) communism are two sides of the same coin!<sup>81</sup> And no wonder Cassirer spent half-a-book time parsing, of all people, Nicholas Cusanus.<sup>82</sup> It makes sense too that Cassirer, who gave the last word to Heraclitus,<sup>83</sup> could be so dispassionately positive toward Machiavelli around Hitler's time<sup>84</sup> and not see that opportunism and imperialistic fascism is built-in to the thought-pattern of Hegel!<sup>85</sup> And it's not unusual then, since Meister Eckhart attracted those rebelling against Scholastic Thomism, that Geneticistic Kierkegaard became a rallying point for those fed up with a Spiritualistic Lutheranism in the state of Denmark and the Scholastic Structuralism of so much stuffy, late nineteenth century Protestant orthodoxism? And so on.

The point is, this kind of opening-up, encyclopedic stimulation comes independent of whether the professor has a fascinating classroom personality or not (which is not, of

course, to be discounted pedagogically). And the provocative stimulation is directed toward *philosophical* matters — a weak teacher of philosophy will often take refuge in general cultural history. (Also, when you are teaching the history of *philosophy*, the important *Zeitgeist* study must elucidate the *philosophical* position and not dissipate that focus.) Beginning students are not penalized because of their incomplete knowledge by this directed stimulation. Rather, if a student who has been analyzing Heraclitus carefully hears mentioned in the same neighbourhood-breath thinkers like Cusanus, Eckhart, Machiavelli, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Lenin and Cassirer, he makes a mental note of it, like receiving a fleeting handshake in a crowd, until he can go back and talk at length with Hegel. This method helps one slowly build up firsthand knowledge in the history of philosophy without being locked up, as it were, in a monographic room.

The strong panoramic sweep and relational pregnancy is not forced. Similar type of philosophic position does not mean “influence” the way so many empiricistic Structuralist thinkers would push it, on the model of physiochemical, direct-effect causality (which, incidentally, only atomizes the historiography of philosophy into unrelated snapshot studies or the interminable “no doubt” evidence of so many Ph.D theses).<sup>86</sup> It just becomes an exhilarating, integrative experience for a student to discover, at best by surprise, without being explicitly told, how similar in makeup, for example, Heraclitus, Eckhart, Machiavelli, Hegel and Cassirer really are. Suddenly there comes a wholesome ordering principle into the unholy disarray of unrelated figures! And once one is able to grasp that philosophic historical continuity is typological rather than genetic, teleological or non-existent, and one begins to contrast philosophical neighbourhoods,<sup>87</sup> the excitement increases, because then one is empowered to expose the many false alternatives men have stupidly accepted and reject the oversimplifications prevalent in traditional philosophical historiography, thanks to a largely common (unbiblical) myopia and astigmatic vision. Again, such provocative integration is not dependent upon the learning and wisdom of a given teaching personality, but is a strength this particular method encourages and affords.

A key mark of normed teaching that would be a witness to christian pedagogy is confrontation of the student with the Truth. *Structured confrontation with the Truth* is indeed an exceptional strength and blessing of the philosophical historiographic method I have illustrated and recommend for teachers who are in earnest about christian historiography of philosophy. You are faced by this method with the fact that there is nothing new under the sun in philosophy if your stance on the crucial, fundamental issues is at odds with the vision that the Biblical Scriptures ask us to accept and obey. "Nothing new under the sun" does not just mean your philosophy is unoriginal, repetitive or dull. "Nothing new under the sun" means, for example, that if your thought-pattern falls into the contours of a Geneticistic Contradictory Monism, your philosophy is filled with the Lie and is a philosophic Way of death!

You have compromised the open revelation of God in creation, epitomized redemptively in his Son, and made graciously known to us fallen creatures again in the Bible, by confessing that the Source of everything is hidden, whimsical and uncertain. You have negated the reality of sin by absorbing the matter of direction as well as structure into an ongoing process that has no room for right and wrong, obedience and disobedience against the law of the Lord, but only relative good responses in contrary and contradictory tension, temporary failings that will come out in the wash. If you are a thinker caught in a Geneticistic Contradictory Monistic neighbourhood of philosophy, you contrive to efface the real struggle in history between the Rule of Jesus Christ and the godless principalities of this aeon by making-believe we should fight the good fight of an elite race against the masses, gnostics against ritualists, the cultured against the unlettered, one nation against another earthly nation, misleading and being misled. And you have smothered the possibility of repentance and sanctified action among men into a generally unattached, deeply energetic, give-your-guts fervour of heroic activity. Such is the particular dead-end character within the philosophical neighbourhood of Geneticistic Contradictory Monism.

This christian method of philosophical historiography makes clear that there are a number of different, recurrent conceptual neighbourhoods (or, if you will,



“families of ideas”) which hold men captive, and are attractive, thoughtful ways to go to hell. That has tremendous *pedagogical* strength, because then teaching and learning the history of philosophy is not some pointless archive work churned out by remote specialists or like playing bridge well: it is a matter of life and death! So it is, done christianly. Anyone whose mind is framed by a godless philosophical neighbourhood — even a born-again Christian — is dead wrong! and such a *thought-perspective* must be converted, subjected to Jesus Christ, on pain of much evil and misery. And it is never a question of being fair or “doing justice” to a “dead thinker” as a christian teacher in the history of philosophy. Instead, a christian teacher must make Machiavelli or Kant or, say, Sartre, live as vividly as Proverbs 7 details the doings of “the strange woman,” so that students may indeed sense the seductive pull of each earnest idolatry — idols are never straw men — the terrible, suicidal vanity that makes you covet it yourself and simultaneously weep bitterly at such wasted brilliance. The christian philosophical historiography I have illustrated sets up this kind of pedagogical confrontation within biblically sure, christian categories that firmly lead one to discern Truth clearly from the complicities of error.

