Towards a Unified View of Value

- Traditional and Evolutionary Perspectives -

Dr. Colin Turfus
Sun Moon University / KOREA

Ⅰ. Introduction

The present paper is an attempt to examine Unification axiology, as enunciated in *"Essentials of Unification Thought: the Head-Wing Thought"*[1], [hereinafter EUT], in the light of recent scientific ideas from the nascent field of complex systems and of the seminal philosophical writings of Alasdair Mac Intyre. It represents the continuation of two previous studies of mine entitled *"Postmodernism? No Thanks!* — A Response to the Modern Philosophical Crisis from the Standpoint of Complex Systems Theory"[2] and *"Chaos, Complexity and the Good Life."*[3] In the first of these I sought to draw parallels between the paradigms of complex systems theory and those of Unification Thought; in the second I sought to compare the claims of complex systems theory with the thesis expounded by Alasdair Mac Intyre in his celebrated monograph *"After Virtue."*[4]

I shall begin by outlining in Ⅱ what I understand to be the central claims made by EUT [1] in its chapter Ⅳ on axiology. In the process I shall consider some areas which I consider to be problematic in this exposition, identifying its main stumbling block as being the lack of a convincing argument that so-called "traditional" values can and will be revived on the basis of a new interpretation thereof. I shall proceed in Ⅲ to discuss Aristotle's attempt to provide a unified framework through his notion of a human telos. Historically this approach ran into two difficulties, one theoretical and one more practical. The first, discussed in 4, is the denial of the possibility of freedom implicit in Laplacian determinism. I show how contemporary scientists

involved in research into complex systems are concluding that the upholding of such determinism is by no means incompatible with the adoption of a teleological outlook or interpretation. The second difficulty confronting any argument for the possibility of a unified view of value is the diversity of perspectives which do in fact exist. I shall argue, invoking the opinions of two contemporary moral philosophers in my support, that by placing tradition and practice, rather than abstract rationality, at the center in our contemplations, a new way forward is opened up.

Ⅱ. The Axiology of Unification Thought

In the axiology of EUT, as in the theology of *Divine Principle*[5], [hereinafter DP] whence it is derived, the basic paradigm employed is that of *"Paradise Lost"* (hereinafter PL), in the sense of initial innocence, purity or goodness being lost, subsequently to be regained. In the parent theology, DP, the appeal to PL is explicit in that the existence of sin and suffering in the world is attributed in Part I, Chapter 2 to the disobedience of the first human ancestors Adam and Eve to God's commandment in the Garden of Eden. The remainder of the book consists basically of an account of the progress mankind has made under God's guidance in attaining or "restoring" the original ideal of a world of harmonious goodness, which ideal was never accomplished on account of the first human ancestors' mistake.

The use of PL in EUT's axiology, on the other hand, is more implicit. Here it is claimed from the outset [1, p. 131] that modernity is in a state of crisis resulting from our rejection of traditional values such as mutual trust, parental authority, and the upholding of human dignity. This state of affairs is contrasted sharply with a past golden age wherein "traditional points of view concerning trueness [sic], goodness, and beauty" [1, p. 131] were upheld. The reason given for this decline in influence of traditional values is the decline in the status of religion and of philosophies supporting traditional values, vis vis science and atheistic or materialistic philosophies like communism [1, pp. 131-2]. EUT looks forward to a time when this trend will be reversed: The future society ... where the values of trueness [sic], goodness and beauty, centered on heart, are realized is a society with the culture of heart, or a society of unified culture. [1, p. 133]

This reversal, EUT claims will be accomplished through a "new

view of value." So what is this new view of value, on what will it be based, and what are the particular values advocated thereby? Here EUT runs into some problems as is evidenced in the following passage: ... it would be wrong to think of the new view of value as an entirely new system, to be established at the cost of denying the traditional views of value from Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, and so on. Rather, the new view of value is established on the basis of traditional values. Since the bases upon which traditional values stand have collapsed, we need to rebuild those bases and to revive and strengthen traditional values. [1, p. 152]

It is clear from this that the values which EUT seeks to advocate are none other than the "traditional values" of the past golden age, in accordance with the PL. Furthermore the promised "new view of value" will be established on the basis of precisely these traditional values. But unfortunately, since this basis is said to have collapsed (the reason why the new view is needed in the first place), the start of the building project is necessarily delayed. For this reason it would seem, rather than actually setting out the promised new view, EUT in the section entitled "Establishing a New View of Value", limits itself to setting out the grounds necessary for such a view to come into existence. So what are these grounds? EUT sets out three [1, pp. 152~157].

