5-8-2007

Cultural Leadership and Peace: An Educational Response to Religious Violence

B. David Rowe

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL LEADERSHIP AND PEACE: AN EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

by

B. David Rowe

This study is a philosophical inquiry into violence as the consequence of dysfunctional meaning-making processes. It establishes a theory of leadership development which requires, catalyzes, and sustains a reinvigorated relationship between education and religion in order to create more pacific ways of making meaning on interpersonal, organizational, institutional, societal, and global levels.

The inquiry articulates an understanding of leadership as drawing on educative and religious processes for the deployment of power in order to make meaning with or on behalf of groups of people at various levels of social complexity. The analysis demonstrates that leadership is informed by and can inform institutional patterns of behavior and signification. Examination of leadership style on a developmental continuum of more and less violent modes of deploying power simultaneously offers insight into the origin of violent social relationships and into a process for creating more pacific ways of making meaning. Therefore, providing a path of personal cognitive and moral development along this continuum for organizational, institutional, societal, and global leaders offers one approach to influencing the development of social institutions which, in turn, influence the development of other leaders, along a mutually formative
path toward interpersonal and global peace.

The examination of leadership as energy deployment for the purpose of making meaning offers an opportunity to consider religion as an institution which encodes meaning making processes for society and individuals alike and to consider education as an institution which encodes behavior and norms attendant to the explication of reality. Rehabilitating religion and education in order to play these respective social roles more effectively requires more sophisticated leaders who deploy energy in less violent ways. Conversely, leadership development is constrained and empowered by these institutions which are in need of such growth themselves.

This philosophical inquiry, therefore, synthesizes a new theory capable of framing new questions for leadership development and institutional growth with personal, organizational, societal, and global implications. The theory creates the category of Cultural Leadership which becomes a model for making meaning in less violent ways while providing a pathway for personal and social growth toward sustainable peace.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My wife, Jodi, will quickly correct me when I tell someone that I have been working toward this degree for seven years. She is keen to remind me that I took my first doctoral level course in 1997 at Emory University while working at Oxford College as that school’s director of development. It was not until the Spring of 2000, after joining the staff of LaGrange College as vice president for advancement, however, that I embarked on a formal degree-seeking program at Georgia State University which required a great deal of commitment and sacrifice on the part of countless supporters who nurtured me and encouraged me along the way.

I am aware of how much has changed in my life over the course of these seven years and how much has changed in the lives of those upon whom I have depended during this time. Jodi and I have become parents. She and God blessed me with the two most wonderful children on the planet, Carter and Philip. They have never known a father who was not going to school or, in the latter years, working on “daddy’s book.” Raising them is my deepest joy and one I struggle to express adequately. I am simultaneously grateful to them and deeply sorrowful each time they grudgingly let me go out the door to the library or allowed me to sit quietly with my laptop or book in my chair as they played elsewhere. I pray that I have enough life left for them to cash in all the IOUs I offered in response to their recurring plea, “but I just want to spend time with you, daddy.”

Starting and raising a family is no passing obligation. Jodi has had to devote more than her share of creativity, love, and frugality to make up for my physical, mental, and sometimes emotional absences. Never counting the cost, only investing more of her time, energy, and deferred personal dreams into my education, Jodi compelled me to persist during the moments I considered scaling back on the program or abandoning the goal altogether. Without her, I would not have the privilege of putting these words on paper right now. I am indebted to her and to her network of family and friends who surrounded her with love and support, especially when she suddenly and sadly lost her daddy.

Most of the world will never know, and even I may never fully appreciate, what it took for my family to support me over these years. They were not alone in making this dissertation possible, however. It was my three-time boss, mentor, and friend, Stuart Gulley who also served as a role model for me. He embarked on his doctoral program while we were colleagues at Emory University. He encouraged me to consider starting the program myself over the years. And then, when he hired me at LaGrange College, he made it possible for me to actually commit. LaGrange College’s generosity in providing tuition and fees reimbursement covered most of the financial burden of the program. For that I am most grateful. Stuart’s patience, tolerance, and first hand understanding of my
experience made him a supportive supervisor who, no doubt more than once, refrained from adding assignments or expectations that would interfere with my schoolwork and who surely forgave many oversights and mistakes caused by my dedication to the program and to this project.

