"Moonlight in the Garden of Akademos"

Presented by

Dr. Leroy Nelson Meyer
Professor of Philosophy

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"Moonlight in the Garden of ΑΚΑΔΕΜΟΣ"

I should like to dedicate the Forty-ninth Harrington Lecture to the memory of Fred Zuercher. You can well imagine my ambivalence and the complex emotions I have. I am honored to present this lecture to my colleagues in the College of Arts and Sciences, and to the extended University, under which I include as much of humanity as would be interested. Our community of learning was deeply saddened by the unexpected death of Fred Zuercher, who was to have delivered the Harrington Lecture this night. He was a close friend and a wonderful colleague; we were "cousin Fred" and "cousin Leroy". Some years ago, Fred invited me to join a stimulating, ecumenical reading group with Howard Coker, Brent Froberg, Dennis Johnson, and Ray Ring. Fred and I canoed together in Nebraska and Arkansas; and we traveled for South Dakota Humanities Council programs throughout the state; I drove while Fred would read aloud about local history and politics. Everywhere we went, people knew Fred. In diverse circles, he graciously encouraged students, colleagues, and local citizens in reflective discussions regarding the ethics of political thought. At USD, he resurrected the ATΩ fraternity. We guest-lectured in each others classes. When he began to study Canadian politics, he committed to learning French; to practice, we would pass each other profound notes, in chairs council: *"Chaque grande chose a un fin, mais le saucisson a deux"* [Every great thing has an end, but the sausage has two]. He sent me postcards from Quebec, from Machu Picchu, and from Washington, D.C. Our last conversation was about his visit to Japan. I wish I could have been with him to help him appreciate Japan's extraordinary culture and beauty, and its puzzles for scholars of public administration. Just days before Fred died, my friend Leonard Bruguier, took the opportunity to express to him what a splendid mentor Fred had been to Leonard. He was a fine teacher and a dedicated member of the faculty of Arts and Sciences for nearly forty years.

Last year at this time I listened in awe to Cindy Struckman-Johnson (Psychology) describe her research on sexual violence in prisons of America. Through the integration of teaching, research, and service, her work exhibits the highest level of fulfillment of the complex purpose of modern higher education. Some time ago, on

a subcommittee under Don Dahlin's chairmanship of University Planning, Sylvester Clifford and I had tried to describe just such integration of the complex purpose for faculty. I think it has been exhibited in many of the Harrington Lectures thus far. I take pride in my colleagues, and their achievements have encouraged me in my research as it has grown out of my teaching and enabled me to provide some service to the university and to the public.

A college of arts and sciences, indeed, a university, is primarily a community, and to a considerable degree its character—its virtue, will be determined by the relationship among its community members. For me, The University of South Dakota has proven to be a splendid community in which to develop academically and to interact intellectually and culturally. I fully expected it to be so, from my first meeting with Nancy Skeen, when she interviewed me in Washington, D.C., in December 1977. Unlike other interviews, Nancy and I had an engaging philosophical discussion, unconstrained by time. After arriving in Vermillion, I had similar experiences repeatedly, with the late George Scott, Alex Mehaffey, Tom Gasque, the late Ray Block, John Fremstad, Susan Wolfe, Norma Wilson, John Day, Herb Hoover, Bill Farber, Alan Clem, Chuck Estee...; I run the risk of leaving out names of those who have meant a great deal to me at USD. Nancy and Herb Granger were splendid faculty mentors for me. (Jim Hollerman was then a precocious undergraduate, rather like a junior colleague.) The Humanities Research Forum that Dennis Klein had organized a few years before I arrived, afforded me the opportunity to exercise philosophical research in directions that were new to me. There I first met Norma and Jerry Wilson, who had arrived the same year. They introduced me to Native American cultures. Susan Wolfe (English), the late Bob Bunge (Modern Languages), Phil Turetzky (Philosophy), and Frank Pommersheim (Law) were very generous in letting me sit in on courses they taught. I participated, along with Richard Rognstad (Music) and Ed Woerner (Math), in an Honors seminar on *Godel, Escher, Bach,* taught by the late Harry Settles (Anatomy). I have also team-taught with Nancy Skeen, George Scott (Chemistry), Tom Lobe (Political Science), Bob Hilderbrand (History), Bob Bunge, Phil Turetzky, Leonard Bruguier (American Indian Studies), Tom Gasque (English), Steve Dill (English), the late

Steve Ward (History), and Jerome Kills Small (Modern Language). I have benefited from Dakota Writing project workshops organized by Nancy Zuercher (English). I have collaborated with several colleagues on various interdisciplinary projects; Sally Hanson (English) and I worked on the joint pedagogy of grammar and logic; Tom Lobe and I organized a world hunger conference; I collaborated with Tom Lobe, Sylvia Wheeler (English), Kenn Robbins (Theatre), Nancy Myers (Library), Bob Hilderbrand, Virginia Monroe (Education), Sylvester Clifford (Communication Disorders), and Al Lee (History), on a comprehensive interdisciplinary project to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Herb Hoover and Leonard Bruguier introduced me to the Native American Church. For the South Dakota Humanities Council, I helped lead reading-group discussions in local communities, first with Wayne Knutson and later with Nancy Zuercher. Larry Zimmerman (Anthropology) included me in a symposium on reburial issues at an anthropology meeting in Washington, D.C.

These experiences are clearly not mine alone, but experiences of a diverse community of scholars and educators that is strongly connected in its commitment to learning. After the sudden loss of my dear friend and colleague Fred Zuercher, it is especially fitting to reflect in this way. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues for those opportunities and many others. Without such community I could not have lived intellectually.