Let no one think a christian philosophical historiographic methodology encourages students to hole away in their own little christian neighbourhood and close the doors and windows, since there is so much contagious philosophical disease around. No Christian may be so self-centred.

We who do have the Truth in philosophically earthen vessels<sup>88</sup> are called upon, if that is our professional ministry, to serve the philosophical neighbourhoods of the world, devastated today by plague of secular disbelief in Jesus Christ’s Rule, serve them with critically christian, philosophical historiographic instruments and healing, before it is autopsy time. Not only to help protect the little ones of God’s folk from stumbling, but also to be obedient in loving our neighbour, lest when the Lord returns he say, “And why did you not visit me (*heni . . . tōn elachistōn*) in the neighbourhood of Geneticistic Contradictory Monism, and give me a cup of cold water and make me privy to your philosophical shalom?”<sup>89</sup>

I pray that this volume honoring Prof J A L Taljaard may encourage many of the younger generation of God's people to join in the work he has shared, studying and teaching redemptively the history of philosophy, so that the Lord may greet a host of obedient philosophical witnesses too, as faithful servants.

#### **CALVIN G SEERVELD**

**CALVIN GEORGE SEERVELD** was born in 1930. He studied English literature, philosophy and classics at Calvin College and the University of Michigan. After five years of graduate study he received the Ph D from the Free University of Amsterdam with a dissertation entitled, *Benedetto Croce's Earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism* (1958). Some other publications: *A Christian Critique of Art and Literature* (1964), *The Greatest Song: In Critique of Solomon* (1967) and *A Turnabout in Aesthetics to understanding!* (1972). After thirteen years of developing philosophy instruction at Trinity Christian College outside Chicago, he accepted (1972) the chair for Aesthetics at the graduate Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

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#### NOTES:

1. Cf C G Seerveld, "Biblical Wisdom underneath Vollenhoven's Categories for Philosophical Historiography," in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy*, ed H Dooyeweerd (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1973), pp 127-143.
2. D H Th Vollenhoven, *Geschiedenis der Wijsbegeerte*, deel I, Inleidingen Geschiedenis der Griekse Wijsbegeerte vóór Platoon en Aristoteles (Franeker: T Wever, 1950, 618 pp) and articles such as 'Ennoëtisme en 'ahoristos dyas' in het praeplatonische denken," *Philosophia Reformata* 19 (nos 2-3, 1954) :58-86, and 19 (no 4, 1954) : 145-168.
3. H E Runner, *The Development of Aristotle illustrated from the earliest Books of the Physics* (Kampen, 1951); J A L Taljaard, *Franz Brentano as wysgeer* (Franeker, 1955); C G Seerveld, *Benedetto Croce's earlier aesthetic theories and literary criticism* (Kampen, 1958); H Hart, *Communal Certainty and Authorized Truth; an examination of John Dewey's philosophy of verification* (Amsterdam, 1966).
4. Vollenhoven's short survey of philosophy, *Kort overzicht van de geschiedenis der wijsbegeerte voor de cursus Paedagogiek M O A.* (Amsterdam: Uitgave Theja, 1956, 42 pp) indicates better the potential of his methodology for teaching undergraduates the history of philosophy. J M Spier's attempt in *Van Thales tot Sartre; wijsgeren uit oude en nieuwe tijd* (Kampen: J H Kok n v, 1959, 218 pp) to point toward the work of Vollenhoven mixed with Sassen suffers from the thankless and impossible task of old-fashioned handbooks — cite the special commonplaces about a thinker and dispense with him in a page or two of print. Spier's book lacks the colour and body of Gordon H Clark's history of philosophy, *Thales to Dewey* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co, 1957, xii-548), which, however, tends to dissolve the seriousness of the enterprise into diffident wit. The introductory class syllabi of John C van der Stelt, e.g *Survey of Contemporary European Philosophy* (Sioux Center: Dordt College, 1972), and John van Dyk, *Survey of the History of Philosophy* (Sioux Center: Dordt College, 1969-70), struggle with the dilemma of Spier too, and try to highlight the christian insight and conceptual results of Vollenhoven's work for the history of philosophy. But needed most at this time, perhaps, is to find a way of engaging others in the basic elements of this christian historiographic methodology, learning to use it on a defined problem. Cf John C van der Stelt's good article on "Kuyper's Semi-Mystical Conception, in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy* (Toronto, 1973), pp 178-190.
5. For orientation of Friedrich Gundolf, "Historiography" (1936) in *Philosophy and History. The Ernst Cassirer Festschrift*, eds R Klibansky and H J Paton (Harper Torchbook, 1963), pp 277-282; and Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past* (1955) (Cambridge University Press, 1969), xvii-238.
6. Emile Bréhier, "The Formation of our History of Philosophy" (1936), in *Philosophy and History. The Ernst Cassirer Festschrift* (Harper Torchbook, 1963), pp 159-172.
7. Background materials for this argued position can be found listed in *Perspectief. Feestbundel van de Jongeren bij het 25-jarig bestaan van de Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* (Kampen: J H Kok, 1961), Vollenhoven bibliography edited by C Groen, pp 99-112; and cf K A Brill, "A Selected and Annotated

Bibliography of D H Th Vollenhoven," in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy* (Toronto, 1973), pp 212-228. Of special note is the monograph by A M Wolters, *An Essay on the Idea of Problemgeschichte* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Interfaculteit, 1970), 69 pp.

