The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity and shall not fail.

- A.E. Houseman

INTRODUCTION

Freedom reigns supreme among American values. Before it, every American genuflects. And technocratic modernity is in love with freedom. But feedom is one of those core words in the language of human experience for which, like "being," "goodness," "truth," "beauty," we can find no satisfying and universally acceptable definition. Because freedom is at the heart of our distinctive being as human, different perceptions of what a human being is have led to rival views concerning the meaning of freedom.1 Christianity enters the lists as one more possibility, though in advancing its own distinctive view of freedom, it merges at some points with othe views. Where it diverges from contemporary views of freedom it may offer worthwhile correctives. I want, therefore, to reflect on a few isolated characteristics of the logic of freedom as Christianity perceives it.

Let me preface my reflections with tw preliminary matters, the first a contemporary issue, the second an historical tracing. They may help to contextualize what follows. I shall treat both with the greatest brevity. First, to clear the way for our reflections, I must confess at the outset tat I postulate the existence of freedom. Freedom assumes a myriad of forms, social, political, economic, religious. But beneath them all resides the basic freedom of the person. Call it transcendental, essential or inner freedom. It grounds all the forms f freedom and cannot be extinguished by external restraints. This essential freedom of the human person is not a thing with empirically describable properties. Rather, it is the condition grounding the possibility of the phenomena of freedom. Usually, andwith some truth, freedom is defined in negative terms as freedom from, though we cannot, as we shall see, define it that way with complete adequacy. Yet, in a sense, freedom is first of all, a negation, an absence of restraints, a distancing from nature ad the world of persons and things. A distancing, not a separation from nature or life world, which is impossible, since we inextricably belong to them and resonate with the voice of earth. But we are beings who are not wholly subject to nature's or sociey's compulsions. This transcendence is

freedom's beginning. In a way, freedom is the empty space, the room left us for maneuvering within these determinisms.

On the other hand, because freedom is not a thing, and therefore is not empirically accessible fo observation and verification, some opt for a determinism of some kind, in terms of which the postulation of freedom is considered unscientific or even anti-scientific. This is wrongheaded. Although there is no way to study freedom as an empirical object,it is freedom that makes science possible. All science thrives on judgments of what is true or false, probable or improbable, valid or invalid. Such judgments are arrived at on rational grounds. But if determinism has it right, rational discrimination, an science with it, becomes impossible. We were wrong to think we were reasoning. We were simply being manipulated by our physical and social environments. Beliefs and judgments, including the belief in universal determinism, I suppose, become simply the unlterably determined products of a chain of natural causes beyond our control and not the conclusions of any truly rational process in humans. We judge this or that true or false not on rational grounds, but because of chemical or social or psychological fctors that are in play. But could we predict the theories of Einstein or the tragedies of Shakespeare if we had suitable knowledge of their neurobiology and biochemistry, their psyches and cultures and so forth? Would that evidence lead us to predict Einsein's abstract equations about space and time or the Bard's Iago? Even if we knew their thoughts, could we forecast how they would link them or whether they would lead to the theory of relativity or the tragedy of Hamlet? If we could, wouldn't we be more olleagues than oracles?

Surely, the factors just mentioned are important, but to make them the whole story undercuts true science, to say nothing of our juridical systems and our responsibility as moral agents, since we become mere spectators of our live. What is questionable here is not the validity of studies of brain chemistry or sociological correlations, but the paradigm that is operative when causal relations are thought to exhaustively define the human being. At a certain level the paradigm of cauality is valid. However, it overlooks human beings' experience of themselves. Because that experience cannot be quantified, it does not fall into the causal network, hence human being in its distinctive reality is excluded. Though we cannot prove that we re free, which would be a misguided objectivization of freedom, we have to assume it as a postulate of any rational discrimination.

It is mistaken, however, in light of our experience to go to the other extreme, to deny that human behavior is determined y external and internal factors. Nor is such a denial required to defend

freedom against the extreme of fatalism. We are not so autonomous as to be wholly independent of the determinations of our physical and social environments. We are not angelic intellcts inhabiting physical vehicles that have no effect upon our motivations. Feelings, decisions, self-determination do not surge up in us free from all influences. These phenomena are not creations ex nihilo of our freedom. We are born into social worlds o culture and language; we are subject to the necessities of our biology. Skinner correctly, therefore, drew attention to the conditioned character of our behavior.2 Behaviorist theories are right about the involuntary at work in our lives. But we must disinguish between determinisms setting limits and strict causality, the production of an effect by invariant physical laws-biological, chemical, or psychic. Motives, the reasons for an action, are not independent of the decision that invokes and shapes them all the while itself being shaped by them. These involuntary elements cease being static, extrinsic elements once they enter the circle of the voluntary. Motives acquire significance from the will they dispose and solicit. The will determines them by itschoice, adopts them in its consent. Motives determine the will only insofar as the will determines itself. Motives incline, they do not compel. Passivity and activity lie at the heart of decision.3

Yet today, the image of the new scientist, able to undertand, and thus to control the determining elements of destiny, promises a more extravagant freedom than any previous mythic image. This modern myth portrays the people in the white coats as free and able to control according to their creative purposes andthe person on the table as an object of inquiry. However, the one on the table can always look back at the investigator and controller, and even cheat on the objective test. And as Langdon Gilkey has remarked, since both the controller and the controlled an be instances of the same things, freedom and determinism, the myth self-destructs. A myth offering freedom from destiny's necessities on the basis of humanity's complete subservience to necessitating determinisms is even less intelligible than accountsfielded by theology concerning the puzzle of grace and freedom.4

Now to the second preliminary matter. Aware of the oversimplification that goes with using too large a brush on history's canvas, I want, briefly, to trace the grand lines of freedom's movemnt through history. Freedom as we find it in classical antiquity is primarily the moral and political freedom of the Greek polis. There, freedom is restricted to free men and does not extend to women, children, slaves, and foreigners. At the dawn of moderity, the focus becomes the freedom of conscience and of reason championed by the Protestant reformers and the Renaissance and

Enlightenment philosophers respectively. The nineteenth century political and industrial revolutions sounded a clarion call for te individual's right to freedom and for laissez faire economic freedom. The twentieth century saw the "triumph of the therapeutic" and the search for interior liberation of the self through psychoanalysis for those who could afford it and pop psychology fr the masses à la Dr. Laura. Often, freedom was presumed to be not a given, but an achievement. Humans had to seize it from the gods or from tyrants as an emancipation or by conquest of others or of one's self. But some did consider freedom to be woven ino the fabric of human being, constitutive of our humanity. This was the thinking of some of the classical philosophers. By essence, the human is a being who is free, and this is the distinctive mark of the human among all other earthly beings. From this erspective, freedom is not so much an achievement as something given. Still, one can view freedom as the existentialists did. Freedom belongs less to the order of being than to the order of existence. Freedom is not inscribed in human being. Essence is no given. One must achieve one's essence by existing in history. At the outset, freedom is a possibility, a project to be realized. I recognize that I have moved from the Greek polis to modernity without touching upon what lies in between. That "in between"will be at the heart of the reflection that follows.

FREEDOM AS GIFT, TASK, AND GOAL IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

What contribution can the Judeo-Christian tradition make to our understanding of freedom? In this tradition freedom, like everything ele, can be considered only coram Deo, in relation to God. The starting point is neither essence nor existence but creation. The human person is a being who is created free. Here is an assertion that tows in its wake several implications.5 First, freedom isnot something humans seize from God as Prometheus stole from the gods fire that did not belong to him. Rather, freedom belongs to the human as a gift of creation. And freedom is the distinctive mark of a being created in the image of the free God, as was ften noted by the Greek fathers. But second, the gift entails a charge, a vocation. Freedom is a dynamic, not merely a static endowment. "You were called to freedom," says Paul (Gal 5:13). Created in the image of God (Gen 1:26), humans must become more an more conformed to that image, as the Christ was. Thus freedom is gift and acquisition, privilege and responsibility, task and goal. As Irenaeus of Lyon (130-200 C.E.) has it, humans are made in the image of God but must grow into likeness to God.6 We mus become what we are meant to be.