Along with Stuart, I appreciate my other LaGrange College colleagues. In particular, Lydia Wheitsel, a long time mentor, friend, and former boss, along with Carla Rhodes, both executive secretaries to the president, helped protect my time and often directed my attention to pressing priorities. My colleagues on the president’s cabinet, Quincy Brown, Jay Simmons, Linda Buchanan, Phyllis Whitney, Bob Boozer, and Kim Myrick offered encouragement and advice along the way. In fact, my student in seminary, Quincy Brown, became my teacher at LaGrange College. My counselor and confidant, he guided me emotionally and spiritually even during his own ordeal of needing and receiving a kidney transplant. Through his experience he showed me the transformative impact of liminal experiences, which inevitably demand to be appreciated and used for personal growth. He also served as an intellectual advisor teaching me about the hold that myth and story have on our lives.

Similarly, I thank Linda Buchanan who on more than one occasion loaned a book with a spoonful of advice, reminding me that I only had an audience of four committee members and that when it comes to writing dissertations “done” beats “perfect” any day. She, along with Stuart, Toni Anderson, and in the latter years, Sharon Livingston, joined me in forming the core of what is affectionately known as “Philo University.” All of us are products of the Georgia State University higher education program which, as a result, has influenced immeasurably the operations of our common employer, LaGrange College. To varying degrees, we are indebted to Philo Hutcheson for our academic journeys. Philo has become an intellectual father to me, offering me latitude to explore topics not traditionally encountered in higher education programs while also instilling in me an appreciation for rigorous and focused scholarship. He and my other dissertation committee members, Susan Talburt, Doug Davis, and Thee Smith patiently, and often skeptically, held me accountable to my discipline while permitting nontraditional approaches to understanding the intersection of education and religion. Their influence joins that of Mary Beth Gasman and Ben Baez in helping me gain self-confidence as a scholar.

Other colleagues also provided invaluable services and encouragement. Catherine Kostilnik edited my dissertation. Any errors herein result from my failure to correct the mistakes she and Philo identified. The staff of the Banks Library, especially Arthur Robinson, who can locate through inter-library loan any volume on the planet, provided a resource-rich cloister for research, rumination, and writing. Fellow students and friends Meredith Curtin Siegel and Rodney Lyn helped me formulate my ideas in the earliest stages. Andy Fleming deepened my understanding of the work of Brian and Elva Hall. My friend and fellow Oikos co-founder, Mark Davies inspires me to relentlessly believe all of us can and should work to make this world a better place.
LaGrange College is fortunate to have one of the finest advancement staffs anywhere. Their dedication and hard work more than compensated for the many times school, research, and writing rendered me unavailable. They, too, exhibited an immense amount of understanding and patience. They tolerated early departures from work to attend class and long absences for research and writing. It is a tribute to their competence and professionalism that the College’s external relations and fundraising efforts have flourished during this time period. They gave me confidence to share with them my leadership responsibilities for the division in ways that transformed my own notions of management and influenced greatly the chapter in this dissertation I devote to leadership styles and development. They can attest to the gulf that exists between my theory and my practice when it comes to my personal and professional inadequacies.

While the entire advancement team made this dissertation possible, I wish to pay particular tribute to the division’s directors. Tammy Rogers and Martha Pirkle have endured this process from the beginning. Dean Hartman, and more recently, Shirley Harrington, have ably led their areas while also allowing me the space and time I needed to press forward toward completion. Others have come and gone during this time, but, in their own way made this accomplishment possible. Kristen Brooks, Natalie Shelton, Pride Hawkins, John Riley, Kathy Pirrman, Renee Ferguson, Pam Barnes, and Terri Bassett served in various roles over these years offering personal and professional assistance in this process while my attention was divided among work, family, and school.