8. C G Seerveld, "Biblical Wisdom underneath Vollenhoven's Categories for Philosophical Historiography," p 135 ss.
9. It is an important question outside the purview of this article whether the problematics with which christian historian Herbert Butterfield (cf among others, *Christianity and History*, 1949) works is entirely free from such ambivalence. In evaluating Lord Acton and Ranke's use of Providence in historiography, Butterfield says: "The truth is that technical history is a limited and mundane realm of description and explanation, in which local and concrete things are achieved by a disciplined use of tangible evidence. I should not regard a thing as 'historically' established unless the proof were valid for the Catholic as well as the Protestant, for the Liberal as well as the Marxist. . . . Each of these can add his judgements and make his evaluations; and they can at least begin by having some common ground for the great debate that still lies open to them. Those who bring their religion to the interpretation of the story are naturally giving a new dimension to events; but they will not be less anxious than anybody else to know what can be historically established" (*Man on His Past*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp 139-140). It seems to me that limiting "what can be historically established" to "a limited and mundane realm of description and explanation" while yet making room for variously committed "evaluations" and "interpretation," still halts problematically between and tries to synthetically join two conflicting positions — the Positivist-inspired *ideal* in Ranke's *wie es eigentlich gewesen* and a vision true to I Corinthians 2:6-16. Dooyeweerd's insightful judgment can help us appreciate the ambiguity of such a struggle: ". . . in such a partial christian groundmotive the synthesis-in-appearance may be so arranged that the adapted non-christian motive is almost completely controlled by the specifically christian one. In this case the universal significance of the antithesis can indeed be recognized also for the issues of temporal life. But it will nevertheless not be understood as it would if the Scriptural groundmotive had penetrated completely" (H Dooyeweerd, *Vernieuwing en Bezinning om het Reformatorisch Grondmotief* Zutphen: J B van den Brink & Co, 1959, p 13; translated by J N Kraay and B Zylstra as *Reconstruction and Reformation* (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1970), sec 1-6). Singleminded reformation and biblically-directed formulation of a creational norm for "description and explanation" seems imperative to me if christian historiographers are ever going to break with a synthetic-christian *ideal*, that misleads both children of God and disbelievers. Cf Robert McAfee Brown, "The Reformed Tradition and Higher Education," in *The Christian Scholar* 41 (no 1, March 1958) : 21-40; and the dialogue contributions treating the same problem in literary criticism by N Vos, C G Seerveld, V Mollenkott, E C Vanderlip and K Richardson, in *Newsletter of the Conference on Christianity and Literature* 16 (no 2, Winter 1967); 5-13; 16 (no 3, Spring 1967): 2-4; 16 (no 4, Summer 1967): 10-16. My colleague C Thomas McIntire enters the lists for christian historiography with his inaugural

- address, *The Ongoing Task of Christian Historiography* (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1974), 22 pp.
10. F Gundolf, "Historiography," pp 280-281; E Bréhier and the striking quote from Lessing, "The Formation of our History of Philosophy," pp 128-130.
  11. The complexity of historiography, as a defined task, concerns at the least professional historians, philosophers and aestheticians. Gundolf raises the importance of the style question to influential historians from Herodotus, Thucydides and Tacitus to Herder and Ranke ("Historiography," pp 277-278). Benedetto Croce struggled his whole life to lay the problem to rest, first tending to conceive historiography in the form of art, which treats what is "individual" ("La storia ridotta sotto il concetto generale dell'arte" (1893), in *Primi Saggi*, 3rd edition (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1951), 1-41; cf C G Seerveld, *Benedetto Croce's Earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism* (Kampen: J H Kok, 1958), pp 4-6), and later ascribing a rather "universalizing" power to historiography, so it could act as catharsis towards the past and as a propaedeutic instrument for moral (future) action ("La Storia come Pensiero e come Azione" (1938) in *La Storia come Pensiero e come Azione*, 6th edition (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1954), pp 31-33; "Storiografia e Politica," *Ibid*, pp 177-181, 191-194; and "Storiografia e Morale," *Ibid*, pp 211-219, e g "Si potrebbe altresì esprimere questo concetto nella formula: che la conoscenza storica è dell'individuo agente e non del paziente ... e azione importa attuazione di valori o di universali," *Ibid*, p 218). Croce's final position on the unity of philosophy and historiography (cf "Considerazioni Finali," *Ibid*, pp 333-335), in conscious polemic with Hegel ("... lo Hegel mirava a risolvere la storia nella filosofia col darle l'andamento di un sistema che si svolga e compia nel tempo, e noi miriamo, invece, a risolvere la filosofia nella storia, considrandola come un momento astratto dello stesso pensiero storico e i suoi sistemi come sistemazioni storicamente transeunti e storicamente giustificate, e come ogni atto storico, di valore eterno," "Prospettive Storiografiche," *Ibid*, p 277; cf also "Hegel e la storiografia" (1951) in *Indagini su Hegel e Schiarimenti Filosofici* (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1952), pp 87-91), animated by a strong Lebensphilosophic spirit that confesses a lofty Humanism ("La Storiografia senza Problema Storico," *Ibid*, pp 77-79, 100; "La Certezza e la Verità Storica," *Ibid*, pp 116-117; and titular essay in *La Storia come Pensiero e come Azione*, pp 1-52 *passim*. This collection was translated by S Sprigge as *History as the Story of Liberty* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1941). Cf C G Seerveld, *Benedetto Croce's Earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism*, pp 102-104), still did not resolve the problem. In fact, this influential position, which makes philosophy the methodology of historiographic thought ("La Certezza e la Verità Storica," *Ibid*, pp 140-141; cf also "Unità logica e unità mitologica della filosofia con la storiografia" (1947) in *Filosofia e Storiografia* (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1949), pp 188-192), adopted by Collingwood in *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), and practised years before in Windelband's *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (1891), translated into English by J H Tufts, 1892; cf also Windelband's essay on "Was ist Philosophie?" (1882) in *Präludien*, 3 A. (Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1907) (structuralistically confuses history with human "logical" "creative activity," historiography with