1

So it was for Socrates, as his character in Plato's Crito explains why he cannot escape prison. The philosophical community for Socrates was the Athenian *agora,* the market place, where he engaged in discussions, presumably in an effort to assist his fellow citizens in the improvement of their souls. Plato conveys to us the Socratic admonition that the unexamined life is not worthy for humankind. Although Socrates felt obliged to help others in what appears to be the individual's responsibility for self-reflection, he seems to have disdained formal teaching. In his famous allegory of the cave, at the beginning of Republic, Book VII, Plato describes education as a process of turning the eyes of the soul towards the

light of truth. The individual is not inclined to be set free from the shackles of imagery and sensation, that have imprisoned him since birth; someone must force the prisoner up the long passage to the outside world that represents the intelligent realm of being. Reality for Plato is ideal and abstract, the world of being; our sensory experience and imagining lie in the apparitional world of becoming. The sun is the highest form—Good, source of the light of truth, that illuminates all that is; the fire in the cave represents the physical sun, a vague representation of the Good; the shadows on the wall of the cave represent images most distant from reality and the illumination of truth.

Plato removed himself a mile outside the Athenian walls, to the public garden of Akademos, near his villa. (It was safe from harm by invading Greeks, as the sacred ground of the hero Akademos.) Supposedly Plato had an entrance sign that required all who frequented his "Akademia" should first know mathematics—presumably geometry—in order to condition the intellect to engage the dialectic process through which one comes to grasp the ideal forms, not the least of which is the form of justice. So, the pushing and shoving of the former prisoner out from the cave represents the tedious struggle to learn logical abstractions. Plato did not intend that educators be like cruel wardens, for the allegory is not his only commentary on education, and the examples he provides of Socrates and Parmenides, and of others, is not of some mean task master, but of a friend. As for the location of his university, he may have intended to avoid the distractions of urban environment, but Plato did not remove his school to the mountains, or several miles from Athens as he could otherwise have done.

Plato becomes much clearer and more coherent—even more interesting—when we take seriously the fact that he wrote dialogues, rather than lectures and treatises, as Aristotle did. As it happened, Plato also wrote letters. Of the few dozen letters, there is a series in which he describes, at considerable length, having assisted a friend, Dion, a general of Syracuse, on the island of Sicily, in his efforts to reform the despotic ruler of Syracuse, Dyonisius. After the better part of a decade, and two voyages between Athens and Syracuse, late in life, Plato laments that the effort failed, and that his friend Dion was assassinated by Dyonisius. This is quite remark-

able, for it indicates that Plato was a man of the world, who intended that philosophy should have ethical consequences for the political life of humankind. Plato was not withdrawn from the world, but very much a participant in trying to improve the *polis.* Philosophy and the Academy which supports it should be in service to humanity.

2

I regard philosophy as at the heart of liberal arts education, and liberal arts education as central to the mission of a university. However, it is important to avoid the constraints of conventional academic categories. One useful lesson to have learned from Plato's example is that philosophical insight may spark or develop in odd circumstances. To find purposeful meaning in the complexity of a contemporary university, I must reflect briefly upon my own philosophical development. As Plato required, my academic roots lie in mathematics, and from early adolescence I was intrigued by the very possibility of formal abstraction as transcendental truth. I was a naive neo-Pythagorean whose interest in mathematics was deeply ontological. Like many adolescents, I dwelt on the fact that the physical world, in all its grandeur, is subject to unrelenting change. (It seems I was also a neo-Heracleitean.) I remember experiencing a dreadful anxiety over the impermanencc of all manifestations of human culture. My generation grew up with "duck-and-cover" drills, and bomb shelter construction. Living within minutes of D.C., my friends and I were aware that we lived inside a first-strike nuclear target. At George C. Marshall High School one day, during the Cuban Missile crisis, an explosion boomed through the hallway; someone had lit a cherry bomb in a trashcan, but I was jolted by terrible thoughts of nuclear attack. Such experiences foreshadowed my academic interest in the atomic bomb.

Adolescence is among the chains that fetter us inside the cave of becoming. Many young people of my generation were drawn to Nietzsche or to Kierkegaard. 1 was too socio-politically conservative for Nietzsche, and too religiously liberal for Kierkegaard. (It turns out Schopenhauer might have been the one for me, but who knew?) For Cartesian epistemic security, I greatly admired the rigor of geometric proof taught me by Mrs. Griffith. Majoring in math-

ematics, I wrote a paper on affine geometry that drew me into the logical foundations of mathematics and into theory development in science. My graduate studies were heavily concentrated in analytical philosophy, with emphases in philosophy of science and philosophical logic. Analysis pulls things apart by abstraction, and puts them back in an understandable way; but, there is a sacrifice of contextual understanding to which I was oblivious.

Having escaped adolescent angst, I then suffered from the affliction of foundationalism. The roots of the affliction are Aristotelean, but Descartes is the principal modern carrier, who sought to build an edifice of knowledge upon "a firm and lasting foundation". His *cogito* argument—,"I think, therefore I am"—provided the foundation, and the mortar was his doctrine that clear and distinct ideas ensure certainty. That doctrine, coupled with Cartesian skepticism towards sensory experience, form the antithesis of British empiricism championed by David Hume, and earlier by George Berkley—,the guy who invented and solved the question about the unheard tree falling in a forest. (Berkeley also tried to found the first inter-racial college in the New World, in colonial America.) Modern rationalists and empiricists alike shared in the Cartesian expectation of a unified body of science, methodically developed, and securely based upon some logico-philosophical foundation. Science and philosophy, according to Descartes, can result in the intellectual distillation of truth. Dennis Johnson (Economics) and I have discussed my rejection of this Cartesian hope.

Following Hume, the logical positivists had insisted in the early twentieth century that any cognitively meaningful statement must be verifiable in principle. On such a criterion, traditional metaphysics was presumed to be nonsense. Of course, it proved an embarrassment that many a statement in classical physics seemed to be dismissed by it. (Wolfgang Pauli's conception of the neutrino, for example, was of a virtually undetectable entity.) As Ian Hacking puts it, science was mummified by modern philosophy. Most embarrassing of all, the principle itself appears meaningless by its own standard. I. was witnessing the last gasps of logical empiricism and the advent of a relativist-subjectivist critique of science, logic, and mathematics. Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend—a flamboyant romantic at Berkley who published hyperbolic critiques of

conventional philosophy of science in the 1960's and 70's—opened up the flood gates to a great deluge of attack on the positivistic, foundationalist tradition in philosophy of science, born out of both rationalism and empiricism.