Janet Hughes, however, deserves special mention. Like Einstein’s brain, her genial disposition, quick wit, patience, understanding, perseverance, and support ought to be preserved for posterity and examined by scientists in succeeding generations who might be able to understand what is, at this point in time, inexplicable. Janet devoted a great deal of time, energy, and knowledge to help me complete this dissertation. She jealously guarded the hours and days I needed to work for extended periods while not letting any priorities slip by without my attention. Borrowing time from her family, she kept me on task and spent hours late at night and on weekends to help me format and edit the final product. There is no telling what else she has done to make sure that I finish this program without losing my job, my staff, or my family. Like a compass, Janet always knows true north, directing (often re-directing) my focus to what is truly important in life as well as what is most pressing at the moment.

The past seven years make up my formal doctoral program, but my education has been a lifelong adventure. That reality has become clearer and clearer to me with each page I have written. My mom and dad, Joyce and Ben Rowe, have provided a living model of interfaith relations. A Missionary Baptist and Roman Catholic married in 1960, they showed through their love for one another and for my sister, Jana, and me how to resolve conflicts that emerge from deeply ingrained differences. Their efforts to educate Jana and me in both traditions introduced me to early mentors whose influence I feel today. Gene Wilkes, my youth director while working on his Ph.D., was the first person I recall knowing who combined ministry and research-based scholarship. Similarly the Jesuits, who taught me in high school, lived out a model of scholastic ministry.
Clearly this work is, for me at least, an intergenerational product and a community effort. I inherit a legacy of love and support from many who have surrounded me recently and throughout my life. Without such a foundation and network, I would not be in the position today to make this contribution to a world in great need of that same love and support. Mindful of the footsteps in which I follow, I endeavor to make a path equally worthy for future generations. It is for this reason, that I dedicate this dissertation to my closest link to tomorrow, to the two persons whose world I hope to make more peaceful. To Carter and Philip, with love, I offer this work. For you ground me in joy and teach me to hope. It is in you and through you I most clearly see the image of God.
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Religion is at the center of – or wrapped around – many of the world’s most violent conflicts. Unfortunately this has been true for some time and is true today. The pervasiveness of religion-related conflicts is illustrated by the fact that seven stories detailed religious conflicts in the December 2006 issue of *The Economist* alone. In Palestine, Islamist Hamas is on the brink of a civil war with secular Fatah. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh pledged that the “Palestinians would ‘continue the jihad [against Israel] until Jerusalem had been liberated,’” but it is the specter of Islamist and secular Palestinians spilling each other’s blood that seems to be the most imminent threat.¹

Moving East, in an in-depth discussion of Pushtunwali, the tribal code of the Pusthun people in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the journal distinguishes the tribal code from the almost equally pervasive sharia or Islamic law. The distinctions fade, however “in times of duress, when a standard is needed to rally their fractious tribes and sub-tribes: then they have tended to hoist the flag of jihad.”²

Moving to the west of Palestine in the article “Wars of Religion,” the magazine details the schism, less bloody than legal, in the “American Episcopal Church over the ordination of gays and women.”³ Large Virginia parishes occupying expensive property

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and with rich historic ties to the founding of the United States are seeking communion with Anglican bishops in the developing world, especially Africa, who have “taken to ordaining American bishops in order to lead the Episcopal church back to its ‘biblical foundations.’”

For all of the conflict it seems to engender, religion as a social phenomenon is not going away, according to *The Economist*. In “Christianity Reborn,” Peter Berger, to whom the magazine refers as the “dean of sociologists of religion” draws on Max Weber’s observations about the links between Protestantism and capitalism to explain the role of emerging Pentecostalism particularly in the southern hemisphere. “Pentecostalism, like Puritanism before it, is an instrument of modernization,” claims the magazine. Churches “teach people to speak in public, organize meetings and as they become more successful manage large organizations. The bookshops in the mega churches are full of tomes on management.”