Third, humans are called to creativity; they are created to be, with God, co-creators. The gift is a task, an adventure we must embark upon. Freedom is not just a right to be demanded; it is every bit as much a responsibiity God demands of us. Humans are not created like the snail, which carries its world on its back. Images of a creative God, humans are created as creators of a world. God has perfectly made an imperfect world that humans might perfect it. A Midrash puts t this way: "Isaac asked the Eternal: When Thou hadst made man in thine image, Thou didst not say in Thy Torah that man was good. Wherefore Lord? And God answered: 'Because man I have not yet perfected, and because through the Torah man is to perfect himslf and to perfect the world.'" Freedom is more adventure than possession; it has been given to us to explore the unknown, indeed the undreamed of, to fashion the new by our free initiatives. The old resists the new. The "yes" that freedom addresses to thenew transcends the "no" of the old that wants to perpetuate itself and abort the new. Confronting the old, freedom becomes negation, but freedom can not live as negation, purely as freedom from. It flourishes only on affirmation, as freedom for God's inbeaking future.

Yet far from setting out on a purely private or humanistic adventure, we are, fourthly, by reason of our freedom, summoned to assume a role in the Creator's master plan. We are challenged to construct not just an earthly city but the kingdm of God. The Christian prayer "Thy kingdom come" signals awareness that we are participants in a drama far vaster than our own private pursuits and small biographies. It is in relationship to God that humans discover themselves and can take the measure o themselves and of their grandeur, which is their freedom in transcendence, a freedom whose horizon is the infinite. "Lord, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God nd crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet" (Ps 8:4-6). According to the tradition, then, God is not the negation of human freedom, but its ground and witness ad lure.

In this regard, however, Paul steers us away from an overly anthropocentric view because he casts our freedom into a cosmological perspective when he writes: "Creation awaits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God…that creatio itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:19, 21). Paul detects a mysterious affinity between humans and God's total creation, of which humans are part, and with which humansare meant to share the call to freedom. This flies in the face of the many forms of

dualism bedeviling the Hellenistic world that saw only incongruity between the freedom of humans and the physical world.

Finally, the Biblical tradition alerts us to the ragility of human freedom and views fallible humanity as fallen and ravaged by fault, which is the result of freedom's abuse, for freedom implies the capacity to unmake what God has made. A free humanity is God's risk. Evil, in the Judeo-Christian traditin, is neither woven into our being nor predestined by the gods or fate, as the Babylonian theogonic and the Greek tragic visions, respectively, would have it. Rather, evil enters a good creation through the door of human choice. But evil must be defeated.This is the theme of the liberation of freedom (eleutheria) that Paul so often returns to. Authentic freedom is won not by overcoming a jealous God, but by throwing off the chains of our own self-imposed bondage. "For freedom Christ has set you free. Stan firm and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery," says Paul (Gal 5:1). But if human freedom is wounded, it has not been obliterated. With sin we do not cease being creatures, and as creatures we remain the image of God and free, but in need of the freeng of our freedom, of a deliverance from evil. Thus Augustine's frequent distinction between liberum arbitrium, freewill, the capacity for choice, and libertas, true feedom, the capacity to use free will as it should be used, a capacity which is now in bodage and in need of freeing by God's grace. The doctrine of original sin, with all its flaws, was an attempt to articulate our dark underside, and dare I say, the uncomfortable truth for the easy conscience of twenty-first century Americans that we see inMr. Hyde, Hitler, and Hannibal Lecter something of ourselves writ very, very large. Uncomfortable truth in a culture where the words "evil" and "sin" have all but vanished from its vocabulary, as have the symbols once so helpful in giving expression to ou experience of evil. As Hannibal told Officer Starling:

> Nothing happened to me, Officer Starling. I happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences. You've given up good and evil for behaviorism, Officer Starling. You've got everybody in moral ignity pants-nothing is ever anybody's fault. Look at me, Officer Starling. Can you stand to say I'm evil?"7

Yet if the doctrine of original sin was shelter from excessive and naïve optimism about our humanity, it was shelter also from an excessivelybrutal view of our humanity and despair

concerning it. It was so because it told the human story not only in terms of fallibility but in terms of redeemability as well.8

These are, then, the distinctive characteristics of freedom in the Christian traditin. They provide the presuppositions that undergird the reflections that follow. Contemporary hermeneutics is closer to the truth than Cartesian "objectivity" when it contends that one arrives at truth not by starting from ground zero or with a tabula rasa but by setting out from within the tradition that is part of one. From what has been said we see that the Judeo-Christian anthropology is in agreement with essentialist philosophies that freedom is of the essence of humanity, since the tradition views itas a birthright of every human by reason of creation. And it is in agreement with those existentialists who see freedom as an achievement, since the tradition views humans as called to freedom's liberation and its dynamic development. It may differ mainlyin that it anchors freedom and freedom's story in God. The whole meaning of Christian faith is expressed in terms of the interplay of divine and human freedom in a drama enacted on the stage of history. The Christian vision of history is a vision of histoy gone wrong, of a perversion that affects every person and every human institution. Who God is and what human beings gradually become emerge as the drama unfolds as a tale of our essential or created freedom, then of freedom bound, of freedom liberated, nd of freedom transfigured in the kingdom of the free.

In sum, then, what we learn from the tradition is that God is not an overpowering God, the blinding incandescence of whose presence incinerates human freedom. "Truly you are a God who hides himself,"says Deutero Isaiah (Is 45:15). God is there but not there. God has placed a discrete distance between Godself and creatures so as to allow them room and space. God creates the world as the sea the shore. This God of the possible has, according to the Judo-Christian tradition, wanted humans to freely make actual the possible, not to be marionettes acting out a pre-scripted story. We do not make God great by projecting into God our own childish imagining of omnipotence and disallowing the kind of God that od has chosen to be. A genuine transcendence respects the other, is magnanimous enough not to find it unacceptable that there be other free, transcendent beings, and is expansive enough to rejoice in that which is created by the other. Aquinas marveled tht human freedom was woven into divine providence itself, even though Sirach notes: "It was God who created humankind in the beginning and left them in the power of their own free choice" (Sir 15:14).9 When a theology denigrates humanity, that is an indicaion of a probable error. Not that we should negate divine transcendence so as to aggrandize our humanity and its fragile freedom. But

can there be an adequate theology of God based upon a denigration of God's creation? Often enough, inadequate theologies re rooted in inadequate anthropologies, which lead us to false gods. False not so much because they do not exist, or because they erroneously replace the true God, but false because falsifying the image of God, they falsify God. Fragile humanity is falle, yes, but no lower than God descended in the Christ. In a sense, anthropology is the touchstone of theology. This Judeo-Christian optic on freedom must be kept in mind as we reflect upon contemporary notions of freedom

FREEDOM AS CHOICE

One of the cruial markers that sets off modernity from previous periods in history is choice. In the secularized consciousness of the West freedom means the ability to make choices on one's own without outside influences or constraints. Simply put, freedom means free coice, the exercise of preference in the absence of determinants. It means what philosophers have termed libertas indifferentiae, in which nothing or no one coerces or compels, determines or necessitates choice. Modernity privileges choice as the reigning ategory in public life, the apex of human aspiration. And there is a growing public sentiment that society would be far better off if humans incapable of choice were not in our midst. And choice, we feel, should run the gamut, from the kind of burger one elishes to the bride one cherishes, from breakfast cereal to abortion. And now, the fertility industry allows us the fetus of our choice. In this way of thinking, freedom increases as one's options increase. The greater the multiplicity of models, flavors styles, brands, the freer we are thought to be. There is a kernel of truth in all this. Freedom is the capacity to act on one's own independent initiative. Negation of that is negation of responsibility and therewith negation of juridical and ethical acountability. But that said, there remains a crying need for nuance.