To me, analyzing that which is fundamental to the understanding of reality seemed as good a philosophical ambition as any. The legacy of empiricism turns towards phenomenology, but I followed the path of a latter-day pragmatist, the late Willard van Orman Quine, addressing the topic of ontological commitment. (This is, by the way, a scholarly interest shared by Eric Johnson (English), Dean at Dakota Sate.) By what formal linguistic means is one committed to a particular ontology, a specific position as to what exists? So, as a visiting scholar, before the Moral Sciences Club at Cambridge, I puzzled aloud over the meaningfulness of the statement, "For years humans have searched for the abominable snowman, and *yeti's* not been found." Pragmatism had led me to ontological relativity: how are we to understand what is supposed to exist, according to a particular theory or world view? My mentor Jim Cargile, instilled in me a habit of precision and clarity in the use of language, and a sensitivity for reexamining "settled" questions and presuppositions.

Since coming to USD, my attention has widened, across disciplines and across cultural world views. I have not abandoned my analytic roots, but I have pursued a pragmatist critique of foundationalism. I recommend we lay aside the ancient metaphor of the light of truth, cast by the Sun—the ideal Good that transcends the mundane realm of mere becoming. Instead, we must study what we have made available to ourselves, in the *moonlight* of the Garden of Akademos.

3

Modern culture inherited from antiquity a deep attachment to the enigmatic notion of truth. (In the allegory of the cave, it is represented by the light of the sun.) Foundationalism takes truth to be objective, universal, immutable, and grounded in fundamental principles; relativism regards truth as contingent upon cultural context or theoretical perspective; and, skepticism dismisses truth as meaningless. Foundationalism led to theories of truth as a value of

the linguistic expression of cognitive belief. But truth is precisely the sort of notion that must be addressed from more than one perspective and does not admit of theory. (E.g., Susan Haack has explored the competing varieties of alternative logics, and Nancy Cartwright has exposed *How the Laws of Physics Lie.)* Thus, I suggest the figure of moonlight, rather than the light of the sun.

To avoid the shortcomings of foundationalism, relativism and skepticism, I have espoused an epistemic attitude awkwardly called *pluralistic perspectivism.* It occurs to me that we are compelled to sustain more than one way of world making, more than one world view, not necessarily competing, yet disparate nevertheless. But, each must have its own integrity. This seems to me to be prominently represented in a modern university, just as it was, presumably in the Lyceum, which Aristotle founded in another garden outside Athens, a number of years after Plato's death.

I have been influenced in this direction by Thomas Nagel, and by the late Nelson Goodman who developed what he called *radical relativism-* Goodman regarded ontology (the philosophy of being and existence) as "evanescent"; in his view, "what there is consists of what we make". The "ways of worldmaking" are many, and by the use of symbols, "worlds" are made out of nothing. Goodman's "irrealistic" philosophy denies any absolute perspective and entails a pluralism of "world versions". In confronting the paradoxical conflict of "true versions", Goodman advocates *"judicious vacillation".* (I recommend *noetic funambulism.)* Thus, Goodman says, "...'the world' rapidly evaporates." There is no universally true version. Features combine "to make the world of that version", which is thus a construct. Goodman does not claim that we simply make worlds at will, yet he insists that finding what is already there ends up "very much a matter of making". (See *Ways of Worldmaking,* 32-35.)

Goodman's view was criticized by his colleague Willard van Orman Quine, (the only philosopher to participate in both logical positivist/empiricist groups in the 1930's, the Vienna Circle and the Berlin Circle). Quine writes, "One feels that this sequence of worlds or versions founders on absurdity. ...I would end it after... physical theory, [granting] alternative physical theories...; ...the rest ...[are] a rather tenuous metaphor." Like others influenced by positivism, Quine failed to observe the actual character of science.

For Quine, everything is supervenient upon physical phenomena; so, every "theory" is supervenient upon physical theory. However, the notion of supervenience—the last gasp of foundationalist reductionism—wanders off in a fog, and fails even to *offer* a unified world view.

One wonders how far the notion of world-making can be pushed in the academic disciplines. Is historiography not a matter *of* world making.[7] Allow me to tease you with an example that illustrates how history especially entails a making. Based upon his recording of the moment, Jacob Beser, Radar Countermeasure Observer, and the only person to be present on both *Enola Gay* and on *Bock's Car,* on the respective atomic bombing raids over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reports:

> At the instant of the explosion [over Hiroshima], Bob Lewis, true to his wartime character exclaimed, "My God, look at that sonofa bitch blow!" At a much later date, he disclosed to the world that what he had really said was, "My God, what have we done!" By the time he revised his quote he was cleaning up his act. Everyone of us made some statement for the record. None, including my own, was very profound. We had never seen anything like it. (112)

How the making of history works—by what standards, by means of which tools, is determined by the creativity of a community of historians. Philosophy of history re-examines the conceptual standards of historical inquiry, the very notion of 'historic fact', and the hermeneutics of historic interpretation. Classicist Paul Veyne, in reflecting on the question whether the Helens believed in their myths, reveals that, "...different worlds of truth are historical artifacts, not psychic constants" (88).

One might think that science transcends such deliberate creativity. But, world making is not born of some idiosyncratic whim. Communities create worlds and sustain them more than individuals. Kuhn found on the two sides of a scientific revolution there were two incommensurable world views accessible only by gestalt switch. Goodman quotes gravitational cosmologist John Wheeler, in support of his view:

> The Universe does not exist out "there" independent of us. We arc inescapably involved in bringing about that which appears to be happening. We are not only observers, we are participators...in making [the] past...the present and the future. [*Science* 81 (June) p.67]

A splendid example of world making in science by R.V. O'Neill and three colleagues, is their ramified theory of ecosystem, based upon the thermodynamic concept of dissipative structure (a field George Scott devoted considerable attention to more than a decade ago). Goodman holds that philosophy must consider "all the ways and means of worldmaking", which is essentially my position of pluralistic perspectivism.