A force of modernization, perhaps, but religion holds and conveys deep mysteries as well – mysteries only truly understood by believers and often incredible to non-believers. Take the phenomenon of jinn, for instance, as described in *The Economist’s* article, “Born of Fire.” Descriptions of jinn or genies range from shape-shifting spiritual beings to whispers of thought. Real or not the effects of the belief in jinn are palpable.

In August [2006], for instance, Muslims in the Kikandwa district of central Uganda grew feverish over reports of jinn haunting and raping women in the district. So when a young woman stumbled out of the forest one day, unkempt and deranged, she was denounced as jinn. Villagers beat her to death. Police finished the job with six bullets at close range. The

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4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
young woman called out for her children in her last moments. An investigation revealed her to be from a neighboring district. She had spent days without food or water, searching for her missing husband.\(^9\)

In this instance, at least, the connection between religious belief and bloodshed is clear. But it is only an example of the numerous local and global correlations between religion and violence, but there seems to be another factor involved as well, education.

The article which demonstrates a link between religion and violence also correlates belief in jinn with education levels. Comparing Somalia and Afghanistan, the correspondent reports that “jinn belief is strong in both countries” which are “war-ravaged and have rudimentary education systems.”\(^10\) The article suggests that “illiterate rural women are more open to jinn” while “to more scholarly clerics jinn are little more than energy, a pulse form of quantum physics perhaps.”\(^11\)

This interplay among religion, violence, and education has at least an anecdototal correlation with global wars as well. The Economist asserts that “factions in Somalia and Afghanistan have accused their enemies of being backed not only by the CIA but by malevolent jinn” while a Pakistani jihadist cleric claims that United States missiles “will be misdirected by jinn.”\(^12\) Similarly, “Ahmed Shah Masoud, the commander of Afghanistan’s Northern Alliance … [who was] assassinated by Al Qaeda operatives on September 9, 2001” was said to have “jinn on his side” thus making Osama bin Laden an enemy of jinn in the eyes of many of Masoud’s followers.\(^13\)

This one issue of one magazine is only one example of the pervasiveness of the apparent relationship between religion and violence in the world. Further, is there, as The Economist suggests, any other relationships?\(^1\)
Economist suggests, a causal relationship between religion, coupled with its potentially violent effects, and education? This dissertation attempts to answer that question, moving from the anecdotal to the analytical in hopes of charting a path away from violence and toward deploying the rich resources of religion and education for the purpose of creating a more peaceful world.
INTRODUCTION

Religion, Violence, and Education

What is it about religion that places it so squarely in the company of conflict and violence? Answering this question requires an examination of the nature of religion and the way it functions in societies. In order to do this, I must separate the notion of religion, at least temporarily, from theological content and examine it functionally as a component of any society, even a society for which secularism, patriotism, or some sort of civil tolerance of multiple faiths serves this function. Similarly I will look at education functionally and the role it plays in societies and how education functions relative to religion. Understanding the functional relationship between education and religion will allow me to ask whether religion is the problem generally, or whether it is theology that is the problem. In other words, is it that people believe or what people believe or some combination of both that creates such a strong correlation between religion and violence? Further, is there a problem with education relative to religion? Can education have an effect on religion that minimizes its correlation with conflict? If so, is it how education functions that is important, what is being taught and learned that is important or, again, some of both?
To get at the relationship between education and religion and how they interact with respect to violence, I must develop a thorough understanding of the role of religion and education in societies. My research reveals that analyzing religion, education, and society requires that I develop a theory of culture against which to examine religion and education in functional terms.

Once understood in the terms I will establish, cultures, as conveyors of meaning, avail themselves to the influence of leaders as meaning makers who, in turn, are shaped by the culture. Understanding this mutually constitutive relationship of leaders and cultures is key to an understanding of social change that begins to map a vector away from violence by deploying the best tools that religion and education have to offer. So the second project of this dissertation is to develop a theory of leadership, and specifically a theory of leadership development, that demonstrates its interrelatedness to my theory of culture.