The reduction of freedom to arbitrary choice is a fiction. It creates the illusion that life is a kind of shopping mall and all choices a kind of economic transaction based on a cost-beefit analysis. This commodification of life risks the trivialization of freedom by our consumerist culture. Not surprisingly, the phrase "standard of living," viz. that in accord with which people can live humanly, has imperceptibly come to mean our growig capacity to consume. The engines of economic growth have greatly contributed to human well being in the West, but have lulled many into defining the good life as ever- increasing monetary rewards and an ever- expanding range of consumer choice. This enbles economic advance, irrespective of the nature of the advance, to

become a socio-political priority. In many ways we choosers have become a generation of surfers moving from choice to choice, from channel to channel, station to station, website to webite, even from job to job and from spouse to spouse. The dizzying multiplicity of options may leave us restless ("I should have had the hazel nut instead of the mocha"), drained of the energy and discernment needed for truly serious decisions, where our otions are limited, if indeed there are options at all. For the array of options seems to vary inversely with the importance of the decision to be made. Choosing a husband is not like choosing from thirty brands of bread in the supermarket. Perhaps worst o all, lost in a mall of endless choices, we risk never coming into contact with our inner selves, who we really are. Surging waves of choice can overwhelm us, sweep us adrift like rudderless boats. This cult of choice fits well with an ideology of individalism and flight from social consciousness and responsibility. In our atomized society, private pursuits of personal happiness and special interest groups' pursuit of their own selfish ends trump the common pursuit of the good society. And where freedom i reduced to arbitrary choice, others fast become hindrances to my freedom and objects of resentment.10 The question we need to ask ourselves is this: do we want to be creatures of the global market or creators of a more faithful and humane global society? In connection with freedom as choice, most would also view freedom as the capacity to choose between good and evil, to sin or not. Again, this is true enough; what and how we choose is as important as that we freely choose. To assume that all that matter is that I can choose freely, no matter what it is I choose, is narcissistic choice for the sake of choice, and again, the trivialization of choice. Not all options are equally worthwhile just because freely chosen. Choice alone does not confer value. Thi line of thinking about freedom as the capacity to choose either good or evil goes awry, however, when it assumes that we stand in a posture of indifference before good and evil. In the first place, the ability to choose between good and evil seems not tobe of the essence of freedom as such. It adds nothing to the notion of free agency to wrap into every choice or consent to a motivating good an unexpressed, unacted upon power of refusal, a power to do evil and fail the good that beckons us, thereby denyig what we are. God, in whose image we are, is the norm; God is preeminently free, yet cannot choose evil. The unjustified sinner, according to the Christian tradition, cannot not sin (non posse non peccare); the just are able not to sin (posse non peccare; and the beati, confirmed in good, cannot any longer sin (non posse peccare), absorbed as they are in the supreme good, an absorption already seen in the predictability of the saint. Is Dorothy Day less free than the libertine?

In any case, the will is ot in a neutral stance, straddling the fence between good and evil. Far from being neutral, we are, prior to any choice, already determined to the good, to universal good, the bonum in communi as the medievals called it. The will, the heart itself, is inatiable hunger for the complete good. Even when one does evil, it is behind a facade of seeking what is good. Freedom is freedom to seek and do the good. We cannot not will good. To do evil, the absence of due good, is to fail the good, to abuse freedom ad refuse to be what we are. This is unfreedom, a moral vacuum. Sartre, in his Being and Nothingness, describes this as "bad faith," choosing what runs counter to authentic humanity while at the same time viewing such choices as life-promoting and of value11 Later, this negation parading as affirmation may be recognized for what it truly is, though on a deeper level, we knew all along it was a choice for atrophy and death because it ate away at a covenant bond in my life or led to an egoism that numbs a loe. The tragic irony in all this is that evil choices in the guise of good are parasitic. They derive energy from the heart's dynamic eros for the good. We cannot gauge the worth of anything without affirming the all-encompassing good, source of allworth. To make any other our master does not free us but debases our attachment to and dependence upon the all-inclusive good. Allegiance to a pretender cannot be "instead of" but only "in addition to," which places us in self-contradiction. The self becoes a house divided, and divided selves lead to divided societies, which, in a vicious cycle, foster divided selves. Souci-political and economic divisions reflect religious problems within divided selves living together. The demons in conflict with the al-inclusive good are legion and ready to possess us. Disparities of wealth within and among nations, e.g., will remain intractable until we purge the demonic idolatries that plague our individual and communal life. In sum, negation of the mystery that is or horizon is a travesty of self-determination, and in reality, self-negation. Even our "no" to the good stands as sad witness to our craving for life and being, and to the "yes" to the good that is engraved on our being Whether we choose good or evil, the"yes" asserts its power in us. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, our hypocrisy is the obeisance our vice pays to virtue.

The real opposition, then, is not between freedom and necessity or determinacy, but between freedom and sin, the negation of the heart's ers, a deficiency, a dis-value, nothingness. Freedom and necessity as such are not opposed, but freedom and an inner servitude that compels one to act contrary to one's authentic nature. Aquinas speaks of the will's inbuilt finality, its determinacy to the omprehensive good as a natural and necessitating appetite, the voluntas ut natura, or the will as nature, which asserts its grounding presence in all affective and voluntary movements.12

Augustine, who writes with his blood, is more existential: "Thou hat made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."13 For Thomas, the voluntas ut natura, the natural desire for the good, is what orients, sustains, and arouses thevoluntas ut ratio, or the will of decision or choice, thewill selecting concrete, relative goods and the means to secure them. All too easily these particular goods are transmuted into the absolute good that they manifest and participate in. When that happens, these goods become demonic idols, their devotees enlaved and unfree, and the heart's eros stifled. No finite good can sate the heart because the heart's hunger is always, already beyond every finite good as it forever gravitates toward the transcendent good, the lure of which is the ground of our freedom nd self-transcendence, and of our endless restlessness for being, life, truth, beauty, goodness. Naked choice cannot be the paradigm for freedom; choice is possible because it is grounded in our essential freedom. Alternatives appear because the overridig orientation to comprehensive good can never be sated by any concrete good. What is chosen will be a means to the highest good or a lesser end subordinate to it, however deluded or destructive we may be in identifying the good.

To put all this another wa, the appetite for good is the quest for happiness. Freedom is not sheer randomness, undirectedness, or unpredictability. It is easy to be unpredictable if you do not mind acting crazily. But coherence within our lives is necessary if we are to make any maningful choices at all. What freedom requires is not unpredictability but something more positive and difficult to define, spontaneity. What matters is not that my acts are predictable but that they are my own. When magnanimous persons spontaneously actmagnanimously, our reaction is not, "How predictable." Rather, we see these individuals as more free than others who are unpredictable because they are, for whatever reason, swept up in the passions of the moment. So there is a directedness scripted intous. We are not blank pages. Being determined to universal good is as necessary to freedom as light is to seeing or sound to hearing. This determination to good is the condition of the possibility of freedom, not its antithesis. Unless there is something dfinite we want from the beginning, we will not be able to start choosing. To refuse to choose according to what we judge to be truly good is to render ourselves unintelligible, because it is the denial of our natural appetite for the good. Admittedly, givn the plodding pace of human cognitional and moral development and of personal integration, we often lack sufficient knowledge to discern the authentic good. And even when we correctly discern the good, we may be unable to will it because our freedom is i bondage.14 A culture where the entertainment and diversion afforded by a myriad

of choices overshadow meaning, further aggravates matters. In that case the distinction between emotional happiness and ethical happiness, between the pleasant and the good, lurs. Emotional happiness is feeling good and pursuing the means to feel good; it means having fun. (According to the studies of Schor and Calder cited above, "overworked" and "overspent" Americans are not really having as much fun as they'd like.) Ethica happiness, on the other hand, is doing and being good by pursuing the absolute good in and through all relative goods. This is not to deny room for what Thomas, following Aristotle, called the bonum delectabile, sheer pleasure, as distinct from the bonumhonestum. and the bonum utile. But being ethically good may not bring emotional happiness. It may be no fun at all. It may cost one's life. Fun comes and goes; happiness is a steady state. In the end, true freedom is authentic fulfillment, not just a capaity for choice, which at best, bears the fruit of fulfillment and at worst, the fruit of egoism and dissipation.

Now a qualification. The innate desire for the good does not make of us angelic beings. We experience the multiple impulses and motivations nrmal for animals and they often clash. There is, as the human genome project shows, no unspanable canyon yawning between the other animals and us. But there is no incompatibility between human freedom and our evolutionary origin. Evolved and evolving we ae. We are not machines with but one but one set of programmed functions. We have a plurality of possibilities, aims and motivations that need to be held together in a flexible and versatile coherence by means of prioritizing, which means having a morality Ideally, the motivating impulses and urges are not suppressed but harmoniously integrated with our desire for the comprehensive good. Such unifying wholeness is the heart of human freedom. Lacking it, the tyranny of passion or reason or culture reigns. T one extent or another however, we are all divided kingdoms, a matter to which we shall return.