- “absolute spiritual” science, and leave literarily formulated knowledge on the tenterhooks of a concrete universal. But a thorough-going critique of this tempting conception of historiography is beyond the scope of the present article.
12. Cf C G Seerveld, “A Skeleton to Pedagogy. Christian Analysis,” an unpublished address delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 1965, which develops certain ideas found in my *Cultural Objectives for the Christian Teacher* (1964) (Seattle: Pacific Northwest Christian Teachers Association, 1966), pp 18-23. For pertinent materials cf A N Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (1929) (Mentor, 1949); A Janse, *Het Eigen Karakter der Christelijke School* (Kampen: J H Kok, 1935); K J Popma, “Opvoeding, Onderwijs, Schoolverband,” in *Philosophia Reformata* 12 (nos 1-3, 1947): 36-41, 86-93, 130-144, especially thesis VI: “Het schoolonderwijs is niet primair-practisch en draagt een interpretatief karakter, zoowel in analytischen als aesthetischen zin”; Jan Waterink, *Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1954); Guido Calogero, “Educazione e istruzione” and “L’educazione e la tecnica,” in *La Scuola dell’ Uomo* (Firenze: G C Sansoni, 1956), pp 124-137, 163-176; Max Guzilowski, “Discussion in teaching philosophy,” *Teaching Thomism Today* (Washington, D C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), pp 183-193; David R Hunter, *Christian Education as Engagement* (New York: Seabury Press, 1963).
  13. Cf the unifying refrain of Proverbs 22:17-24:22, found in 23:17-18, 24:14 and 24:20-21.
  14. Cf “The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep” and “The Instruction of Amen-em-opet” in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed James B Pritchard, third edition with supplement (Princeton University Press, 1969), pp 412-414, 421-425.
  15. “Many poets since then have conjured up the gods and heroes of pagan mythology; but now we think of them merely as the shadowy puppets of poetic fancy. We might easily regard Homer from the same narrow point of view; but if we did, we should never come to understand what myth and poetry really meant to the Greeks” (I,35). “And the greatest of Greek poetry does more than show a cross-section of life taken at random. It tells the truth; but it chooses and presents its truth in accordance with a definite ideal” (I,36). “The Homeric epics contain the germs of all Greek philosophy. In them we can clearly see the anthropocentric tendency of Greek thought, that tendency which contrasts so strongly with the theomorphic philosophy of the Oriental who sees God as the sole actor and man as merely the instrument or object of that divine activity” (I,53). Werner Jaeger on “Homer the Educator” in *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture* (1933), second ed 1945, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), volume I.
  16. Cf R Ross Holloway, “Archaic Sculptural Form,” in *A View of Greek Art* (London: Harper & Row Icon edition, 1973), pp 31-44.
  17. Heraclitus in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed Diels-Kranz, 6 ed (Berlin-Grünwald: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951): *ginomenón gar pantón kata ton logon tonde frag 1*; cf frag 8, 30-31, 60, 67, 76-77, 103, 118.
  18. *Ibid*, for example, frag 2, 29, 72, 114; *tón men theón kala panta kai agatha kai dikaia, anthrópoi de ha men adika hypeiléphasin ha de dikaia frag 102* and *sophié aléthea legein kai poiein kata physin epaiontas frag 112*.