4

Integrity rather than truth, strikes me as the more fundamental virtue. It is the internal cohesion of a complex object, as it fulfills its *telos* (or manifold *teloi).* To be understood coherently as an entity (to have ontological status, so to speak), something must be understood to have a telos (an essential purpose, function, goal) and it must have the relevant integrity. Humans, I presume, have a manifold *teloi* (self-reflection and self-direction, moral purpose and choice, social inter-action, and environmental reflection). We should exercise self-understanding; we are a social species—more wolf than wolverine—capable of, and naturally driven towards, a wider and wider awareness of our environment. What is more, we are responsible for what we know, both in the knowing and in the responding. To a considerable degree, this echoes conceptions of mankind expressed by Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is in concert, furthermore, with the teachings of Jesus, and of Hillel in Jerusalem a generation before, with the teachings of Mohammed, and with Confucian thought. It is certainly not at odds with the classical tradition of the Buddha nor with Lao Tzu (but more cannot be said of such world views in which the metaphysical status of self is ineffable). Royce Engstrom's recommended addendum to the Scout Law includes the virtues of *respect* and *curiosity,* which could help philosophically reform a venerable institution; these are entailed by the complex human *teloi* as well.

Walter Kaufmann envisioned humankind as subject to three levels of need: physiological needs (e.g. for calcium), psychology needs (e.g. inward needs to be loved, to feel secure), and ontological needs (e.g. to love, to express, to transcend mundane experience, to create, to understand). The human *teloi* are embodied by this sort of complex of ontological needs, in response to which we explore, we create, we develop theories, we express both feeling and understanding, we communicate and identify with one another, we have faith. Few of us do all these things, but those who do none, may suffer deeply. In marked contrast, fixation on the enigmatic notion of truth is a symptom of a philosophical dogma of propisitional belief that infects many disciplines and distorts world view. Foundationalism, relativism, and skepticism are codependents that overindulge conscious, propositional belief. When Jesus said, "KCO. γνωσεσθε την αληθειαν και η αληθεια ελευθερωσει υμαζ" *[and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free,* John, 8:32], he was not alluding to a doctrinal tenet, but to spiritual enlightenment. Jesus and Plato were somewhat in concert. (No wonder Augustine was a neo-Platonist, although, in Plato's account, the freeing of the soul must take place in order that the eye of the soul be turned in the direction of the light of truth.) Plato was not referring to linguistically expressible principles, for, in his Seventh Letter, he *denies* that the insight into virtue that the soul might achieve through the dialectic process, can be rationally distilled and recorded in writing. His very point in using dramatic dialogues, seems to be to illustrate how the dialectic process might be engaged, and to suggest topics worthy of pursuit through dialectic inquiry. Why else should his hero Socrates occasionally suffer a logical blow or a rhetorical hit, as in *Republic* and *Parmenides,* especially?

5

My critique of the epistemological dogma of belief is not a complaint about religious thought, nor about faith, which I regard as quite distinct from propositional belief, precisely as Wilfred Cantwell Smith has distinguished. The word 'belief in modern English is ambiguous between *faith* on the one hand and conscious commitment to the truth of a proposition (or statement, if you will), on the other hand. Certainly, in modern culture, some forms

of religious faith arc prominently expressed through religious doctrine; but ones faith is not ones doctrine, even though the doctrine may be the principal means by which one *expresses* ones faith. There is no appropriate reduction, and Smith has gone to great lengths to show that we ought to avoid confusing faith with propositional belief.

Many contemporary philosophers blithely assume that conscious, propositional belief is central to world view. It seems paradoxical for me to deny the notion that a world view amounts to a "system of belief. Analytic philosophers who follow Quine prefer the psychologistic image of "web of belief instead of the notion of world view; they prefer fantasy to ethnography, especially regarding philosophy of language. Richard Rorty characterizes the human mind as a "web of beliefs and desires, sentential attitudes", that is constantly "self-reweaving". To change ones world view is just to "recontextualize" an individual's "web of beliefs" (60-61). Mental cobwebs of modern philosophy have ensnared Quine, Rorty, and many others in an unfortunate foundationalist metaphor.

Rorty does seem to appreciate that we never *choose* a world view. Indeed, we rarely *choose* a point of view. We might, incidentally, *choose* a theory, or explanation; but, more characteristically, we *build, construct, create* or invent them. Traditions, world views, perspectives, frames of reference, forms of life, ways of thinking—these are pervasive modes of perception, deeply embedded in the subconscious, which we acquire less overtly than we acquire theories (though choices do affect the evolution of world view). There are many aspects of culture that cannot plausibly be said to rest upon anything appropriately called belief. Hume identified *habit* as the basis for inductive inference; Goodman remarks that "...habit must be...an integral ingredient of truth"; and Aristotle recounts from tradition, moral virtue "is the child of *ethos* [habit]". That nebulous aggregate of dispositions, tendencies, customs, ways of thinking, one might call *my world vlew,* does not amount to anything like a system *of belief.* My experience of, say, Gabriel Faure's requiem mass, does not depend upon conscious beliefs. Nor does my power of expression of thoughts through English rest upon a network of conscious beliefs. Echoing Hume, I say abandon such epistemological dogma, as "it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion".