FREEDOM AS SELF-CONSTITUTION

If we probe beneath the surface, where freedom is flattened out and narrowed into choice, we may at a deeper level see freedom fo what it truly is, self-constitution. The self determines its course of action. It freely chooses to act or not to act in a particular way, to pursue or not to pursue particular goods and goals. True enough. But far more important, freedom is not only abot choosing this or that. It is about defining oneself, what kind of self one wants to be. For the self by its choices, unconsciously for the most part, determines its stance toward life, its way of living, of being in the world. By my decisions not only d I affect others, I also affect myself. I posit my self, determine

who I am to be, sculpt the character from which most of my future decisions and actions will spring. In my choices, especially the important ones, I am thrown back on myself. What kind of erson do I desire to become? Someone who is open to the possible "more," or sealed within the circle of my own small concerns and values? This is what the Christian tradition, in it better representations, has been much concerned with in its understandingof freedom. In its depth, freedom is not about choosing this or that, but choosing with, in, and through all the "thises" and "thats" the person I hope to be, someone open or closed to the ever receding mystery that draws us. The central point here is tha we want not merely to exist but to lead our lives, so that what we become is not just fated, but plotted insofar as it can be by conscious choice. Choices about friends, work, family, civic life derive from that all-embracing decision that determines forus what gives value to our lives and loves, captures our heart and is our ultimate concern.

Of course, one can cop out on self-creation, go with the flow, follow the herd. To recognize that the significance of my life comes from its being chosen, however,requires that that significance and my choices depend on an awareness first, that independent of me and my will there is something worthwhile in shaping my life and second, that some life-options are more significant than others. Self-choice cannot be mad in isolation. Defining myself is dependent on a horizon of values, on issues that count, e.g., the needs of others, the duties of intelligent citizenship, the demands of truth, love of God. These are what determine significant choices. What makes me to b me are not trivia, such as my having seven toes or liking a cigar after dinner. Self-centered quests for fulfillment that are oblivious to the collective wisdom of the past or opposed to the demands of social life are self-defeating. To turn a deaf ear t the demands arising from beyond the self kills the possibility of significant self-choice. Self-constitution, identity making are forfeited. In place of a self there is only a steady stream of choices, each suited to the moment.

And all this has socialconsequences. I am who I am because I decide. Even though decisions are intentional and turn away from the self and toward a project in which one can become lost, they also involve a return to the self. The subject does not constitute itself in a void or x nihilo, but in the project that takes it out of itself. Only in a circuit through the otherness of the world does one have access to oneself and constitute oneself. However, there are, in a sense, no purely private choices and actions. All our choices ad actions make us the kinds of persons we are, which in turn, make our society the kind of society it is. For what we have made of ourselves by our choices determines all our intersubjective relationships, which, in turn, ripple out into the currents of or communities.

This aspect of freedom as self-constitution is often neglected in discussions concerning freedom of choice. Yet it is this aspect that makes freedom an essentially moral concept, because it is within the subject and its character that thebasic norms of decision, choice, and action reside. In other words, who I am determines what I do. What I am colors my agency. "By their fruits you will know them" (Mt 7:16), but only because their roots are what they are. Being and choosing and doing aredialectically related. What kind of person I am determines what I do with my freedom; what I do with my freedom determines what kind of person I am. Nonetheless, this needs qualification, and we shall develop this below: each human life is an intricate patern of choosing, doing, but also of being done to, of activity and receptivity, of the voluntary and the involuntary. But even the passivity can open the way to a new level of doing and becoming. We are not condemned to vanish without remainder into the ircumstances of our lives, our genes or our culture.

The Christian tradition would add to all this that my choices are not only about self-definition, deciding who I shall be. They are as well acceptance or rejection of a call inscribed in my being, an nvitation that summons me in and through all the goods and all the dreams that entice my desires. I am choosing not only who I shall be; I am also choosing myself in relation to and assuming a posture toward the absolute good, the mystery that is the horion of all my decisions. Choosing A or B and choosing my self and choosing or rejecting the holy mystery are not separate decisions. The three coinhere. Choosing to be a certain kind of person is either allowing oneself to be defined solely by one's desire or not only by one's desires but also by the absolute mystery that is the heart's hunger.

FREEDOM AS SITUATED

We have been contending that we do not stand before good and evil in a condition of neutrality and indifference, because we have a natural apptite that determines us to the good prior to any particular choice, while evil is the negation of that appetite and, therefore, of what we are. Now I want to suggest several additional dimensions of our humanity that singly and cumulatively, eliminate thepossibility of any putative neutrality in choosing between good and evil. The cult of choice and self-determination as the apogee of our aspirations blinds us to these dimensions, and hence to our vulnerability, lack of control and dependence on others. hese factors lead us to see that freedom is never absolute, but always relative, conditioned, hemmed in. Human freedom is always a situated freedom. Biological, psychological, social, and historical givens condition freedom.

Genes, the body, family, cultue shape us and our freedom. What I do with my freedom depends on who I am, what I have chosen to become. I am the sum of my choices. But I also am to a large extent what others have chosen for me. So now, briefly, a consideration of several dimensions of ur humanity that play upon all the registers of our lives and loves and in so doing condition our freedom for good or ill. Each of these factors is deserving of greater elaboration than I can provide here.

First, disproportion is part and parcel of our hmanity, for we are torn between infinity and finitude. As Hamlet put it: "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell yet count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." We are exocentric beings open to the beyond. We reach for thestars yet are earthbound, tethered to nature and history, of which we are part. We long to soar, but our limitations weigh upon us. We crave the whole, the universal, but must settle for the part, the particular. But we are tortured by our failure to achive our full possibilities, to do better than we have, to be more than we have become. This rift in our being we manage neither wisely nor well. A balance, indeed an integration of the polarities, openness to the infinite and loving acceptance of our finitde, is difficult, because from the parentage of the two, angst is born. Frustration and ambiguity in our being flow from the tragic dimension of our existence. Angst is the price of freedom. We cannot imaginatively project the future without anxiety nor b sensitive to self and others without suffering. And the always-latent threat of non-being, of having to die prods anxiety. In Kierkegaard's words, "Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom when freedom gazes down into its own possibility grasping at finitenes to secure itself."15 John Updike, the most theologically literate of our novelists, formulizes the toll angst can take: Ass= I/angst. Unable to tolerate this constitutive angst we may, in an attempt to secure ourselves, overweight freedom, self-assertionand veer toward destructive hubris and, in defiance of our finitude, toward a Nietzschean will to power. Or we may overweight our limitations, exchange our freedom for the bread of a false security and veer toward acedia, sloth, lack of self- assertion, een despair at our finitude. Shrinking from freedom and resting content with the "good enough" of mediocrity may parade as simplicity and selflessness, whereas in fact, it may be the failure ever to become a self. Thus we may sense ourselves to be, as Sarte noted, "condemned to be free." For many, freedom's possibilities, which seem bottomless, are dreadfully frightening, a phenomenon Dostoevsky portrays in his story of the Grand Inquisitor in The Brothers Karamazov. We desire freedom, yet we flee the dizying responsibility of freedom and put our destiny in the hands of someone else. Angst, however, is not

in itself evil. Without it we would never build a home, or found a city, or find a cure for illness. Nevertheless, angst remains a non-necessitating prcondition for sin. Here, then, is a basic ontological phenomenon conditioning our freedom.

Second, there is that reservoir of unconscious libidinal energies and cravings that spontaneously erupt and, controlled by the pleasure principle, clamor for satisaction, what Freud called the id, "a cauldron of seething excitement," and somewhat akin to what Augustine called concupiscence and Paul called epithumia, covetous desire (Romans 7). Try as it may to govern these unruly energies, the conscious ego, the cnsor aligned with the reality principle, is not always master in its own house. Here again we experience a rift in our being, a kind of psychic dualism: the conscious and the unconscious, the voluntary and the involuntary, the active and passive dimension of our being. As with angst, the id, or concupiscence, is not evil in itself.16 It is part of God's good creation. The sheer pleasures of bed and board are blessings of our finitude. Nonetheless, gone awry, the psychic tension makes of us divided selves o the point of bondage. Our task is not suppression of these libidinal stirrings, for where would civilization be without the passion that creates poetry, music, art, philosophy and the family? Rather, our task is the integration of the will and its choics of authentic good with these spontaneous appetites so that we become unified selves. Inner tension though there be, to overspiritualize our being at the expense of these elements, wrongly termed "lower" appetites, is to make ourselves half persons if ineed, human persons at all. Pascal offers a wise caveat: "Who would make of man an angel will make of him a beast." Nonetheless, all that said, the id remains a constitutive ontological dimension conditioning freedom.

Closely linked with id and ego is tha other component of our personalities that may limit our freedom, the superego. If our parents' first legacy is our genes, the superego is the second and it shapes us psychically. Unconsciously, we internalize the values and the disvalues, the biases, goo and bad, of our parents and their legacy lingers in the sediment of the unconscious. Thus the superego is initially another involuntary given and as such, a powerful, pre-reflexive, pre-volitional moral orientation for good or ill. So there is choice, bu there is also legacy; we are culprits, but also victims. The superego is, in one sense, a natural facticity, but we may through the history of our choices connive with it and thereby reinforce it. Facticity meets with complicity, much as the Greek tragichero, finding himself in a situation not of his making, brings about his own undoing by the exercise of his freedom. We are forever in a dynamic process of exchange between unconscious

representations and conscious perceptions, between the active sedimentd past that conditions our freedom and the calls that summon us from our present world and from the approaching future.