The theories of leadership and culture, when taken together, raise questions about how groups of people make meaning. This exercise of signification processes requires a type of cultural energy that I will explore more fully. The third part of this dissertation, therefore, establishes the theoretical underpinnings for appropriating physical science for social analysis by developing a theory of thermodynamics of culture and leadership.

These three theories permit a new construct, one I term Cultural Leadership. It is a self-aware, socially aware, intentionally developing cultural leader that will understand his or her role in the social construction of cultures and societies. This self-understanding permits, if not requires, an awareness of the ways in which cultures and leaders become or remain violent. Cultural Leadership provides the theoretical framework and the tools
to reverse violent trends and engage in the creation and sustaining of peaceful social arrangements.

**Method**

My development of Cultural Leadership as a theoretical model on the organizational, institutional, societal, and global levels will draw on theoretical constructs in the fields of anthropology, sociology, theology, literary criticism, human development theory, education theory, leadership theory, network theory, physics, and complexity theory. The questions I am posing are broad-reaching and require an interdisciplinary approach.\(^1\) My presupposition is that asking the questions I am posing against any one of these theoretical frameworks alone would reveal the respective inadequacies of each discipline to understand, let alone answer, these questions. As philosopher Michael Scriven notes, echoing Ludwig Wittgenstein’s admonition, “when you get to the foundations of the subject, you cannot use the methodology of that subject, since you haven’t yet established the legitimacy of the subject or the methodology.”\(^2\) Therefore I use philosophical inquiry to synthesize a new theory capable of framing new questions with implications for social change as well as personal growth. The very absence of such a frame necessitates its exploration and development prior to investigation by any other

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\(^1\) In order to approach these questions in a systemic way and in a manner that acknowledges that any one particular theoretical approach is situated in a larger field of epistemological discourse, it is necessary to integrate “multiple paradigms of knowledge” as suggested by James L. Paul and Kofi Marfo, “Preparation of Educational Researchers in Philosophical Foundations of Inquiry,” *Review of Educational Research* 71 (Winter 2001), 540.

My approach to argumentation throughout this dissertation takes a rather positivist approach. I assemble empirical evidence to support my claims and to identify causal relationships between and among various social phenomena.

Culture

One of the relationships I examine in this dissertation is that between religion and violence. I do so in multiple ways. In chapter one I start with Samuel Huntington’s analysis of the role that religion plays in exacerbating violence in the world. Huntington’s work suggests that the reason religion is often identified so closely with violent conflict is that it offers those persons in conflict a meaningful identity to differentiate one group from its enemy while generating alliances that transcend other lines of identity and distinction such as national boundaries. Huntington’s claim that religion can offer shared meaning among people who do not share the same nationality, for instance, raises questions about the relationship between meaningful identity and culture. Clifford Geertz offers a framework in which to understand culture in terms of shared and transmitted meaning. Huntington and Geertz, when taken together, suggest the possibility that persons can operate in multiple cultural contexts at the same time. While nationality may be a prerequisite for culture in one sense of the term, Huntington’s “civilizations” imply the existence of (at least nascent or provisional) cultures that transcend nationality as well as divide people from one another within nations.

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3 “Such subtle arguments from paradigms and analogies are not, therefore, to be thought of in any way as weak sisters (or weak brothers) of hard-core empirical research. They provide the foundations on which any worthwhile empirical research must be based…” Ibid.
5 Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (USA: Basic Books, 1973), 89.
Thinking of cultures in the plural and as scalable and thinking of cultures fundamentally as having to do with meaning will lead me next into an analytical reflection on the nature of meaning and the ways persons and groups of persons make meaning. Viktor Frankl’s account of perilous survival in Nazi concentration camps offers a vivid description of meaning-making on the personal level. When placed in conversation with Peter Berger, Frankl’s account also offers images of how groups of people make meaning in ways that are consistent with the meaning-making mechanism Geertz describes. Geertz suggests that making meaning is simply reconciling the way things are with the way things ought to be.6