First there is the theological ground. All the great religions believe in God the Creator, who made this world with a purpose of goodness. So, in approaching the fulfillment of that purpose, we can expect there to be a convergence amongst the followers of the various religions as to what virtues should be upheld. Unfortunately EUT at this point engages in a circular logic which fails to advance its position substantially. In the first instance, it is claimed that the existence of a common purpose of goodness towards which all people aspire is evidence "for affirming the existence of God" [1, p. 152]. Yet, as we have just seen, the reason why EUT seeks to affirm God's existence at this juncture is precisely to establish the grounds for those shared values which it says have been lost. Further, if the heralded convergence of viewpoint concerning virtues is indeed occurring, then by EUT's own admission there is no need for a new view of value. And if it is not, then the theological ground on which it seeks to establish the new view is not sustained.

Secondly, there is the so-called philosophical ground. Here the golden age heretofore only implicitly referred to is finally located in the period from the sixth century B.C. to the seventh century A.D., during which time "people had to accept the rule of authority

unconditionally." The ancient Greeks and the Orientals, we are told, in the early part of this golden age, asserted a correspondence between natural law and ethical law, as did Karl Marx in more modern times. We, therefore, should follow the lead of these august scholars and seek a ethical basis in the natural world for ordering our lives and our society. Caution is advised here though lest we err as Karl Marx did by making inferences from the apparent struggle between and within species in the animal kingdom. Rather we should learn from the moon in the steady orbit she keeps round Mother Earth, from the earth in its persistent circulation of the sun, from the fact that the sun in turn is constrained to revolve round the galactic nucleus, and so on. We are further encouraged to note the hierarchical ordering of planets within the solar system. Finally, from all this is deduced a system of reciprocal obligations between parents and children, rulers and subjects, teachers and students, and so on. The basis on which the content of these obligations is to be worked out, or how they might evolve, is not clarified. Neither is the basis on which positions like "ruler" and "subject" are to be determined. Presumably though, these finer details are to be worked out on the basis of "traditional values."

Thirdly, there is the historical ground. Marx is once again cited, this time with less approval, for his theory of class struggle in history. Such a viewpoint, we are told, we should eschew in favor of a recognition of the course of history as the gradual vanquishing of evil by the forces of goodness. Once again though, the logic mustered by EUT to make its point is less than convincing. For, if it is apparent on the evidence that "in the long run, the relatively good side will always win," then presumably we only need to let history run its course and all will be well. But it is clear that this is precisely the opposite of the viewpoint that EUT is advocating when it opens the chapter on axiology by noting: The contemporary age is an age of great confusion and great losses. Wars and conflicts never cease, and innumerable vicious phenomena are covering the world, such as terrorism, destruction, arson, kidnapping, murder, drug abuse, alcoholism, declining sexual morals, the breakdown of the family, injustice, corruption, oppression, conspiracy, and slander. [1, p. 131] Further, EUT's claim that Secular powers have risen and fallen, but religions, which strive to follow Heaven, have managed to survive [1, p. 156]. It lacks persuasive power since it is precisely the persistence of secular authority and the decline of religious authority which EUT laments and cites as the basis for its asserting the need for a "new theory of value":

God is being eliminated from every field, including economy, politics, education, and art. At the same time, religious values are being neglected [and] traditional religious virtues have lost their power to persuade modern people, who tend to think scientifically. [1, pp. 131-2] So, in the absence of convincing arguments in support of its position, what are we to make of EUT's axiological claims?