Epistemology has played a central role in modern western philosophy, and modern culture has broadly misconstrued the nature of disparate world views, because of an epistemic preoccupation with conscious, propositional belief. There are circumstances in which we do well to isolate a feature of our experience *as if it were part of some fixed structure* of thought or some secured element of "fact" corresponding to an external reality upon which we can depend. We purposefully refer to "beliefs" in order to articulate in language meaningful aspects of our field of experience; for the most part it serves an heuristic, organizational, connective function, that enables memory and reference. Perhaps not all belief is conscious; and not all conscious thought is dependent upon belief. But, the notion of "beliefs" as the fundamental constituents of cognition is no more substantial than the idea of "pictures" in the mind. (Are they discrete images, fixed and retrievable?) Each of these notions is, in its turn, limited and limiting. Only foundationalist dogma would lead one to suppose that belief, conscious or not, undergirds world view. Just as it is odd to say that someone *believes* that bachelors are single, it is misleading to think that a world view is a "system of beliefs".

6

For decades scholars of comparative religions have cautioned against a preoccupation with propositional belief in the study *of* culture. In his study of the relation between *faith* and *belief,* Wilfred Cantwell Smith argued that doctrinal, propositional belief is only one among several means by which faith is expressed.

> Doctrine has [in the Christian case] been a central expression of faith, has seemed often a criterion of it; the community has divided over differences in belief, and has set forth belief as a formal qualification of membership. No other religious community on earth has done these things to the same degree; and some have not done them at all. (13-14)

For much of Christianity, belief became the foremost means of expressing faith. By the modern period, Christians had conflated the notion *of" faith* with *belief.* Consequently, non-Christian religious

culture is misunderstood. Westerners tend to ask, "What do they believe?", where belief is beside the point. A half century ago, Ernst Benz observed that Western Christian thinkers tend to emphasize inappropriately the "didactic and doctrinal elements" of Asiatic religions in the interpretation of "forms of religious expression", because Western Christian thought attributes theology, "the doctrinal part of religion", to religions generally (124-125).

Precisely this sort of misinterpretation was committed by the Presbyterian missionary Stephen Return Riggs, who came with his wife Mary among the eastern Dakota, the Isanti, in Minnesota, in the 1840's. After the Little Crow War of 1862, Riggs helped minister to those who were forced onto the Sisseton and the Crow Creek Reservations in the Dakota Territory, and the Santee Reservation in Nebraska. Riggs became an accomplished ethnographer, helping to write one of the first Dakota dictionaries and grammars, and documenting traditional culture. Riggs misinterpreted, however, the deeper metaphysical and ethical significance of Dakota-Lakota world view, by attributing to it a notion of substantive evil, spiritualist fear of natural forces, and polytheism. "The sum and substance of it", Riggs writes, "is *demon-worship".* He proceeds to give an annotated list of "innumerable deities" of the Dakotas, including "The *Toon-kan'* or *In-yan;* the *Stone—god,* or *Lingam,...Wa-ke'-yan; the thunder god!",* and *"The Ta' -koo-shkan-shkan'; the moving god"* (64-66). Riggs refers to a number of others he takes to be deities. But these three serve well to illustrate his confusion.

Riggs failed to realize these are among *Tob tob kin* [the sixteen], the manifestations of *Wakantanka* (Great sacred power). *Tunkan* and *Inyan* are distinguished in Lakota-Dakota world view, yet all sixteen are related. Or, so it would seem, for, 1 do not presume to provide a reductive analysis: I simply mean to thwart pejorative misinterpretation. These are not separable deities so much as they are distinct aspects of one integrated whole. Many of the sixteen aspects of *Wakantanka* can, at least superficially, be identified in English translation: *Inyan* as rock, *Wakinyan* as thunder, *Takushkanshkan* as power of motion, (joe Rockboy who was a member of the faculty of Arts and Sciences was Hokshina Inyan.) But, of course, in Dakota *Wakinyan* is never just thunder, for the voice of thunder is *wakan.* (A Christian Dakota thinks of Jesus on the Sea of Gallilee

as *wakan* on water.) *Hanhepiwin* [Moon] and *Ampetuwin* [Sun] are included, as are *Tatanka* [bull bison] (remember "Dances with Wolves"?), *Wohpe* [shooting star], *Tate tob* [the four winds], *Tate* [wind], *Yumni* [whirlwind], and *Hununpa* [two leggeds].

Where there are terms of translation, we are apt to be misled in supposing we understand. But, let me mention the other four: *Nagi* [spirit], Nrya [breath], *Nagila* [ghost-like], and *Shichun* [immortal soul], from which seems to derive *washichun* [white man]. We no longer feel so cozy with our translation, for, although these may bear some affinity to one another in English, it is not at all clear how they might be distinguished and yet related. Furthermore, how arc the several Tob tob understood to relate to one another? I cannot answer that, and I fear I presume too much in having said what I have, but it does appear to me that as I have encountered traditional Lakota-Dakota world view, in *inipi kagapi* [sweat lodge ceremony] and other traditional rites, there is a deep and abiding sense of creation as a unified, integrated spiritual whole. This is not a "system of belief, but a way of life that is immediate and commanding; it is not a process for cognitive registration.

Historically, colonizers were wont to regard indigenous people as childlike, and their traditional culture as static and inflexible. Ironically such prejudice limits the very observers themselves to a *childlike* perspective of the indigenous culture, interpreting, as they do (from the perspective of the dominant culture), without deeper engagement of the native world view. Westerners are often given to extravagant claims about native religion and native art works and the people who created them, proceeding from the most superficial impressions of what is presumed to be the "traditional religion" and "traditional art". Scholars have not always taken care to employ responsible contextual interpretation of indigenous religion or art *within* its cultural matrix. Philosophical progress has been achieved by some leading cultural anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz, who affirms Nelson Goodman's view of world making.