This reconciliation seems to occur on large and small scales. Huntington suggests that religion functions to create those shared meanings both within and beyond national boundaries, for instance, creating what he calls civilizations. If shared meaning constitutes culture in Geertz’s terms, then on some level Huntington’s proposition suggests the emergence of cultures within cultures. This seems to be borne out by the example of the dual Pushtun allegiance to Pushtunwali and sharia described above. Likewise, reading Frankl and Berger in light of Geertz’s framework demonstrates relationships between the personal and collective enterprises of making, preserving, and transmitting meaning.

Geertz’s meaning-making mechanism, a synthesis between the ontological (the way things are) with the normative (the way things ought to be), then can be thought of as scalable from the personal accounts of Frankl to the global analysis of Huntington. In order to test the scalability of Geertz’s proposition, in chapter two I will examine an organizational decision-making crisis about two men requesting the use of a campus

6 Geertz, 126-7.
chapel for their wedding at Emory University. My analysis will allow me to elaborate how Geertz’s mechanism works for various levels of social complexity. My investigation into the Emory crisis also will reveal how social institutions, as described broadly by Robert Bellah and his co-authors of the Good Society (particularly education, religion, and the government in this case), create different meaning-making paradigms for people involved in the same crisis. In addition, my examination of the way these institutions influence how actors make sense out of this ordeal illustrates another property of social institutions. Namely, institutions mediate the scalability of Geertz’s mechanism. That is, they form a bridge between personal meaning-making processes and collective meaning-making processes. I will illustrate the way meaning making (or signification) occurs at the various levels of social complexity in a table I call the Moral Meaning Matrix. As a theoretical model, this table offers a functional description of the ways persons and groups of persons reconcile the normative and the ontological from the personal to the societal. It interpolates arbitrary levels of complexity in between those levels in order to demonstrate the mediating role of social institutions. It also extrapolates beyond the societal level, indicating the potential that societies can project their socially-constructed meanings into claims of universal truth. This universal projection is particularly useful when thinking about the functional role that religion plays. Note that throughout the dissertation the term universal refers to such a projection. The idea that anything can be described as universal is certainly a contested notion. I do not intend to make claims of universal fact or truth or to articulate a particular theology or metaphysics, but I do claim that through the process of social construction of reality and knowledge, described in greater detail below, societies create, share, and respond to a projection and perception of
realities (or of reality) that transcend(s) the most complex levels of social organization comprehensible to the projecting and perceiving group.

Once I establish the relational arrangements among various social institutions and demonstrate their roles in meaning making which is an important component of culture creation, I will begin to look at the role that energy plays in the signification processes that form, perpetuate, and transmit cultures. Understanding how energy is deployed as power in order to create culture at various levels of social complexity as illustrated in the Moral Meaning Matrix begins to illuminate the relationship between culture formation and violence. Paolo Freire’s descriptions of oppression and liberation illustrate the insidious ways power is used to oppress people by exporting norms from one social context and imposing them on another. Those who transfer norms in this way must have power in order to impose those foreign norms. The imposition of the norms preserves and advances that power. This is violence in Freire’s terms even if blood is not shed. As Freire points out it is often the revolutionary reactions to that initial violence which are bloody, but the initial violence was already in place via the imposition of non-native norms in what might be described as an imperialistic or colonizing signification or enculturation effort.