Third, evil is not a private and static phenomenon; it has social and historical dimensions. Evil becomes incarnate in our culture's istitutions and symbols and spreads like a contagion infecting each and all. There is the serpent within, but the serpent without as well, the already-thereness of evil lying in wait for us when we enter the world.17 We find evil and we continue it. As Pau expresses it, sin is a demonic power, it enters the world, inhabits us; it abounds, it reigns (Rom 5). Paul's language is mythic, a discourse struggling to say what is unsayable in rational, discursive discourse. We are all entangled in a web of interreltedness in evil. We absorb the culture's evil as we do its language. The currents of the culture run through blood and bone. And through the social, political, economic, and ecclesiastical institutions, with which we are all complicit, evil becomes systemc and sin becomes social sin, organized sin, the sin we do together, something more than the sum of our individual sins. And it arises less from conscious choice than blindness, lies, and masterful self-deception. All this makes possible the self-righteouness of anonymous sinners, the flyer who never sees the faces of his victims, the chic dresser who never sees the faces of exploited Salvadoran seamstresses.18 Hence the need for prophets, who are in short supply, since with globalization evil spirals. T be more concrete, note that we now live in a world where the economic institutions have become the pivotal institutions, masters of our world, and we cannot vote them out or storm the palaces of the corporate oligarchy, with whom we are complicit. There re corporations that give us reason for great hope. Think of the pharmaceuticals with their vast potential for good, but also with their pitch-dark underside sustained by corporate cant and greed. The good becomes demonic when institutions, basically goodin themselves, are driven by lust for power and profit.

The point is that while consciousness precedes structure, structures in turn determine consciousness. We make a culture and the culture makes us and becomes a kind of collective superego that with is values and disvalues orients our freedom, endowing us with a powerful pre-volitional slant by teaching us what to love, which is not always authentic good. In Augustine's physics of the heart, "My weight is my love." I choose what I love, indeed, I becoe what I love.19 Our identity and the goods we love are inextricably linked. Before we make any choices we have been shaped interiorly by culture and the weight of our communal past. If the seductive siren call of social sin had its way it would become th all-encompassing, exclusive horizon of our lives, of our

race, for its logic is totalistic, global. No one makes clean escape. The idolatry of hubris and the flight of acedia infect every social world. All human societies are at best ambiguous amalgams o community and alienation, freedom and oppression. We cannot live without the blessings of our culture; neither can we escape its constriction of our horizon and the shackles it places on freedom.

A fourth component of our humanity that conditions our fredom derives from our biological history. As a result of the long evolutionary process, there is physiologically encoded in our being a proclivity to aggression which, if not controlled and adequately channeled, tilts us toward diverse forms of violence ad renders us clever savages capable of doing harm to others and to ourselves. This proclivity, which in itself is not evil, is what Carl Sagan calls "the reptilian core in the human brain," the kernel of savagery surviving in us as the legacy of our evoluionary history and one more involuntary given that freedom must contend with. Fifth, and finally, we stand at an epistemic distance from God, the supreme good, who is veiled in incomprehensibility. All our God-talk reaches a breaking point and cannot bride the abyss that yawns between infinity and the finite. And our world offers ambiguous evidence of God. Hence we live etsi Deus non daretur, in a night of faith and hope. Meanwhile, the very palpable and alluring lovely loves of our life-world call to us,engross us, and nudge into oblivion the transcendent good. Or worse, these relative goods and loves are made absolute and objects of ultimate concern, our gods.

Considering these five factors, we begin to see the conditioned character of our vaunted fredom and hence, our ethical impotence. There is a structural instability or fallibility in the finite human, who exists at the intersection of freedom and nature, consciousness and body, the individual and the social. The traditional doctrine of original sn, with all its dreadful consequences, was an attempt to articulate clearly and discursively all these factors and the power of sin in our lives prior to the exercise of our freedom. Seduced by dark psychic powers within and ensnared in a history of evil ithout, we are unable wholeheartedly to pursue the great good that beckons. Our desire for the good shatters against a wall of ineptitude. Like the middle-aged Augustine, we feel the awful distance between "I ought" and "I can." Even when we pursue the god, our actions often, if not always, carry a coefficient of ambiguity. We enjoy at best, a halting openness to infinite good. As Augustine said: "Our hearts are not in our power."20 Small wonder that Thomas could say that the re-creation of persons by grae is God's greatest work, greater than creation ex nihilo, for the stubborn contrarieties of the voluntary and the involuntary within our being offer greater resistance than nothingness.21 The poet Auden caught this well: "We would rather be ruined than

canged/ We would rather die in our dread/ Than climb the cross of the moment/ And let our illusions die."

Another way to look at these limitations on our freedom is in terms of horizon analysis. To be a human is unavoidably to be equipped with a set of vales, the values of the culture at that. The illusory wedge driven between naked facts and values and the illusion of the neutrality of the disengaged Cartesian self denies the import of moral frameworks or horizons that make us who we are and govern our evryday decisions. My freedom activates itself within a horizon determined by the limits of my vision and imagination, of my knowing and valuing, all of which are influenced by the factors just discussed. There are doors I cannot open, roads I cannot take. oors I cannot even imagine opening even though I could, perhaps, if I wanted to, though I cannot bring myself to want to. Despite his insight into and lofty words about the evils of slavery, Thomas Jefferson could not translate his perception into decisio for want of a suitable antecedent willingness or horizon. In this he was probably not alone among his contemporaries.

We should at this point, then, distinguish our actual or existential horizon and our essential horizon.22 Choices we can easily make relect our habitual disposition, reflect who we are, where we are, the stage reached in the course of our journey, and the range of our freedom here and now. This perduring disposition, like all habits, enables us to act easily, readily, without extended deiberation, hence consistently, predictably. Such an orientation may be blessing or curse, for it is linked to what the philosopher Charles Taylor calls our "moral sources," or the rock-bottom "constitutive goods" which enable us to steadily pursue concret "life goods," such as equality, tolerance, autonomy, justice. These constitutive goods, which are our "hypergoods," our deepest convictions, determine what it is we supremely love, which in turn determines what we choose to pursue and why we do what we d. These moral sources become the coordinates that map our horizon and chart our course.23 Hovering at the outer limits of my horizon are goods I may recognize as goods, but they lack the power to draw me, and I the élan to pursue them. They cannot draw mebecause, given my present dispositions, they lie beyond the pale of what I am able to choose. Witness Augustine in self-bondage and unable to make the conversion he recognized he should make and wanted to make, or the addict unable to cease using, though e knows he should and wants to.24 So my horizon lays down markers that set the limits of my freedom. So often the future and its possibilities are closed off because of past and present choices, our loves gone astray. Our past is never closed, our future ever wholly new.

The boundaries of one's actual or effective horizon, however, can be narrowed or expanded. Yet expand the actual or existential horizon of our present freedom as we may, our approach to essential, or transcendental freedom, where we are iven over root and branch to the absolute good, is incremental, a never ending journey into a new birth of freedom. Coincidence of the voluntas ut natura (willing will) and the voluntas ut ratio (willed will) remains an asymptotic limit. We are foreveralmosting it. Radical shifts in horizons come with conversion or the moral breakdown of an individual or the culture one is part of. Essential freedom is an ontological dimension of the human, a sense and taste of the infinite that is retained even while ne is confined within the borders of one's effective horizon. It is naïve, however, to think only in terms of transcendent or essential freedom. Addicts and chronic liars, e.g., may be essentially free to abandon their evil ways and may know they should ad even want to do so while remaining effectively unable to do so. Their wanting to change reduces to velleity. As already noted, physiological, psychological, and cultural factors may diminish freedom to the point of moral impotence. One's effective horizn becomes, as Augustine said, a second nature and it can face one with "a cruel necessity of sinning."25 Habitual ways of spontaneously thinking, valuing, deciding, acting forecast future behavior. We do not operate out of a cool neutrality that allows useasily to "just say no" to evil. Paul, anguished and mindful of his longing for the absolute good, yet conscious of his freedom being delivered over to the power of sin, gives voice to our universal experience: "I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under in. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate….It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. I can will what is right but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I o not want is what I do" (Rom 7:14-19).