19. *Ibid*, for example, frag 33, 41, 49-50, 51 *palintropos harmonié*, 61, 123.
20. *Ibid*, frag 80, translated by Philip Wheelwright, *The PreSocratics* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1966), p 71 as fragment 26.
21. Cf how the goddess Athena approves of Odysseus' lying straight to her face, *Odyssey*, 13:287-310.
22. Cf Émile Mâle, *L'art Religieux du XIIIe Siècle en France* 1913 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1948), pp 395-403.
23. *Summa Theologica*, I q 1 8 ad 2.
24. "Wan swer got suochet in wise, der nimet die wise und lât got, der in der wise verborgen ist" (Sermon *In hoc apparuit caritas Dei in nobis* in *Meister Eckharts Traktate*, ed Josef Quint (Berlin: W Kohlhammer Verlag, 1963), 1:91). "... gebetene, an vastenne, an wachenne und aller hande üzerlicher üebunge und kestigunge. Ein ieglichiu eigenschaft eines ieglichen werkes, das die vrheit benimet, in disem gegenwertigen nû gote ze wartenne und dem aleine ze volgenne ..." (Sermon *Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum*, 1:28-29). "Dise menschen heizent heilic von den üzwendigen bilden; aber von innen sint sie esel, wan sie enverstânt niht den underscheit götlicher wârheit" (Sermon *Beati pauperes spiritu*, 2:489-490).
25. Sermon *Beati pauperes spiritu*, *Ibid*, 2:506.
26. "... Alle créatüren verzlhent sich irs lebens uf ir wesen. Alle créatüren tragent sich in mine vernunft, daz si in mir vernünftic sint. Ich alleine bereite alle créatüren wider zuo gote" (Sermon *Nolite timere eos* in *Meister Eckhart*, ed Franz Pfeiffer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914 reprint of 1857 edition), p 180.
27. "Allez, das got wûrket, das wûrket er in dem einen im selben glîch" (Sermon *Ego elegi vos de mundo* in *Meister Eckharts Traktate*, ed Quint, 2:63). "Her üz drûcket im got, der êwige vater, die vüllede und den abgrunt aller sîner gotheit. Das gebirt er hie in sînem eingebornen sune und daz wir der selbe sun sîn, und sîn gehern das ist sîn inneblîben, und sîn inneblîben ist sîn üzgebern" (2:68). "Si enmac niht geliden, das iht ob ir sî. Ich waene, si joch niht geliden enmûge, daz got ob ir sî ..." (Sermon *Consideravit semitas domus suae*, 2:143). "... got und gotheit hât underscheit als verre als himel und erde. Ich spriche mê: der inner und úzer mensche die hânt also verre underscheit als himel und erde. Got hât vil tûsent mîllen dar obe. Got wirt unt entwirt. ... Got ist in der sêle mit sîner nâtûre, mit sûne wesenne unde mit sîner gotheit und er enist doch niht diu sêle. Daz widerspilen der sêle das ist in gote. God unde si ist doch daz si ist. Got der wirt dá alle créatüren. Gotes sprechen dá gewirt got. Dô ich stuont in dem grunde, in dem boden, in dem river und in der quelle der gotheit, dá frâgete mich nieman, war ich wolte oder waz ich tête: dá enwas nieman, der mich frâgete. Dô ich flôz, dô sprâchen al créatüren got. ... Got wirket, diu gotheit wirket niht, si enhât niht ze wirkenne, in ir ist kein werc. ... Got unde gotheit hât underscheit an wûrken und an niht-wûrken. Swenne ich kume wider in got, bilde ich dá niht, sô ist mîn durbrechen vil edeler danne mîn üzfluz. Ich alleine bringe alle créatüren üz ir vernunft in mîn vernunft, daz sie in mir eine sint. Swenne ich kume in den grunt, in den bodem, in den river und in die quelle der gotheit, so frâget mich nieman, wannen ich kome oder wâ ich sî gewesen. Dâ vermiste mîn nieman, daz entwirt" (Sermon *Nolite timere eos* in *Meister Eckhart*, ed Pfeiffer, pp 180-181).

28. "Wan der ewige vater gebirt sīnen ewigen sun des vaters und sich selber den selben sun in der einiger kraft des vaters" (Sermon *Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum* in *Eckharts Traktate*, ed Quint, 1:32). "Diu selbe kraft, dar abe ich gesprochen hān, dā got inne ist blūejende und grūenende mit aller sīner gotheit und der geist in gote, in dirre selber kraft ist der vater gebernde sīnen eingebornen sun als gewaerliche als in im selber ..." (1:40-41).
29. "Dā diu crēatūre endet, dā beginnet got ze sīnne. Nū begert got niht mē von dir, wan daz dū dīn selbes ūzgangest in crēatiurlicher wise und lāzest got got in dir sīn" (Sermon *In hoc apparuit caritas Dei in nobis*, *Ibid*, 1:92). "... diu sēle gesast sī in ein lūter wesen. Daz ander ist, daz ez in mi treit widersatzunge. ... Dar an liget der sēle lūterkeit, daz si geliutert ist von einem lebene, daz geteilet ist, und tritet in ein leben, daz vereinet ist. Allez daz geteilet ist in nidern sachen, daz wirt vereinet, als diu sēle ūfklimmet in ein leben, dā kein widersatzunge enist" (Sermon *In occisione gladii mortui sunt*, 1:135-136). "Dō ich stuont in mīner ērsten sache, dō enhāte ich keinen got, und dō was ich sache mīn sebles. ... Das ich wolte, das was ich, und daz ich was, daz wolte ich, und hie stuont ich ledic gotes und aller dinge. Aber dō ich ūzgienc von mīnen vrīen willen und ich enpfīenc mīn geschaffen wesen, dō hāte ich einen gōt; wan ē die crēatūren wāren, dō enwas got niht 'got,' mēr: er was, das er was. Aber dō die crēatūren gewurden und sie enpfīengen ir geschaffen wesen, dō enwas got niht 'got' in im selben, mēr: er was 'got' in den crēatūren" (Sermon *Beati pauperes spiritu*, 2:492-493). "Alhie, in dirre armuot sō ervolget der mensche daz ewic wesen, das er ist gewesen und daz er nū ist and daz er iemer blīben sol" (2:501). "... wan ich enpfāhe in diesem durchbrechen, das ich und got einz sīn" (2:505).
30. *Von abgescheidenheit*, *Ibid*, 5:412.
31. "Die meister sprechent, got der sī ein wesen und ein vernūnftic wesen und bekenne alliu dinc. Sō sprechen wir: got enist niht wesen noch vernūnftic noch enbekennet niht diz noch daz" (Sermon *Beati pauperes spiritu*, *Ibid*, 2:497), translated by R B Blakney, *Meister Eckhart* (Harper Torchbook 8, 1957), p 230.
32. "Vernunft diu bliket in unde durbrichte alle die winkel der gotheit unde nimet den sun in dem herzen des vater und in dem grunde unde setzet in in iren grunt. Vernunft diu dringet in, ir genūeget niht an gūeti noch an wīsheit noch an wārheit noch an gote selber. ... Si geruowet niemer, si brichet in den grunt, dā gūete unde wārheit ūz brichet, unde nimet ez in principio, in dem beginne, dā gūeti unde wārheit ūz gānde ist, ē si ūz breche, in eime vil hoeheren grunde denne gūeti und wīsheit sī" (Sermon *Modicum et iam non videbitis me* in *Meister Eckhart*, ed Pfeiffer, pp 144-145). "Wan den guoten koment alliu dinc ze guote, als sant Paulus sprichet, und als sant Augustīnus sprichet: 'jā, ouch diesūnden'" (*Die rede der underscheidunge*, *Eckharts Traktate*, ed Quint, 5:231). "Aber dū solt gote wol getriuwen, daz er dir des niht verhenget haete, er enwōlte denne dīn bestez das ūz ziehen" (5:233).
33. Cf Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 501-529, for the exact errors Pope John XXII cited on 27 March 1329, which the Roman church said *damnamus et reprobamus* expresse.
34. "Wan das got ist got, das hāt er von sīner unbewegelichen abgescheidenheit ..." (*Von abgescheidenheit* in *Eckharts Traktate*, ed Quint, 5:412).