With the link between meaning making or culture creation and violence established and with a glimpse at the role that social institutions play in the signification process, I will turn, in chapter three, to an in-depth discussion of the function of social institutions in US society in terms described by Robert Bellah and his coauthors of The Good Society. Institutions play a dual role. They mediate between the personal and collective levels of social complexity and, as the Emory case demonstrates, they preserve
and transmit different meanings even in the same society. With this dual function of social institutions as a backdrop, I will examine religion as a social institution in the United States in particular detail. Aside from the primacy Huntington has placed on religion in violent global conflicts, both Geertz’s description of culture and Berger’s analysis of the creation of society give religion a third role in the maintenance of societies. They both identify religion itself with signification or meaning. Religion on the broader societal scale functions as the social institution which prescribes how societies arrange the synthesis of the normative and the ontological. In that way it encodes the culturally-proper relationship between the is and the ought for other social institutions. If a culture’s religion, functionally speaking, privileges the normative over the ontological, for instance, which Freire demonstrates is oppressive, then education, law, and economy, for instance, will follow suit. Since each social institution will have a different set of norms, each will be capable of making a different sense out of reality than the other institutions, but the normative privilege will be the same for all to the extent that the functional religion of the society influences them in that way.

The extent of that influence is questionable, however. Bellah et al.’s observation is that religion in the United States, at least, has been relegated to what they call the private sphere. This diminishes its relationship with other social institutions and inhibits religion’s ability to be a robust public participant in the meaning-making processes of society. This confounding problem of the institution which encodes signification being distanced from the other institutions’ processes of meaning-making leaves religion stagnant as a social force, if not in a state of atrophy while at the same time leaving the other social institutions dependent on an ailing signification code for cues as to how the
normative and the ontological ought to relate in a society that purports to cohere. So my argument calls for a revival of the role of religion in public life. Such a revival, however, is not without potentially violent consequences.

To understand fully and more explicitly the potentially violent consequences and to offer a case upon which to test the effects of this functional understanding of religion, I will depart the functionalist framework and look at a particular theology or belief system. Christianity, as broadly understood and practiced in the United States and Western Europe, influences these societies' meaning-making processes in ways that create and, in a sense sacralize violence according to René Girard’s theory of mimetic rivalry and sacrificial violence. Girard judges that contemporary Christian theology, broadly speaking, represents a misreading of the Christian Gospel. This misreading encodes violent modes of meaning-making. So to the extent that meaning-making processes of the other social institutions in the United States and Western Europe are indirectly (and sometimes directly) dependent upon this misreading of the Gospel then meaning-making processes in these globally influential societies will continue to find violent ways to use power for the sake of forming, maintaining and transmitting culture. So reviving religion’s role in public life, or at least Christianity’s role in US society, could have (some would say even more) devastating consequences not only on United States society, but on the world. It is also possible, however, that Christianity, is in fact already influencing these violent modes of signification and the so-called privatization of religion is only a one-way shield, allowing religion’s influence to pervade society without accepting any influential shaping from other social processes. So my call for the revival of religion in public life is much more about a revival of discourse about religion and a
more open and critical engagement of the meaning-making processes it encodes for other social institutions.

Chapter four examines the relationships among the various social institutions in detailed case studies. Carol Gruber’s analysis of colleges and universities during World War I illuminates Girard’s thesis on an institutional scale. Dysfunctional relationships among education, religion, and government contributed to major changes in institutional identity and those changes, in turn, contributed to what could arguably be described as uncritical and hyper-bellicose attitudes among educational and religious leaders.

I will also examine more recent events at three universities in the Middle East. These studies also demonstrate how education allowing itself to be co-opted for economic and governmental ends can directly lead to the involvement in violent conflict. Chapter four concludes with a call for education to re-examine and rehabilitate its own sense of moral purpose outside those freely assigned to it by economic and governmental influences. Religion can function to help education make meaning in its own terms and to begin that process of rehabilitating its moral purpose, but religion needs education to reverse its devolution into violent meaning-making patterns.