It is only in the last two decades of the twentieth century that Euro-Americans have faced the ethical ramifications of misunderstanding the intentional significance of Native American cultures. At present, in California and elsewhere, there are issues concerning desecration of sacred sites, for the sake of local development. The

Army Corps of Engineers is in dispute with Native American spiritual leaders over the disposition of human remains unearthed along the shores of the Missouri River, near Pickstown. (Herb Hoover often serves as an expert witness.) hi the mid-1980's, the British Columbia Provincial Museum, in Victoria, Vancouver Island, returned totem poles to their original villages, where they will gradually decay, as the traditional, coastal cultures of the Northwest (e.g. Haida, Coast Salish, Tlingi, etc.) intended wooden creations to participate in the dynamic processes of the natural world. The temptation remains to speak of "system of belief to account for these intentions, but we must resist.

7

A notion of beliefs as linguistically dependent can serve us no better than language can, and it cannot do justice to all that we do through language. In her Tennant Lectures at the University of St. Andrews, Mary Midgley describes a conundrum that the analytic tradition of modern philosophy presented us, wherein our sensory perception is thought to veil reality from us, and yet the veil of perception is supposed to lie behind a curtain of language. A new, more direct and precise language was supposed to draw the curtain and lift the veil. But, recalling the later Wittgenstien's aphorism: "Language is not a cage!", Midgley argues, that, more appropriately, perception is understood as a window, and language as a channel of communication.

> Words work in the most varied ways in conjunction with the whole mass of our actions to bring about whatever we aim at in our forms of life. They cannot possibly be reduced to a single function. (223)

Poetry and art, for example, serve to connect features *of* thought and experience in significant ways that are not limited to a notion of external reality. Not only can poetry connect in diverse ways, but it can integrate and purposely disconnect.

A shallow reading of Plato might give one the impression that poetry was expunged from his garden of Akademos; the poets and storytellers are turned away at the gates of the *polis,* albeit, after being wined and dined, and decked with laurel; and in the

dialogue Jon, the reciter of Homeric verse is a caricature of an ignorant, pompous epigone. Yet, the very language and imagery of Plato's dialogues are themselves deeply poetic, as if to convey how poetic thought can complement dialectical inquiry. Plato's ambivalence over poetry and storytelling is largely due to his notion that the divinely inspired poet and storyteller are not entirely in control of their faculties, and do not comprehend what they express. That one might explore, seek understanding, and discover, through storytelling, poetry, and art—indeed, through *poeisis* in general—was not foremost in Plato's thinking. It is rather common to think of poetry as expressive, conveying feelings as opposed to facts, or otherwise derived by non-rational, non-cognitive inspiration. But the notion of feelings as discreet features of human experience is problematic. Feelings are cognitively saturated; I feel anxious over roads I know to be icy; I delight in knowing there are eagles overhead; and I worry over whether I am boring you now. What we see by the light of the moon increases as our ways of world making widen. Art and poetry not only increase the means, but they expand the modes by which we think, feel, and respond. Poetry and art play *yin* to the *yang* of theoretical analysis.

Howard Gardner has identified several distinct kinds of human intelligence. He used to count seven—it occurs to me that one might count more; for, the mind seems splendidly integrated, leading me to suppose that particular combinations of aspects of alleged "intelligences" might constitute other kinds of intelligence. Perhaps there is a musical-poetic intelligence, or a mathematical-kinetic-linguistic, or a humor-eurhythmic, etc. My son Justus explained that he associates certain colors with certain concepts. Such associations occur in traditional Lakota-Dakota and other cultures. Coherent sensitivity to such associations may require a special intelligence. If Gardner is right about various kinds of intelligence, most of which have nothing to do with propositional belief, there are other kinds of understanding, corresponding to such intelligences.

The late Hans Georg Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutic circle of understanding can prove useful here, in regard to the philosophy of culture. Gadamer resolved the ancient paradox that to understand the whole one must understand its parts, but to understand its parts one must understand the whole. We widen

the context of understanding, through a dynamic interpretive process; we extend meaning, not simply by trial and error, but by applying what is familiar, and discarding what does not fit. There is a reciprocal process in understanding, whereby the wider our understanding of the whole, the more enriched our understanding of the parts. Because understanding is dynamic, it is misleading to think in terms of momentary time-slice. And, only some, but not all, intelligence is manifested through the analytic use of language. The Garden of Akademos should then be open to the widest variety of modes of human experience and intelligence.

Recall that Goodman urged consideration of "all the ways and means of world making". Not to overwork a figure of speech, but, in wonder one is apt to ask, "What do you make of that?" The question calls for *poiesis,* a making, that could, of course, entail a telling, a showing, a recalling, a comparing, even a feeling. Brent Froberg helped me some years ago to notice that it is the term ποιεσις Plato uses in the tenth book of *Republic* that is rather carelessly translated as *art.* The concept of *poehis* calls for science as much as it does for art, and the science that is called for is as much art as it is a commitment to belief in determinate facts. An example that comes readily to mind is close at hand here in old Main (except for the locked doors between us and the Oscar Howe Gallery). In extending the Dakota tradition of *owa* [painting], Oscar Howe used a technique that is distinct from cubism, contrary to some conjecture. The generation of forms in his paintings is directed by *tahokmu* [spiderwebl, involving quasi triangulation points. Once we are aware of this, the principle of integration in the works is transformed and redeveloped; we are led to a dynamic "reading" of the paintings and our hermeneutic circle expands. It is as if we had only been seeing charming shapes before, or as if we had been trying to hear something as a waltz that is actually, say, a chaconne. As Gadamer reveals, coming to understand entails coming to be familiar.