35. "Got möhte niemer nieman funden hân, als der wîse sprichet 'herre, dû bist ein verborgen got?' Wâ ist dirre got? Reht als sich ein mensche verbirget, sô rûnstert er sich unde vermeldet sich selber dâ mite, also hât ouch got getân. Got kûnde niemer nieman funden hân; nû hêt er sich vermeldet" (Sermon *Laudate coeli et exultet terra* in *Meister Eckhart*, ed Pfeiffer, p 301).
36. Cf Pico della Mirandola: *Invadat animus sacra quaedam ambitio ut mediocribus non contenti anhelemus ad summa, adque illa (quando possumus si volumus) consequenda totis viribus enitatur (De Hominis Dignitate, 1486 (ed E Garin, Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1942, p 110).*
37. "Onde è necessario a uno principe, volendosi mantenere, imparare a potere essere non buono, e usarlo e non usare secondo la necessità" in *Il Principe* (no. 15).
38. "... tutt'i profeti armati vincono, e li disarmati ruinarono" (*Ibid*, no 6) *uses Savonarola's fall as case in point.*
39. "Non di manco perchè el nostro libero arbitrio non sia spento, iudico potere esser vero che la fortuna sia arbitra della metà delle azioni nostre, ma che ancora lei ne lasci governare l'altra metà, o presso, a noi" (*Ibid*, no 25); "... el tempo si caccia innanzi ogni cosa, e può condurre seco bene come male, e male come bene" (*Ibid*, no 3).
40. *Ibid*, no 9.
41. *Ibid*, no 18, no 25.
42. *Ibid*, no 17, no 19. "E però bisogna che elli abbia uno animo disposto a volgersi secondo ch' e' venti e le variazioni della fortuna li comandano, e come di sopra dissi, non partirsi dal bene, potendo, ma sapere intrare nel male, necessitato" (*Ibid*, no 18). "E sopra tutto uno principe si debbe ingegnare dare di sè, in ogni sua azione, fama di uomo grande e di uomo eccellente" (*Ibid*, no 21).
43. *Ibid*, no 7.
44. "E quelle difese solamente sono buone, sono certe, sono durabili, che dependono da te proprio e dalla virtù tua" (*Ibid*, no 24). "Non si può ancora chiamare virtù ammazzare li suoi cittadini, tradire li amici, essere senza fede, senza pietà, senza religione; li quali modi possono fare acquistare imperio, ma non gloria" (*Ibid*, no 8).
45. *Ibid*, no 26.
46. Socrates' commitment to *areté* (cf Machiavelli's *virtù!*) led him to make this kind of Objectivistic point in a somewhat different neighbourhood of thought. Cf *Crito, ou to zên peri pleistou poiéteov alla to eu zên* 48b 5-6.
47. ... ad prudentiam pertinet non solum consideratio rationis, sed etiam applicatio ad opus, quae est finis practicae rationis. ... Operationes autem sunt in singularibus. Et ideo necesse est quod prudens et cognoscat universalia principia rationis, et cognoscat singularia, circa quae sunt operationes (*Summa Theologica*, II-II q 47 3 res). ... prudentia proprie est circa ea quae sunt ad finem; et hoc ad eius officium proprie pertinet, ut ad finem debite ordinentur (*Ibid*, II-II q 49 6 res).
48. To hear a holy Spirited insight to which Machiavelli's is diametrically opposed, cf Luther: *Ein fest Burg ist unser Gott, ein gute Wehr und Waffen. Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not die uns itzt hat getroffen ...* Also cf John Calvin: *Quare nulli jam dubium esse debet quin civilis potestas, vocatio sit, non modo coram Deo sancta & legitima, sed sacerrima etiam, et in tota mortalium vita longe omnium honestissima (Institutio Christianae religionis, 1536, IV 20:4).* The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) also posits the