Ⅲ. The Rise and Fall of Aristotelian Ethics

It is my view that the core claim on which Unification axiology seeks to found itself is that of the possibility of a unified view of "value"; and that it is in stating this claim in coherent terms and providing convincing supporting arguments that the whole project stands or falls. The problem of course in arguing for the possible existence of such a unified view is that, not only does it patently not exist, but the trend in modern philosophy, and indeed society, seems to be towards an ever-increasing proliferation of mutually incompatible value perspectives. This is a difficult charge to refute, as I have argued elsewhere [3]. One of the most successful attempts historically to solve this problem (or rather a previous manifestation thereof) was that of Aristotle. He, in his Eudemian Ethics, identified the good for a person with the pursuit of his (or her) *telos* — an ultimate immutable set of aims and goals toward the fulfillment of which a person moves by nature. For Aristotle, one's telos was fixed as it were biologically: what Marx would later have referred to as "species-essence." The major shortcoming of Aristotle's account of ethics was of course seen subsequently to be its rootedness in 4th century Athenian society. Even relative to the perspectives in neighbouring Greek city-states, there were significant differences in accounts of what the *telos* consisted in. Also Aristotle was unable to attribute to slaves the same *telos* as he counted free Athenian males as possessing. So it was that Aristotelian philosophy ultimately failed in its attempt to identify a universal concept of "the good".

But his views were to enjoy a revival at the start of the Renaissance in 13th century European society. Here the homogeneity of perspective that had been imposed by the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe and the widespread influence of Augustinian theology made the situation ripe for a revival of Aristotelianism. The successful integration of Aristotelian philosophy with the prevalent Augustinian theology was accomplished to a large degree single-handedly by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). He identified the human *telos* with the fulfillment of the specifically Christian virtues of fides (faith), spes (hope) and caritas (love), and the Aristotelian virtues of sophia (wisdom), andreia (courage), sophrosune (prudent caution) and dikaiosune (justice), as is discussed in EUT [1, pp. 162-3]. This revival was itself of course short-lived, albeit that many adherents both of the Augustinian school and of the Aristotelian tradition did come to make their home together for a time in the grand edifice Aquinas had constructed for them. For, the Enlightenment and its grand project to refound moral science on a purely rational basis followed close on Aquinas' heels, and, by the time it had run its course, that grand unified world view which had been Aquinas' legacy stood in ruins. The story has been told many times and does not need repeating here.

The accounts given by MacIntyre in his trilogy of monographs on the subject *Whose Justice?*,[6] *Three rival Versions of Moral Enguiry*[7] are, in this author's opinion, particularly incisive and have been leant on heavily in the preparation of the present manuscript. There is, though, one particular point to which I would like to draw special attention: as well as the difficulty which arose of every philosophical school of the Enlightenment having its own prescription of "the good" for the individual and/or for society, there arose a further problem in that the very existence of free will came to be called into question by so-called Laplacian determinism. Since, according to Laplace's account, the future of the whole world is determined in principle by its present state, the whole notion of a telos, or of a teleological approach in philosophy, was rendered incoherent. Philosophers were able subsequently to find some solace in Werner Heisenberg's celebrated quantum mechanical uncertainty principle, which opened up once again the space for a small amount of indeterminacy in the physical universe. But, as I suggested in Ⅲ, a more coherent postenlightenment mode of approaching teleology has only recently become possible following the work started in the 1970's by the protagonists of "chaos theory" and the more recent work by the advocates of the so-called "complex systems" approach to complex dynamical phenomena. As I feel it crucial to my overall task of examining the possibility of the emergence of a unified view of value, I would like to spend some time discussing some of what I see as important conclusions arising from this work.