8

In its push for familiarity, cosmopolitan culture has demanded uniformity, which may, ironically, stultify' understanding, even in a university. Poetry and art were not readily included in European

universities until quite late. The fifteenth century French poet Francois Villon held a master's degree in the University of Paris, where he served as an occasional tutor. (His priestly uncle, foster father, had an ecclesiastical post there.) Villon was cast out. He was not embraced by whatever community of learning the University of Paris may have had at the time. The University of Paris had engendered the serious study of logic and philosophy of language, certainly; but, poetry could hardly have been understood from the academic perspective of the medieval university, anymore than it could have been understood in Plato's academy (where it had an incidental presence). Villon produced, made, created, outside the university, first in the streets, the taverns, and the brothels of Paris, where he delighted his *jargoneurs* buddies with quick-witted rhyme and verse, piqued with bawdy innuendo. A scoff-law pilferer of church coffers, and chancel ornaments, who was one to be shunned more than pitied, Villon once killed a man who apprehended him and his cohorts in the act of breaking and entering. Three times he narrowly escaped the gallows, by the grace of God and royal whim, and twice he suffered banishment. During his first exile he wandered through Orleans where he sought the society of his great contemporary Charles, le Duc d'Orleans, himself a political outcast. Even there, Villon could not curb his miscreant behavior, and he pilfered from Charles while attending a sort of poets' retreat *an chateau.* And finally, at the age of 35, sometime after his return to Paris, Villon ran afoul of the law one last time—for all we know it was the last—and he was banished from Paris, lost from history, leaving behind a passel of silly verse and some of the most magnificent poetry of the French language. Villon was a deeply religious reprobate; he was an unripened genius; encouraged by his drinking buddies and incidentally recognized by some of the leading poets of his time, he created his own artistic age, enriched one of the world's greatest languages, and inspired Rabelais a century later. Villon is a sort of pre-Renaissance, proto-Romantic-anti-romantic—an inspiration and a contradiction. And, as Ed Allen strives to be "the boss of iambic pentameter at any cost", Villon became the boss of the *ballade.* What university could have nurtured him? (Berkeley in the 1960's might have and, in its way, Medieval Paris did.)

In *Le Codicitle* to *le Grand Testament* he presents what is for me one of the most compelling appeals for compassion, and hope for universal salvation. Here is the opening stanza with its haunting refrain, echoed in the other three stanzas:

Ballade des Pendus [Ballad of the Hanged]

Frères humains, qui après nous vivez,
[Fellow humans, who live after us,]
N'ayez les coeurs contre nous endurcis,
[Don't be hard-hearted towards us,]
Car, si pitié de nous pauvres avez,
[For, if you have compassion for us poor folk,]
Dieu en aura plus tôt de vous merci.
[Because of that, God will sooner show you mercy.]
Vous nous voyez ci, attachés, cinq, six.
[You see five or six of us tied here.]
Quant de la chair, que trop avons nourrie,
[As for the flesh, which we have cherished too much,]
Elle est piéça dévorée et pourrie,
[It is long since, consumed, and rotted.]
Et nous, les os devenons cendre et poudre.
[And we, the bones, are turning to ash and powder.]
De nôtre mal personne ne s'en rie,
[Let no one laugh at our trouble,]
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre!
[But pray to God that we all be absolved!]

[My translation. Modernized spelling, reprinted in Segher.]

The "truth" expressed in the four stanzas is not reducible to prosaic statements of belief. In fact, I am loath to comment on what I *believe* in reference to the poem at all. It is not that I should avoid discussion, which is prompted by the poem, but that analysis may collapse the power of the poem. And when one asks about the nature of that power, I am inclined to embark upon writing a book.

Villon's "Ballad of the Hanged" calls to my mind an older contemporary *of* Villon, the Florentine painter Andrea del Castagno (known as Andrea *degl'lmpiccati,* [of the hanged menj for a painting he was commissioned to create, depicting four Florentine leaders

who were hanged). Castagno was among the great developers of the Renaissance, a bold world maker. (From his ceremonial shield painting of "the Youthful David", now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., I have borrowed an image for the program illustration.) The Renaissance world, represented by poets and painters such as Villon and Castagno, was not made in the university; most of Renaissance art, much of its science, and even the leading philosophical thought of the period was, for the most part, generated by thinkers and creators outside the academy. A generation after Castagno, his great Florentine compatriot Niccolo Machiavelli revolutionized modern statesmanship and diplomacy, and developed political theories independent of the university. The trend continued in German-speaking Europe as well. Working entirely independently of the university, Albrecht Di'irer was dubbed "the Leonardo of the north" for his universal genius. Engraver, wood-block cutter, painter, and architect (who created the revolutionary military design of Schloss Munot, in Schaffhauscn), Diirer made original contributions to the mathematics of projective geometry. Ultimately, the modern university evolved as a creation of the Renaissance.

9

Continuity of human understanding is sustained by the institutional university, centered on a college of arts and sciences; at its best, it maintains a community committed to human creativity and inquiry. In this way it contributes to the fulfillment of the human *teloi.* But, the unexamined life of the institution is no more worthy than the unexamined life of the individual. In Plato's Athens, women may have frequented the public garden of Akademos, but may not have been included in his Akademia, despite the indications in *Republic* that women are as capable as men to rule. And Thomas Jefferson's university was trebly exclusive of women, of persons of color, and of persons from the working class. To exclude others from the community of learning, not only deprives those excluded of access to whatever learning the community has to offer, but, ironically, it deprives the exclusive members from insightful exposure to dialectical contributions of those who are excluded. The integrity of the university depends upon how well it maintains

a community of inquiry and creativity, and how well it sustains continuity of understanding. For this, the university must be widely inclusive of humanity, both in its membership and in its cultural substance.

With diversity among the many ways of world making in distinct disciplines, there is a problem of fragmentation about which Mary Midgley has warned. Endorsing the Enlightenment assumptions of "the intrinsic unity of knowledge, and the potential of indefinite human progress", the distinguished biologist E.O.Wilson has introduced a notion of consilience "across the great branches of learning". Wilson anticipates an ultimate resuscitation of liberal arts education, with "the best of science and the humanities" united to confront "fundamental questions of human existence head on"; (curiously, he chastises the "social sciences"). Like my friend Tom Geu (Law), I concur with Wilson's normative purpose, to thwart intellectual fragmentation and to encourage constructive interdisciplinary insight. But, the sort of Cartesian foundationalism Wilson recommends stultifies science outside the Enlightenment; the kind of positivistic, causal reductionism he proposes is not possible. Rather than Wilson's "synthesis", his purpose can be better served by *complementarity* of diverse conceptual perspectives among sciences, and between science and other contexts of creative, intellectual endeavor.