- Scriptural thesis in Lord's Day 10 on providence, to which Machiavelli's considered stance is a rigorous anti-thesis.
49. *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (1944) (Doubleday Anchor, 1953), p 221. At present it seems to me that the philosophical position Cassirer has around 1923 remains basically the same until his death.
  50. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans R Manheim (1923) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 1:87; *Essay on Man*, p 220; "... the naked core of mere sensation, which merely is (without representing anything), never exists in the actual consciousness; if it exists at all, it is the prime example of that illusion which William James called 'the psychologist's fallacy.' Once we have fundamentally freed ourselves from this illusion, once we have recognized that not sensations but intuitions, not elements but formed totalities, comprise the data of consciousness, we can only ask: what is the relationship between the form of these intuitions and the representative function they have to fulfill?" *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1929) (Yale University Press, 1970), 3:141.
  51. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:167-176; *Essay on Man*, pp 241, 246-254.
  52. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans Mario Domandi (1927) (Harper Torchbook 1097, 1964), pp 182-184.
  53. Cassirer affirms the Kepler-Galilei position of Rationalism in its Kantian "critical" format. Cf his article on "Rationalism" in *Encyclopedia Britannica* 18 (14th edition, 1929): 991-993.
  54. "It is science that gives us the assurance of a constant world. To science we may apply the words spoken by Archimedes; *dos moi pou stô kai kosmon kinêsô*. . . . *In a changing universe scientific thought fixes the points of rest, the unmovable poles*" (*Essay on Man*, p 261).
  55. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:77s; "... das, was wir den Gegenstand nennen, nicht in der Art einer festen und starren *forma substantialis*, sondern als Funktionsform zu fassen ist. Und es zeigt sich zugleich, wie sich der wahre Reichtum des *Seins* erst aus dem Reichtum des *Sinns* entfaltet . . . ("Das Symbolproblem und seine Stellung im System der Philosophie," *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* (1927) 21:312).
  56. *Essay on Man*, p 75.
  57. "... the fundamental view on which this book rests: the conviction that language, like all basic functions of the human spirit, can be elucidated by philosophy only within a general system of philosophical idealism" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:72).
  58. "Every authentic function of the human spirit has this decisive characteristic in common with cognition: it does not merely copy but rather embodies an original, formative power. . . . Each of these functions creates its own symbolic forms . . . each of them designates a particular approach, in which and through which it constitutes its own aspect of 'reality.' They are not different modes in which an independent reality manifests itself to the human spirit but roads by which the spirit proceeds towards its objectivization, i e, its self-revelation" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:78).
  59. *Essay on Man*, p 177.
  60. "Its (myth) objectivity — and from the critical standpoint this is true of all cultural objectivity — must be defined not thing-wise but functionally: this objectivity lies neither in a metaphysical

nor in an empirical-psychological 'reality' which stands *behind* it, but in what myth itself is and achieves, in the manner and form of *objectivization* which it accomplishes. It is objective insofar as it is recognized as one of the determining factors by which consciousness frees itself from passive captivity in sensory impressions and creates a world of its own in accordance with a spiritual principle" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1925) (Yale University Press, 1970), 2:14.

61. *Kant Leben und Lehre* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1918), pp 372-384; *Essay on Man*, pp 79-80.
62. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:111; "Objectification is always a constructive process. The physical world — the world of constant things and qualities — is no mere bundle of sense data, nor is the world of art a bundle of feelings and emotions. The first depends upon acts of theoretical objectification, objectification by concepts and scientific constructs; the second upon formative acts of a different type, acts of contemplation" (*Essay on Man*, p204). ". . . the reality we apprehend is in its original form not a reality of a determinate world of things, originating apart from us; rather it is the certainty of a living efficacy that we experience. Yet this access to reality is given us not by datum of sensation but only in the original phenomenon of expression and expressive understanding" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 3:73).
63. ". . . image-worlds whose principle and origin are to be sought in an autonomous creation of the spirit. Through them alone we see what we call 'reality,' and in them alone we possess it; for the highest objective truth that is accessible to the spirit is ultimately the form of its own activity" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:111). Cf also *Essay on Man*, pp 82-86.
64. *Essay on Man*, p 93.
65. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:91.
66. *Essay on Man*, pp 95-96, 109ss, 163ss, 202, 273-275.
67. "The world of the spirit forms a very concrete unity, so much so that the most extreme oppositions in which it moves appear as somehow mediated oppositions" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 3:78). ". . . here there is a demand that consciousness — contrary to its fundamental character, contrary to the Heraclitean flux in which alone it seems to subsist . . ." (*Ibid*, 3:115). "The symbolic process is like a single stream of life and thought which flows through consciousness, and which by this flowing movement produces the diversity and cohesion, the richness, the continuity, and constancy, of consciousness" (*Ibid*, 3:202). "The inner contradictoriness, the polarity which necessarily dwells within every such form, does not rend or demolish it; rather it constitutes the condition whereby its unity may again be established out of that contradiction and may thus again present itself to the outside world" ("Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy" (1930), trans R W Bretall & P A Schilpp, in *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed P A Schilpp (Evanston: Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), p 880).
68. "Language stands in a focus of cultural life, a point at which rays of quite diverse origin converge and from which lines of influence radiate to every sphere of culture" (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:175). ". . . language, as a general cultural form, stands on the borderline between myth and logos and also represents an intermediary between the theoretical and aesthetic approach to the world" (*Ibid*, 1:297-298).

69. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 2:4.
70. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:318-319; 2:245, 250; 3:54,93. Cf also *Essay on Man*: "If there is any characteristic and outstanding feature of the mythical world, any law by which it is governed — it is this law of metamorphosis" (108). "Language is, by its very nature and essence, metaphorical. Unable to describe things directly, it resorts to indirect modes of description, to ambiguous and equivocal terms" (142). "In aesthetic life we experience a radical transformation" (204). "It is this 'palingenesis,' this rebirth of the past, which marks and distinguishes the great historian" (225).
71. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 2:235; 3:115; *Essay on Man*, p 215.
72. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 2:xv; *Essay on Man*, p. 29; "The various forms of human culture are not held together by an identity in their nature but by a conformity in their fundamental task. If there is an equipoise in human culture it can only be described as a dynamic, not as a static equilibrium; it is the result of a struggle between opposing forces" (*Ibid*, p 279). *The Myth of the State* (posthumously, 1946) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p 279.
73. For example: Cassirer genially explains why Nazism and recism, for example, cannot be refuted by argument — political myths have to be grappled with as myths, not as ludicrous arguments (cf *The Myth of the State*, pp 279, 297). There seems to be an onus on reverting to "myths" as a man of twentieth century culture and science. Yet Cassirer insists upon their relative, anthropological values (cf *Essay on Man*, p 103ss).
74. *Essay on Man*, p 88.
75. "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy," Schilpp ed *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, p 879; cf 877s.
76. *Essay on Man*, p 286.
77. *Essay on Man*, p 86.
78. *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 2:26; 3:189-190. "(Culture) is an organon of our self-knowledge . . ." (*Essay on Man*, p 260).
79. "This spontaneity and productivity is the very center of all human activities. It is man's highest power and it designates at the same time the natural boundary of our human world. In language, in religion, in art, in science, man can do no more than to build up his own universe — a symbolic universe that enables him to understand and interpret, to articulate and organize, to synthesize and universalize his human experience" (*Essay on Man*, p 278). "Cognition, language, myth and art: none of them is a mere mirror, simply reflecting images of inward or outward data; they are not indifferent media, but rather *the true sources of light, the prerequisite of vision, and the wellsprings of all formation*" (my italics) (*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1:93).
80. Herschel Baker, *The Image of Man. A Study of the Idea of Human Dignity in Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Harper Torchbook 1047, 1961), p 301.
81. Peter Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited* (1949).
82. "Of all the philosophical movements and efforts of the Quattrocento, only his doctrines fulfil Hegel's demand; only they represent a 'simple focal point' in which the most diverse rays are gathered. Cusanus is the only thinker of the period to look at all of the fundamental problems of his time from the point of view of one principle through which he masters them all" (*The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, p 7).

83. "The dissonant is in harmony with itself; the contraries are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent: 'harmony in contrariety, as in the case of the bow and the lyre'" (*Essay on Man*, p 286).
84. *The Myth of the State*, pp 153-154, 162. Cassirer believes one could extol the State but not thereby support a modern totalitarian system, so long as the State is kept from monitoring the culture (*Ibid*, pp 274-276).
85. "In this respect Hegelianism is one of the most paradoxical phenomena in modern cultural life. There is perhaps no better and more striking example of the dialectical character of history than the fate of Hegelianism itself. The principle defended by Hegel is suddenly converted into its opposite. Hegel's logic and philosophy seemed to be the triumph of the rational. The only thought which philosophy brings with it is the simple conception of Reason; that the history of the world presents us with a rational process. But it was the tragic fate of Hegel that he unconsciously unchained the most irrational powers that have ever appeared in man's social and political life. No other philosophical system has done so much for the preparation of fascism and imperialism as Hegel's doctrine of the state — this 'divine Idea as it exists on earth'" (*Ibid*, p 273).
86. Cf my comment on "influence" in "Biblical Wisdom underneath Vollenhoven's Categories for Philosophical Historiography," in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy*, p 130.
87. I had to omit this important feature from my illustration, like comparing Machiavelli with Francis Bacon or Cassirer with Croce, in order to keep a measure of brevity.
88. I have come to be unembarrassed by the fact that the Reformation, especially as captured in the perspective developed by John Calvin, was an important gift of God to Western civilization, already blessed with strains of faulty, christian cultural obedience. I adjudge the idea of a christian philosophy developed by Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd out of that historic root to be not "under the sun" but enlightened by the Word of God enough — inceptually — so that it does service in the order of Melchizadek. Its troubled cosmic contours cannot be charted, it seems to me, in any of the (distorted) philosophical neighbourhoods Vollenhoven himself has unearthed.
89. J Klapwijk's formula of "complete openness and total opposition" of the Christian to non-christian thinking is probably correct (cf "Calvin and Neo-Calvinism on Non-Christian Philosophy" in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy*, p 61); but it may give a better setting for our work to replace "ambiguity and ambivalence of non-christian thinking" with the terms Paul uses: ignorant (Acts 17:30) and perverse (Romans 1:18).