Ⅳ. The Rise of Teleonomy

For reasons of limitation of space, rather than seeking at this point to explain in any detail the technical aspects of these modern developments in science, I shall merely state the conclusion being drawn by an increasing number of authoritative scholars from diverse disciplines that, in order to make sense of complex dynamical phenomena in the physical, biological and earth sciences, it is not only reasonable but indeed necessary to employ teleological language in our description thereof. (For more details, see *Chaos, Complexity and the Good life, Self-organizing Complex Systems and Evolutions*[8], and *Chaos and Determinism*[9], and references therein.) For example, consider the interaction between the Earth's atmosphere and its hydrosphere and the way they seem to regulate themselves for the support of life on the planet. The flows of liquid and gas in both spheres are complex and usually turbulent. They are driven by the energy from the sun, the harmful ultraviolet part of which is (or until recently has been) screened off by an ozone layer. The visible and infra-red radiation is made available to living creatures in the biosphere who depend on it for their survival, and so on. To cite the reflections thereupon of a recent study by a committee of leading scholars from the Institut de France in the fields of physics, biology, economics and philosophy: Such connections could be explained in part by the adaptation of animate organisms to the physical-chemical conditions in the atmospheric-hydrospheric medium as a result of natural selection and evolution ... [but such] does not appear sufficient to explain the coordination that has been demonstrated. [9, p. 94] The same authors, following a survey of similarly remarkable coincidences which occur and have occurred in biology to allow the emergence and survival of living creatures and their evolution into increasingly complex forms, hold that neither can such phenomena be attributed to chance, because to do so would imply a coincidence of so many independent series [viz. chains of events] that the composite probability would be practically zero... In conclusion, the behavior of the natural, nonliving milieu of the atmospheric-hydrospheric system and the behavior of living organisms depend upon causality and exhibit a convergence, through teleonomic coordination, with a bias in favor of life. [9, pp. 151~152]

A similar point is made by biologist Frank Kauffman. In his controversial but compelling monograph entitled, provokingly, "At Home in the Universe",[10] he points out the many inadequacies of current evolutionary theories to explain such problems as how in the genesis of life all the DNA and RNA strands necessary to piece together even the simplest known living organism could converge in place "by chance" with no preexisting living organism around to catalyze the process. He argues that there is, written into the physical laws of the universe, an inherent capacity for "self-organization" of matter and that certain molecular configurations, with a non-vanishing likelihood of occurrence, possess the capacity spontaneously to come together and generate states of much greater complexity whose likelihood would, all other things being equal, have to be expected to be zero. This Kauffman terms "order for free", although he is careful to point out in his Chapter 4 that this is not in fact in violation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics since the order is won at the price of increasing disorder elsewhere. Kauffman goes on to describe numerous computer and other analogue experiments where the principles of self-organization which he holds to be acting in biological systems are seen to operate in simulated "virtual" worlds. It is his further claim that intelligent life should be viewed on this basis not only as possible but even as expected! He argues in a closing chapter that similar principles ought to be applicable in such complex interactive systems as economies and even global civilization.

The cited French authors prefer, rightly I believe, the use of biologist Jacques Monod's term "teleonomic" to the classical "teleological" in describing such apparently directed behavior, on account of the latter's association with mythical world views and notions of causality incompatible with a contemporary scientific outlook wherein the natural world is seen as being governed by efficient causes acting locally in time and space. Nonetheless it becomes possible on this basis to talk coherently of the telos of physical and biological systems. For it appears to be "in the nature of things" that they seek mutual cooperation and coordination — and accomplish it, even in the face of ever-changing "environmental" influences. It is not difficult therefore to go one step further and suggest, as in essence Kauffman [10] and others have done, that it is "in the nature of people" to seek in an analogous sense mutual cooperation and coordination in their activities and ends, e.g. through the formation of families and societies, and that the ideas emerging from the study of complex systems in the physical and life sciences may be of value in offering guidelines about how such cooperation and coordination might best be effected and/or

understood. In particular we are led to consider the importance of the role that the evolutionary forces of self-organization might play in directing the emergence and development of our practices, traditions, and institutions, and to question the assumptions, often made implicitly, that their existence and modus operandi can be understood and explained adequately through rational deliberation, and that they are ultimately susceptible to evaluation in terms of their capacity to measure up to our explicitly determined ideals.