To summarize, my existential or actual freedom is in process and has yet to coincide, if ever, with my essential freedom. Augustine was right to see us as "convalescents" in whom two loves, caritas and cupiditas, re at war. Caritas has yet to wholly eliminate cupiditas. And Luther, too, was right in seeing us as simul iustus et peccator. I shape my effective freedom by my choices, but the culture and other persons shape it too. Here lies the profound truth of theGreek tragic vision of existence. The history of no one of us can be exhaustively understood in terms of the chemically pure freedom of an isolated Cartesian ego. There are all the determinisms of our situation and, tragically, to our detriment we are comlicit with them. We are culprits and there is room for blame, but also lament, for we are guilty innocents; there is choice but also heritage, the voluntary and the involuntary, activity and receptivity. Freedom and destiny play upon one another. We are nver the absolute

beginning of ourselves and never merely the products of a dead history. We actualize ourselves in the crossing of passivity and activity. In the end, one cannot speak adequately of human agency and human freedom without resorting to this aradoxical double discourse. Christianity's profound and realistic grasp of human fragility and redeemability moves beyond today's facile optimism and tomorrow's deadening despair.

FREEDOM AS GRACED

Considering the reciprocity of the voluntary and the ivoluntary, we now have to ask what can prevent the voluntary from being swamped by the involuntary? 26 How is it possible for us to experience the physical, psychic, and social determinations we do without compulsion and coercion? How does community survie in a social world of alienation and stifling, oppressive institutions? The will is finite and ridden with instability. How, then, can it sustain itself in the face of the absorbing forces of its physical and social environments? The freedom the heart deires cannot be had simply by a revolution in socio-economic and political structures, as Marx proclaimed, for the powers that bind us are primarily internal rather than external. Nor can freedom be won simply by freeing the psyche, as stoicism, Freud, andsome existentialists thought, for bondage perdures in the social order even when the psyche is liberated. Perhaps worst of all, and at the heart of the "original sin" in the Adamic myth, our own cunning self- deception and bias blind and deceive us and beome unmindful of themselves in their very act of deceit. In Genesis 3 this is symbolized by the serpent, who represents the seduction of ourselves by ourselves projected outward and into the seductive object.27 Masters of deception, we deceive ourselves i our own deception and the bondage of deception is objectified and reinforced in the institutions of our social existence.

Thus we cannot release ourselves from our self-imposed captivity. Finite freedom is possible only if we remain open to a liberatingpower that transcends us and our physical and social environments. Such openness is a structural component of human being. We cannot liberate ourselves because the powers enslaving us are of our own making. Thus Cassius to Brutus, adapted to our context: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings." Because of our openness to the beyond, the desideratum that cannot be confused with our own finite reality, our restlessness cannot be quieted by any of the ambiguous flfillments history can offer. We look for a liberation that comes from a power of deliverance that occurs in history from

beyond history and does not abandon it but pulls it toward its goal, a kingdom of freedom.28 "Where sin increased, grace abounded al the more" (Rom 5:21). This, at least, is our hope.

Open to our world, but also open in and through our world to the beyond, we are forever looking past every experience. This openness expresses a lack, but the lack presupposes the possibility of the totlity lacking. Thrusting to the beyond, the desideratum hinted at in every finite good, our desires are endlessly unfulfillable. The infinite beyond is experienced by us as the power of the future.29 What grounds and constitutes the power of the future lis beyond the range of philosophical anthropology. But the future's transforming power is experienced as redemptive, for the future holds hope of release from the dead weight of the past and the servile bondage of the present by bringing new possibilitieswithin our horizon. Open to transcendence, we are open to the gift of redemption and new creation. This, of course, leaves unanswered the question of the nature and origin of the redemptive event. Nonetheless, humans appear structurally open to being set ree, to a redeeming power not reducible to themselves or their world. But are the redemption and liberation we seek realities or possibilities or worse, mere illusions? Though humans may be redeemable, are they in fact redeemed?

Arriving at this threshol we have to turn to a faith community and its symbols of bondage and liberation. If redemption is not a reality, then the human hope and search for redemption are either tragic self-deception or make of us absurdities. That humans say yes to life, despiteall its necessities and cruelties, that they plan and play, love and hope seems to signal that redeemability and liberation are scripted into the structural possibilities of our being and are detectable there before ever we turn to the symbols of the fait tradition we wager on, whether it be Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, or humanistic. What we hope for is a kingdom of freedom, which will integrate the voluntary and the involuntary and create a community of persons released from self-decepion and the bonds they have heaped upon themselves. Such a kingdom might, no doubt, be sheer wishful thinking. If so, the alternatives are defiant and rebellious self-assertion in the face of absurdity, which easily becomes idolatry, or despairing surrendr, flight, and apathy. In any event, humans continue to affirm life, anticipate, and sometimes experience liberation as a gift; they go on seeking the integration of freedom and the determinisms of nature through art, music, poetry, sport, and love. Theylive as though a kingdom of freedom is in the making. But, again, who is and what is the nature of the redeemer? To answer these questions each faith community would have to launch into its own distinctive symbolics of freedom. Christians who look into teir own symbol

system would then have to engage in a constructive hermeneutical theology that would appropriate and adequately translate their symbols so that they become intelligible and meaningful to contemporary consciousness.30 This is the work of sysematic theologians and ethicists. It falls to theology to provide the intelligible framework that will enable Christianity to contribute to a new birth of freedom. Obviously, this is more than I can do here, though I shall now and in my conclusion offer afleeting glimpse of what we will find in that vast and rich tradition called Christian.

Obviously, Christians have long dealt with the questions raised above, at least from the time of Augustine. And they are questions that launch us into a sea without sore or bottom. To compress our questions: what can I do to move beyond the limits of my present horizon and the freedom it allows? The answer of Christianity's great doctors, Augustine, Thomas, Luther, and Calvin, is this: alone, I can do nothing. And the assert that this is a truth founded in the Christian scriptures and in our experience. Were I able to move myself beyond the limits of my present freedom, I would not now be confined within those limits. Something, someone needs to act on me from withoutand within to free my freedom and enable me to break out; something, someone has to draw the heart, liberate my powers of self-realization awaiting release, and get me in touch with the deeper resources of my essential freedom. For Paul, the love of God, he universal good that Augustine and Thomas see as having been the heart's desire all along, has to be "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). The tradition came to speak of this indispensable empowering gift rom without as grace, for Thomas, gratia operans. As we have seen, in Augustine's view, despite our sinfulness, we retain freedom of choice (liberum arbitrium), but not freedom in its deepest reality (libertas), the ability to be what we truly are meant o be, lovers of the supreme good above all else and of all else in and for the supreme good. To the extent that we fall short of this ideal, our lives and loves are disordered. With the help of grace we are reoriented, come to a new spontaneity, a new disosition and horizon, a qualitative change in our mode of being, though not necessarily a greater quantity of options. And it is the Christ who mediates to us the Spirit of freedom: "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (Jo 8:36).

Yet despie our re-creation by grace, always we fall short. Our entanglement in personal and social sin is never completely voluntary, because sin becomes habit and cultural modus vivendi, but also because the enduring presence and power of the involuntary render cmmitment to any orientation, good or evil, less than wholehearted and partly non-voluntary. Total disposal of the

person as a whole in basic freedom is ever incomplete, can grow in depth and intensity and has to be sustained and manifested in choices madein myriad situations in face of the involuntary. The full possibility of self-determination goes unrealized. Human agency, therefore, carries a coefficient of ambiguity. Thus our sin, while it is ours, is also something suffered. It is moral evil, but it s nature as well; it begs forgiveness, but liberation as well. Because our sin, personal and social, is born of the entwinement of the voluntary and the involuntary, God's grace is not restricted to the level of conscious, deliberate action. Consciousnessis not the measure of our sinfulness. In its depths, where its hidden roots stretch forth from a preconscious matrix of psychic and social forces, sin must be met by a correlative depth in the range of grace. Sin thrives but grace all the more abounds in eights and depth of our being unsuspected.