I am not opposed to unification of thought, but I am critical of the naive expectation that the vibrant diversity of world views-even in the sciences—should simply fit together on the basis of a preferred structure of rational inference, conforming to a chosen system of logical implication (the one , by the way, that I happen to teach, because it is prudent to discipline our thinking). Humanity must avail itself of various ways of inferring, connecting, doubting, grouping—in consideration of various ends and orientations. I am opposed to reduction, at least on any grand scale, which stultifies human thought and understanding. This is one of the lessons of the Renaissance.

Diverse disciplines interact in complex and various ways that are not limited in the manner of the rationalist dogma that lingered in the Enlightenment. The trouble with fragmentation is not simply the loss of unity, but the failure of interdisciplinary

inquiry and creativity. Some degree of intellectual tension in science and in the humanities results in constructive synthesis of ideas, even as Wilson intends. Furthermore, as Kuhn points out, there is an essential tension between the innovative thinking of invention and discovery, and conformity with the established, productive models of inquiry that define a discipline. In the Garden of Akademos, there should be, as Cambridge philosopher Timothy Smilely says, growers and weeders. We might even admit a few growers of weeds.

10

What ways of world-making are not possible in the Garden of Akademos? In the soft moonlight of the Garden of Akademos we might see things we could not have seen in the dazzling sunlight. Shall we make a world of war? Certainly not, in the sense of waging war; but, understanding war is crucial to the well-being of humanity. To prevent war we must understand it; if we are to mitigate the devastation of war, we must reflect on it. If we are to avoid careless, false analogy and misjudgment in international affairs, the dynamics of socio-political relations must be understood in regard to war as well as in regard to constructive intercourse. Nineteenth century Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz I regard as philosopher, outside the academy, discussing with his wife Maria, the levels of strategy, "the coming together of opposites", "the fog of war", the insight that the outcome of war is as much an issue of strategic thinking as is the process of waging it. Late in the twentieth century, statesmen and theorists such as Michael Howard, Henry Kissinger, Edward Luttwak , etc., brought Clausewitz into the university. For Clausewitz, war is another means of policy; for Rear Admiral Wylie, writing in the 1960's, war is a failure of policy. These are topics for critical inquiry in the academy, prior to the fog of war.

In Thomas Hobbes' 17th century view, "war consisteth not in battle only, or in the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known". The Hobbesian concept of war fits our notion of "cold war" and, to some extent, the contemporary notion of "war on terrorism". Peace studies, which now emerge, expand the very concept of *peace* to include a

wide range of issues about human violence and injustice. In the 1930's and 40's, faculty at many Japanese universities had encouraged students to enlist in Japan's armed forces; now ashamed of that past and firmly dedicated to peace studies, Ritzumeiken University in Kyoto has developed a peace museum that documents the Japanese atrocities of the Pacific War, the Nazi holocaust, and other major events of genocide and war in the twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, the university must address the history and politics of genocide, as Tim Schorn (Political Science) has (and Tom Lobe before him) at USD. The values and concerns addressed by Cindy Struckman-Johnson and by Michael Roche as recent Harrington Lecturers, contribute to peace studies in the expansive sense, which, in addition to the issues of prevention of war and genocide, include attention to problems of poverty, social-political oppression, world health, world hunger, racism, and ethnic prejudice. Peace studies expand even more to include environmental ethics, introduced at USD by the late Webster Sill (Biology), and taught by Nancy Skeen for several decades. Mental health treatment for disaster victims is yet another significant area of peace studies that is manifested in the Arts and Sciences at The University of South Dakota.

Threats to peace in the expanded sense, endanger the moral essence of humanity. In *Night,* holocaust survivor Ellie Wiesel writes of the loss of human integrity, through the collapse of the father-son relation among victims of Nazi concentration camps. The atomic bombing of Japan constitutes another extreme. Hiroshima *hibakusha* [atomic bomb survivor] Toge Sankichi took refuge in a warehouse on the edge of the city, where he cared for an elderly *hibakusha* woman until her death a few weeks after the bombing. Toge wrote poetry until his own death soon after. His poem "Give Back Humanity" is a haunting lamentation of human devastation from modern war.

Give Back Humanity

Give back my father; give back my mother;
Give grandpa back, grandma back;
Give me my sons and daughters back.

Give me back myself.
Give back the human race.
As long as this life lasts, this life,
Give back peace
That will never end.

Toge Sankichi (1945)

[Translated by Robert and Alice Ruth Ramseyer, in Kosakai.]

The uranium bomb dropped over Hiroshima destroyed a city in an instant. It killed tens of thousands, it maimed tens of thousands of others, it diseased tens of thousands who would linger in life, suffering. Like the use of any weapon of mass destruction, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki distinguished between neither noncombatant nor belligerent, between neither child nor adult, neither human nor animal, neither enemy nor ally. (Ironically, there were more than 2000 American citizens in Hiroshima, mostly civilians trapped behind enemy lines.) The deaths and sufferings of so many victims were the most terrible human effects of the atomic bombings. In the Peace Park in Hiroshima one discovers that there were entire communities obliterated, devoid of historic record of their members and their very existence on earth.

We cannot ignore the fact that such devastation results in part from human intellectual endeavor engendered by university education. I am not so sanguine, as to expect that the very best of human endeavor is always and only manifested in a university, much less in a college of arts and sciences. Yet, if we are to enlighten ourselves about the nature of religious culture and thought, about the complex variety of ways of learning in the sciences, about the manifold of creative expression in arts, if we are to engage sound ethical deliberation in a complex world, and above all, if we are to cultivate "peace that will never end", we must let the moonlight shine on rather more diversity of world view and cultural origin within the Garden of Akademos. We would do well to inscribe at its entrance the prayerful admonition of the Lakota: *Mitakuye oyasin.* [We are all related.]