Therefore I would propose as the first element of my attempt to reconstitute a foundation for a universal approach to human values the adoption of a view of humans and human society as adaptive complex systems undergoing a co-evolutionary process. But we must eschew here any crude Darwinism biased, as it has tended to be, towards reductionism and a view of evolution as having occurred "by chance" in the face of a law of ever-increasing entropy. For within the complex systems paradigm the whole is always more than the sum of the parts and must be expected to manifest behavior and attributes not amenable to explication in terms of the action or nature of its constitutive elements. Also we should recognize that although there is in our universe a tendency for entropy on aggregate to increase, this understanding has to be tempered by an appreciation of the (perhaps) equally important ineluctable tendency for atoms, molecules, cells, persons, etc. to find ways to cooperate and form ever more complex higher entities capable of locally decreasing their entropy and even enhancing the complexity of their own structure and interrelationships. This evolution is guided by subtle laws whereby each entity must recognize the existence and nature of other entities and is consequently tightly constrained in its possibilities if it is to survive the onslaught of the second law of thermodynamics and even to reverse its trend. Such laws would furthermore seem to apply from the subatomic level to the level of human society and to govern even the structure of the universe.

On this understanding, it is clearly ridiculous to approach the question of human values, through abstract deliberation, seeking to choose for ourselves among all the myriad possibilities that present themselves in our mental space. Rather it behooves us to study closely what principles and policies have enabled individuals, groups, societies and nations to synergize, prosper and achieve fulfillment historically and in the present. Then we should review our concepts of "human" and "human society". And finally we should address again the question of "the good life".

V. The Good Life Revisited

So, if as I have suggested there are indeed grounds in this postenlightenment era for making new sense of Aristotle's notion of a human telos, how reasonable is it to take the next step, as EUT seems to want to do, of arguing that this telos can be given content in such a way as to apply in a general or universal way to humans as a species, rather than separately to each individual person? Certainly if EUT had gone some way to substantiating its claim that "Unification axiology is precisely that which has appeared to answer this demand of our times" [1, p. 166], we would be in a better position to judge. But in the absence of clearer guidance, we must seek our own way.

The first and most obvious challenge we must confront is the fact of the diversity of alternative standards of justice and right which have been put forward since the inception of the Enlightenment and even before. Some of these were radical attempts to argue from principles of pure rationality. Others sought to justify current practice and belief. Many sought to supplant the need for theistic belief in arriving at answers to questions of the good. Others again sought to prove the necessity of religious belief in finding such answers. What emerged from the successive failures of each attempt to overcome the limitations and shortcomings of its predecessors was a widespread recognition of the impossibility of any such enterprise ever succeeding in achieving a definitive victory, not over all of its rivals, but even over one of its rivals. This is the problem of what Mac Intyre refers to as incompatibility and incommensurability [4]; that is that, although in terms of a tradition of inquiry A it may be possible to show that the adherents of tradition B are in error on a particular point, it may be equally possible to show, within the scope of tradition A, that it is precisely A's rivals who are misled by the fallacies implicit in tradition B. Worse, it may be that adherents of tradition A, for reasons of differences of language, cultural background, etc. find themselves simply incapable of comprehending what it is the adherents of tradition A are trying to say to them. To illustrate that this is not a trivial problem I would cite the fact that Roger Scruton, one of the most eminent conservative philosophers in Great Britain today, feels precisely this way about the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger.[11]

Such incompatibility or incommensurability is a serious obstacle to our present project, although not, as Mac Intyre [4] has shown, an

altogether insuperable one. For Aquinas, in his grand synthesis of Augustinianism and Aristotelianism discussed above, was able to resolve an apparent dichotomy and show Augustinians to their satisfaction how his reinterpretation and expansion of Aristotle's philosophy was able to resolve problems which they had previously had to view as intractable from within their own tradition and vice versa (see [6] for details, in particular Chapter X, "Overcoming a Conflict of Traditions"). This offers some grounds for hope as it indicates that, even in the face of myriad conflicting mutually incompatible claims, it may yet be possible to maintain a coherent notion of progress in moral science.