Yet the relationship of grace and freedom has given rise to no end of difficulty in the Christian tradition. But perhaps we find analogies in everyday experience. We know that our relationship with others are infunction of our self-concept, of our own self-respect and self-love.31 We also know that to arrive at awareness of our own worth and a corresponding self-love, we have to be graced by the love of someone. One becomes a self only in relationship to others.To be is to-be-to-another. Being loved by the other frees us and makes us capable of loving. Yet the love of the other always comes as gift, grace, indeed, as surprise. It cannot be coerced, earned, or bought. We see and experience this in the nurturing, reeing love of parents for children; in the caring teacher who draws out and makes free the student snared in fear and blind to her own capacities; in the therapist, though in a different way, who assists us in freeing ourselves from our inner demons. Is t too much to suggest that there is a sense in which freedom grows with dependence? The point is that we have to be attracted, drawn to freedom by the gracious care and love of another. And since the gracing presence of God is always incarnated, these othrs are, in the eyes of faith, mediations of that enabling presence. Of course, a stumbling block is met here is in squaring freedom with the idea of its "being caused," for freedom appears to be causa sui, self-causing rather than caused by another. Love,however, "causes" in a manner quite different from mechanical modes of causality. Love nourishes our being and autonomy as persons; other forms of causality affect us as objects. Freedom and being influenced as a person are not incompatible; they live in eciprocity. The one who encourages, draws, empowers, and sustains us does not devour us, but frees us. Our identity is formed by the people who love us and whom we love. They become forever embedded in our

identity. The creation and sustaining of our idenity remains throughout our lives inescapably dialogical.

This belief of the Christian community leads us, of course, into a thicket of questions, as the history of theology and philosophy attest. If the flourishing of our freedom is from start to finis, as Christians claim, the work of God, does it not follow that all free human agency is negated? The tradition has been persistent in finding this a non sequitur. However, safe to say, philosophers and theologians have not articulated and no doubt, canno articulate the compatibility of divine and human agency to the satisfaction of most, Christians included, most of whom are probably Pelagians of some stripe. Sartre's solution, the elimination of one polarity of the problem, God, speaks for many on this core. The problem, better yet, the mystery, is a perennial neuralgic point, even among Christians, with some, especially Catholics, stoutly defending human freedom and cooperation with grace, and others, especially Lutherans, just as stoutly defending theprimacy of divine initiative, with neither side today denying both divine and human agency. For both, all is grace, yet the human agent does not do nothing when choosing the good with the help of grace. Freedom is gift and choice. A new birth of freedom i the work of God and of humans, though on infinitely different levels, hence neither a divine monergism nor a synergism of two equal, independent agents. A human is exactly that, a human, image of the free God, and not a stone or a cabbage. The turn to th good, while due to divine initiative, must be a human turn, and that means a free turn.

There is no threat to God's sovereignty and universal causality in allowing creatures the fullest measure of agency in accord with their nature. It is a measure of Gd's creative power that it can raise up creatures that participate in the divine being to such a degree that they too are, in their turn, creative and sustaining. In the words of Thomas, "To detract from the perfection of creatures is to detract from the erfection of divine power."32 Technically, God is primary cause of all, unfathomable ground of all being and action; creatures are secondary causes, moved movers who receive from God power to freely act. These two causalities, divine and human, are not, hwever, two species of the same genus. The former is cause of all causes; the latter participates in the power of the former. God does not act in the world apart from secondary causes, nor beside them, nor in addition to them as complementary, each contribting distinct elements to the outcome. God, as transcendent creator, is necessarily immanent and does not from time to time insert Godself into the series of finite causes at all, but empowers and sustains each member of the finite series of causes

and th series itself. God acts in and through finite agents, the one effect issuing simultaneously from the primary and secondary causal agents, though each stands, as Thomas says, in a different relationship to the outcome.33 The incarnation, wherein the humanand the divine are somehow one and inseparable, but distinct, is our model. Against any determinism of grace, therefore, the Christian tradition firmly holds both ends of the chain in dialectical tension, humanity's free, conscious agency receiving freedo and freely cooperating in its own ongoing regeneration, and humanity's total dependence on a sovereignty free God. Paradoxically, radical dependence and human autonomy vary in direct rather than inverse proportion. Grace and freedom are not at war; the frmer is the condition of the possibility of the latter. The issue for the great doctors of the tradition is not whether grace and freedom are compatible, but whether freedom is even possible without the divine empowering presence. Grace, God's healing, lierating, self-communicating presence, does not negate our freedom, but presupposes it and perfects it. "Gratia non tollit naturam, sed praesupponit et perficit."34 That which fulfills freedom cannot be something less than freedom itself.

This problem of race and freedom has been aggravated by the fact that while all God-talk was for classical theism analogical, since the seventeenth century, in a quest for clarity and system, there has been a tendency to reduce analogy to univocity.35 To talk of God's casality, one simply ratcheted up human causal action and predicated of God the aggrandized version of human agency. This shrinks God, transcendent sustainer of all causal activity, to one more agent operating within a line of finite agents. God becomes, soe began to think, a disruptive player in the human arena if a percentage of responsibility for our actions is assigned to God and a percentage to humans. This God was deemed not credible or not necessary, and so doors opened to deism and atheism, the lattr becoming for the first time a growing public phenomenon. God as co-worker and sometime filler of gaps became an otiose hypothesis. But, as I have been struggling to say, God and humans are in different orders of being and action. Contrary to any intervetionist supernaturalism, God does not pop in from without and from time to time to make conquests of a moment within the human heart. God is the ever-present luring power of the good, the quiet undertow drawing us into the depth of the absolute mystery tht is the heart's inverse gravity.

All this said, in the end, the interweaving of divine and human agency trails off into divine mystery leaving philosophy's rational pursuit and theology's broken discourse stammering and babbling, unable to bridge the infnite distance between talk about God and talk about ourselves. Ultimately,

we are reduced to reverent agnosticism and silence. But take away the heart, the human will, and there is nothing needs redeeming; take away the love that is grace and there is no ay to redeem it.

CONCLUSION: FREEDOM AS CRUCIFORM:

The Enlightenment and its child, modernity, glorify autonomy, freedom as choice and self-determination. But Christianity does not rest easy with that, for choice and self-determination are ambiguous. The can be a source of authentic selfhood, but also of folly and evil. No emancipation can immunize individuals or their society to the reemergence of idolatry, alienation, injustice, and oppression. Freeing freedom intellectually, socially, and politically rees for truth, reconciliation, and justice, but for wrongdoing as well. Today's oppressors are yesterday's oppressed. This, however, is no reason to abandon all efforts at social and political reform and liberation and to beat a retreat to the sanctuary f "religious" commitment and individualistic moralism. It is simply a caveat against naïve optimism. Recall that we free and enlightened moderns made the twentieth century a slaughterbench. Of ourselves we cannot resolve the mystery of our tragic existenc, the misuse we make of our freedom. A Christian reading of history differs from secular readings not merely because it asserts that God is ground and goal of all historical processes of liberation, but even more so because it affirms the ongoing need forforgiving, healing, reconciling grace and the new possibilities that God alone, the absolute future, can provide for the relentless perversity of even liberated humans. A synthesis is needed of liberal theology's emphasis on freedom's progressive liberatin in history and neo-orthodoxy's corrective emphasis on evil's staying power and the need for rescue by grace alone. As tensive theological symbols, "freedom" and "liberation" are more far ranging than as social, political, or economic categories. They suely include these three spheres as integral to any new birth of freedom and salvation, yet move beyond them, for the roadblock on the way to the kingdom of the free is sin, which is the root of all injustice and oppression.

Obviously, then, the issue of reedom is more complex than appears. Sometimes, modernity's rhetoric about freedom has a ring more Kantian and Enlightenment-inspired than Christian. Unless nuanced, this rhetoric can run amok. There are calls for "a new humanity," one "free from all servtude," and "the artisan of its own destiny." Kant saw enlightenment as release from self-imposed intellectual tutelage and from the incapacity to resort to one's own understanding. The problem was said to be not lack of reason but of courage to cast off al self-incurred bondage. "Sapere aude." Others after Kant would urge the casting off of social, political, and economic

bonds. The measure of this noble vision and its positive impulses, however, must be taken by the Christian vision. The Christian vision while certainly more sober, does not demand a rejection out of hand of all Enlightenment ideals, for they have greatly enhanced our humanity, pace Pius IX. Nevertheless, Christianity must add qualifiers. The hope of Christians is well expressed by Chesteton: to sing both the Marseillaise and the Magnificat.36 In many ways, the modern era is less decadence and defection from its Judeo-Christian roots than it is the flowering of their secular possibilities. However, in the Christian vision the meaning ofautonomy is modified, though it is not lost. What Christianity envisions, following the one who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7), is not a life free of suffering and servanthood, but a life that freely takes on servanthood to thepoint of voluntarily taking on suffering as an action in behalf of the other. The Christian seeks less to be free than to be of service, though paradoxically, freedom is realized in service. The first Adam lost freedom in attempting to seize it; the secod Adam won freedom in surrendering it. Christian freedom is not a privatistic autonomy, free from all claims but those it pleases us to take on. Freedom comes when we allow the summons of the face and needs of the other to challenge the egoism of our autoomy.