Nonetheless, since such successes proved to be few and far between, the conclusion which has widely been drawn from surveying the fruits of the Enlightenment project is that it was fundamentally misconceived and that the best we can realistically hope for is the establishment of a level playing field upon which advocates of rival versions of the good life can compete with one another for power, influence and adherents — the so-called "liberalist" position. But Mac Intyre is right, I believe, in pointing out [6, pp. 326-48] that, in the absence of any consistent justification for itself or of self-evident principles governing how a truly liberal r gime should be operated, liberalism itself has difficulty in refuting the allegation that it is no more than one other tradition of inquiry among many competing versions, to whose validity there exist no particularly compelling a priori reasons to give one's assent. He reserves special criticism for that most celebrated creation of this tradition, the so-called "liberal university", whose introductory courses on "Great Books" he characterizes as not a "reintroduction to the culture of past traditions" but, on account of their prior commitment to a level playing field, "a tour through what is in effect a museum of texts, each rendered contextless and therefore other than its original by being placed on a cultural pedestal" [6, p. 386] (for his counterproposal, see [7, pp. 216~236]).

But I digress. The important question we should address is what to make of this antinomy with which liberalism confronts us. One response is that initiated by Friedrich Nietzche, which Mac Intyre has variously dubbed the "perspectivist" fallacy [6] or "genealogy" [7]. This view has in recent times achieved some notoriety through its popularization in the writings of the so-called "postmodernist" school of thought. Its proponents hold that all attempts, liberal or otherwise, to give an account of "the good life" are misguided since there is and can be no such thing as a concept of the good life for

people as such; indeed there is not even any such thing as the good life for any one person, except for what that person deems to be such of his own volition. It is the main thesis of [7] that both the protagonists of the Enlightenment project and the proponents of the genealogical view participate in a common fallacy, namely the view that values and moral perspectives are to be deduced out of abstract principles of rationality: the Enlightenment illustrates the impossibility of ever fulfilling such a goal; genealogy draws the apparently justifiable conclusion therefrom that there are no such things as values-as-such.

It is Mac Intyre's argument that, rather than seeking to ground our values in abstract reasoning, we should seek a more historically-based evolutionary account of human values. This MacIntyre has initiated with his account of practices, virtues and traditions, as I explained in III. The former he defines as: any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. [4, p. 187]

Two things are worthy of note in his definition. First, what is considered "good" is to be determined in the course of practicing, not by abstract reflection. Secondly, what is considered a good or worthwhile end is not fixed but can be systematically extended through participation in the practice. Thus the notion of goodness implicit in practices is inherently evolutionary. Of course the exercise of reason, being required as it normally is to participate in a practice, is not excluded from the process. But the relative importance of the role which it plays is to be decided by the practitioners themselves in the light of the history of the practice. A virtue is then tentatively identified as: an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. [4, p. 191]

This definition has the virtue of simplicity, but is clearly too wide in its scope; neither does it allow us to compare the relative importance of the virtues associated with different practices. To overcome this shortcoming, MacIntyre points to the need to relate practices to what he calls the "narrative" of a human life or lives, in the sense of their self-understanding. Arguing that it is a fundamental characteristic of

human life that it possesses or seeks a consistent self-understanding which is furthermore always directed towards the future, he suggests that such a self-understanding or "narrative quest" naturally provides us with our conception of the good life (to use Aristotle's phrase), in the sense of identifying the good to which other goods must contribute if they are to be meaningfully integrated into a whole life. Locating practices in such a context then allows us to sharpen the above tentative definition of a virtue by excluding those human qualities which are judged incompatible with the practice of the good life; and it allows us, in principle at least, to compare the relative importance or merits of the virtues associated with different practices.

It may be criticized at this point that the viewpoint I have identified appears not too different from that imputed to the perspectivists. But one further qualification needs to be made. The good life is never lived in isolation but always shared in community with others. Thus one's conception of the good for oneself has to be framed in such a way that one's life does not interfere unduly with the capacity of others to live out their good life. Such is of course far easier said than done, but we are assisted at this point by the existence of what MacIntyre calls "traditions." These are precisely the historically determined shared understandings and beliefs of those who engage together in a given practice. And since the good life is lived out by definition through practices (in the MacIntyre sense), this is always in the context of some tradition or another.

And here it seems we come back into contact with the Unification Thought perspective. For if our concept of the good life - our telos - is to emerge in an organic evolutionary way, as Mac Intyre's (and my own) philosophical deliberations seem to suggest it should, from shared tradition(s) rather than through a process of rational deliberation, we are drawn ineluctably back to the "traditional values" which, as we saw, EUT insists need to be revived and strengthened. But we must be careful lest we read more into the correspondence here than is justified. For while in Chapter 4 of EUT the epithet "tradition" is used almost exclusively to connote religious traditions, as is evidenced by Section III on "Weaknesses in Traditional Views of Values" which deals in turn with Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, and (cursorily) humanitarianism, MacIntyre's concern is primarily with traditions of inquiry. This aspect of his thought he develops at length in [6]. Yet he does, as I indicated above, recognize in [4] the significance of practices as the locus in which traditions in the widest sense take shape and are communicated, often in a highly implicit way. In addition his expressed preference in

[4] and [6] is clearly for the (theistic) Thomist tradition as the one which has in his view, over the longest period of time, shown itself most capable of transcending both itself and opposed perspectives by learning from them of its own inner limitations and correcting itself accordingly. So although MacIntyre, as an academic philosopher, has concerned himself in his more detailed analyses mainly with written traditions (of inquiry in particular), his conclusions do to some extent echo EUT's call for a return to traditional religious values, albeit with some differences of emphasis.

A not dissimilar viewpoint was advanced by British moral and political philosopher Michael Oakeshott. In his *Rationalism in Politis*[12], he distinguished conceptually two forms of moral life: the "habitual" and the "reflective". The first of these emerges not by "consciously applying to ourselves a rule of behaviour, nor by conduct recognized as the expression of a moral ideal", but rather by simply "acting in accordance with a certain habit of behaviour". The "reflective" moral life is by contrast determined by a "self-conscious pursuit of moral ideals" or through "the reflective observance of moral rules." Oakeshott emphasizes that the moral life is necessarily lived in practice as some combination of the habitual and the reflective modes. Yet there is a tendency for societies where the first of these two poles holds sway, such as was the case with the pre-Socratic Graeco-Roman world or in early Christian communities, to become increasingly concerned with the formal codification of their values and ideals and so to drift towards the second pole. Oakeshott finds this trend unfortunate insofar as he associates this second pole with a "denial of the poetic character of all human activity." He denigrates its advocates and practitioners by means of allegorical critique. For example he compares the capacity for moral cultivation of a man caught up in deliberations about how to balance conflicting moral ideals which press upon his mind with the capacity of a farmer to cultivate the land when he is "confused and distracted by academic critics and political directors." He compares this situation also to that of a literature in which criticism has usurped the place of poetry, or in a religious life in which he pursuit of theology offers itself as an alternative to the practice of piety.

The parallels with Mac Intyre's emphasis in [4] on the centrality of practices in determining the form of the good life cannot be missed. In conclusion, the second element of my proposed foundation for a new view of value is that analysis within the evolutionary framework proposed in 4 above be carried out in terms of the "emergent" properties of traditions, practices and virtues which we have inherited, paying

particular attention to religious and family traditions which have in particular been the vehicles through which these emergent properties were propagated and upheld, as opposed to merely codified and analyzed. Of course there is no guarantee (nor even likelihood) that such analysis will furnish us with a universal perspective capable of resolving the many value differences that presently divide us. But it would surely help us to recognize more clearly the common ground between us. Also, understanding the evolutionary role which particular practices played in sustaining and/or renewing our society or social unit would help us to explain it to practitioners of alternative traditions: alternatively such investigations might help us to understand — and perhaps even emulate — practices stemming from the traditions of groups other than those to which we belong or of which we have direct experience.

Much more could be said here and further avenues explored, but unfortunately limitations of time and space require that I draw my argument to a close at this juncture with the hope that, in spite of the cursory nature of my survey of a number of detailed and carefully argued positions by scholars whose capabilities and knowledge vastly exceed my own, I have said enough to persuade the reader at least that a case can be made for the view that the pursuit of a unified view of "value" remains a worthwhile one and that, subject to some reinterpretation, the notions introduced here of co-evolutionary adaptive complex systems on the one hand and practices, virtues and traditions on the other may serve as the tools required for the reworking of our understanding of the nature of the good life.

References

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