Iris Murdoch suggests, not with complete fairness, I think, though we grasp her point, that we live in "the age of Kantian man, or Kantian man-god," the man who turns away even from Christ to ponder his own conscience and listen for the still, quiet oice of his own reason; the man who is free, independent, rational, strong, perhaps lonely, but courageous; the hero striding through numerous films and novels.37 Conscious of his estrangement from the material world, he probes it and tries to control it.But, as Murdoch notes, it is a short step from Kant to Nietzsche. In fact, Kantian man, Murdoch notes, nearly a century earlier, had already been incarnated in Milton's work; his name, Lucifer. Where each person's aim is to become the sole, uncompromisingagent of his or her own destiny, the atomization of society increases and solidarity wanes. Not that self-determination and autonomy are inherently incompatible with solidarity and community, but the tension between the two is constant and harmonization n easy matter, indeed, impossible left to our own meager resources.

The struggle for freedom is not incidental to Christian faith, but integral to its very meaning and central to any account of Christian life. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fas therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery," charges Paul (Gal 5:1). But the freedom the Christian is called to is of a distinct kind. The determinate meaning of freedom for Christianity is found in the

figure of the crucified and risen one.It is a freedom that lives by the law of the cross, not only a freedom from but a freedom for, responding to the needs of the vulnerable other. "You were called to freedom," Paul continues, "only do not use your freedom as the opportunity for the flesh, bt through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal 5:13-15). Christian freedomis, ideally, service, even to the point of willingness to suffer and die for the other. One is called to be prepared to reach the point where one aims not simply to become the master of his or her own destiny but where, as John's Jesus says, "You will strtch out your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go" (Jo 21:18). Many find this unrealistic. No doubt, few approach this ideal. But it is the standard to be aspired to in one's own small acre of the world. The cruciform reedom Christians are called to may not be facilely reduced to the liberation desired and struggled for in so many post-Enlightenment contexts. It includes but transcends them. But neither does a cruciform freedom imply supine passivity, obsequious subserience, much less the acedia noted earlier, an absence of self-realization. Pure heteronomy is as destructive of personhood as pure autonomy; neither doormats nor autocrats are persons to be. Rather, Christian freedom is self-involving freedom that willingy engages in service, even suffering, as an action for the well-being of others. Thus it may involve strenuous effort, even consuming struggle to achieve healing, reconciliation, justice. Authenticity, or theonomous personhood, is arrived at only through cstasis toward others. For Christianity, there is a cross-erected over history. Freedom comes by embracing it.

NOTES

1. On rival views of freedom see P. Hodgson, *A New Birth of Freedom: A Theology of Bondage and Liberation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), pp. 42-112. On Catholicism's confrontation with modernity's views of freedom in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see W. Kasper, *The Christian Understanding of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1988).

2. B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Knopf, 1971). See P. Ricoeur, "A Critique of B.F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity," Philosophy Today* 17 (1973): 166-175.

3. P. Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966). See also E. Farley, "Toward a Contemporary Theology of Human Being," in J. Angell and E. Banks, eds., *Images of Man: Studies in Religion and Anthropology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), pp. 55-78.

4. See L. Gilkey, Religion *and the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), especially c. 3.

5. For this sketch of the Judeo-Christian vision of freedom I am indebted to A. Gesché, "L'invention chrétienne de la liberté," *Revue Theologique de Louvain* 28 (1997): 3-27. See also H. Schleier, *"Eleutheria,"* in G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), II, 487-502. I do not wish to imply that the Biblical notions of freedom are posed in the philosophical terms of modernity. Vatican II opened a new chapter in the Christian understanding of freedom as it initiated a new openness to modernity. One of the catalysts was twentieth century totalitarianism. But Vatican II did not integrate the idea of religious freedom (see its declaration on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*) into a comprehensive theology of freedom. See W. Kasper, *The Christian Understanding of freedom.*

6. *Against Heresies,* v. vi, 1; xxxviii, 2 and 3; xxxix, 1.

7. T. Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988), p. 21. On the loss of symbols to articulate the experience of evil see A. Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the sense of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1995).

8. S. Duffy, "Our Hearts of Darkness: Original Sin Revisited," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 597-622,

9. S.T. I, q.22, a.2, ad 4.

10. See S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 1961). Despite the cult of choice and the pursuit of pleasure, discontent dogs many Americans who are overworked and overspent. See the studies of L. Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999) and J. Schor, *The Overworked American: the Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

11. J.-P, Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956). See also on this Aquinas, *De Malo* 6.7 and S.T. I-II, q.10, a.2. See F. Gamwell, "The House Divided," *Criterion* (Spring 2001): 18-22.

12. *De Veritate,* q.22, a.1; q.25, a.1; S.T. I, q.60, a.5; q.108, a.8; I-II, q.1, a.2. The ambiguity of the term "will of nature" reflects the ambiguity of the term "nature," which has metaphysical, physical, and social meanings. See also S. Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in theological Anthropology* (Collegeville, MN: Glazier-Liturgical, 1993), pp. 148-149, 158-160.

13. *Confessions,* Book 1.

14. Augustine's inability to will the conversion he desired is a classic example. See Book 8 of the *Confessions.*

15. On the disproportion in human being and angst see S. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 228-235; P. Ricoeur, *Fallible Man* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965); W. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), pp. 96-107; S. Hiltner and K. Menninger, eds., *Constructive Aspects of Anxiety* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1963).

16. See K. Rahner's seminal and revisionist essay on concupiscence, "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia," *Theological Investigations,* I (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), pp. 347-382.

17. On the varied symbolism of the serpent in the Adamic myth see P. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 252-259.

18. A telling case exemplifying our interrelatedness in evil appeared in "Labor Progress Clashes with Global Reality," *New York Times,* April 24, 2001, p. A1. J. Le Carré's portrayal of the pharmaceutical industry in his novel *The Constant Gardner* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001) does not seem wide of the mark as a portrayal of a corporate oligarchy's ambiguous power.

19. *Confessions,* Book 13,9; Ep Jo, 2, 14.

20. *On the Gift of Perseverance, 13*; see also *Against Julian,* 3,57.

21. S.T. I-II, q.113, a.9.

22. K. Rahner calls our essential horizon "transcendental freedom" and our actual horizon "categorical freedom." Transcendental freedom is the will, the person as undetermined by any partial, limited good because open and necessitated to universal, unlimited good. See, e.g.,

Foundations of Christian Faith (New York: Seabury, 1978), pp. 35-39 and his "Theology of Freedom," *Theological Investigations,* VI (Baltimore: Helicon, 1969), pp. 178-196.

23. C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). A synopsis of this magisterial work is Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

24. *Confessions,* Book 8.

25. *Humanity's Perfection in Righteousness*, 9; *Against Two Pelagian Letters,* 19, 1, 5; 3, 24.

26. For the framing of this question I am indebted to P. Hodgson. See his elaboration of it in *A New Birth of Freedom*, pp. 151-166.

27. P. Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil,* pp. 225-226.

28. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 2 ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp. 269-271.

29. This theme runs through W. Pannenberg's *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* and his shorter work, *What is Man?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

30. See, e.g., P. Hodgson, *New Birth of Freedom,* chapters 5, 6, and 7.

31. See Thomas' insight into the importance of love of self in S.T. II-II, q.26. articles 3, 4, and 5.

32. S.C.G. 3, 69, 15.

33. *Ibid.,* 3, 70.

34. S.T. I, q.1, a.8, ad 2; q.19, a.5. On the history of this axiom see J. Alfaro, "*Gratia Supponit Naturam,"* in J. Hofer and K. Rahner, eds., *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche,* 2 ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1957-1968), IV, 1169-1171.

35. See W. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence; How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster-John Knox, 1996) and M. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

36. With Vatican II's *Dignitatis Humanae* the church came to accept after much foot dragging some concerns of the Enlightenment era. Nonetheless, since Vatican II, church leaders have not yet arrived at the desirable middle ground between two one-sided reactions, outright rejection or endorsement of modernity's views about freedom. Church leadership in the modern era has been much more authoritarian and imposing of uniformity than the medieval church. See W. Kasper, *The Christian Understanding of Freedom.*

37. *The Sovereignty of the Good* (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 80.