This is a call for a religious and educational reformation, and the agents upon whom I call for this reformation are a group I term, broadly, as leaders, not religious leaders alone, but leaders of groups large and small who influence the various social institutions in societies.
Leadership

So what constitutes a leader? Because of the way in which we as modern humans, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, have divided up functions in an attempt to create efficiencies or, at least, loci of control, we have organized our relationships with one another into groups of persons acting together ostensibly for common purposes. Within these organizations, there is often a person or group of persons who relate to the entire group or to a large portion of the group at once. Often we call this person or group a leader or leadership team. Classically, Max Weber establishes categories for analysis for leadership. His ideal types prove useful in understanding the ways authority is regarded as legitimate by groups of persons. In chapter five, I will turn to Weber as a starting point in developing my theory of leadership.

Various notions of leadership have surfaced over the centuries. Perspectives which influence the study of leadership are closely tied with the way one understands reality in general and how people know what is real and what is not real. On one end of a continuum of these notions of leadership is that “leadership is ‘real;’ it can be measured in a relatively objective manner and has generalizable and law-like relationships waiting to be discovered.” On the other end of the continuum is an understanding of reality as socially constructed, an understanding I will develop out more with the help of Peter Berger and others. This understanding views “reality as a projection of human imagination, with a transcendental metaphor.” From this perspective, “leadership reality

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8 Ibid., 24
is a projection of individual consciousness and may be accessible only through phenomenological modes of insight."^{9}

No matter how problematic it is to settle on a fixed notion of leadership and even if leadership is understood as only a socially-constructed reality, the concept of leadership itself is useful if only to aid in the identification of what is wrong with the acquisition and use of power by particular individuals or groups of individuals. It also may serve to identify myths about the use of power, myths that reinforce power differences - myths that need to be exposed, understood and managed. Even if our object is to deconstruct the nature of leadership, to do away with the concept altogether, or to reveal its utility for harm or for good, it would serve us well to be more specific about the meanings of the terms leadership and leader. Chapter five explores multiple examples and discussions of leadership and concludes that leadership is fundamentally a meaning-making activity and, therefore, a fundamentally cultural activity.

I appropriate Weber’s and subsequent analysts’ development of the concept of charisma to describe how leaders actually facilitate the meaning-making process for groups. Charisma enables leaders to evoke a willingness of others to move beyond the security of the status quo through an uncertain middle state and into a new set of structures and norms. But charisma is more than the ability to persuade others to endure such transitions; it is the ability to establish a new order on the other side of those transitions. Victor Turner’s research in liminality and communitas provides a language for describing this meaning-making process.

As a cultural activity in the United States and in Western Europe, at least, leadership is informed by the institution of religion insofar as Christianity functions to

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^{9} Ibid.
encode the processes of meaning-making. As such leadership as meaning-making activity is subject to the same rivalry and violence embedded in the misreading of the Christian Gospel described by Girard.

A theory which suggests a path for the development of leaders toward using charisma to make meaning in ways that are less violent is essential at all levels of social complexity. Unfortunately, pacific leaders on the organizational level will be inhibited by the lack of pacific patterns allowed within a particular organization’s institutional framework. Likewise, the institutional framework is unlikely to have the capacity for such patterns if the society is incapable of legitimating such ways of interacting.

Developed leadership, then, at the societal, institutional and organizational levels is important to effect the mutual transformation of institutions and organizations as well as that of institutions and society.

Developmental theories focus primarily on the personal, interpersonal and, increasingly, on the organizational level. But few, if any, have answered the call of The Good Society to examine institutional development in a way that effects changes at the societal level.10 To that end, I propose to use this framework to create a theory of how leadership development can effect the growth of social institutions.

In chapter six, I will construct such a theory on the basis of the developmental work done by Brian Hall by reading his leadership styles in light of the relationship Girard establishes between religion and violence. In so doing, I will illustrate that most of Hall’s leadership styles exhibit some degree of violence in the way they deploy energy and use power to synthesize the normative and the ontological. In fact my argument will

demonstrate alignment between the leadership styles and the violent Christian myth that Girard exposes. Girard’s call for a transformative re-reading of the Gospel narrative is embodied in only the two most developed of Hall’s seven leadership styles.

Thermodynamics of Culture and Leadership

While Hall’s work deals primarily with organizational leaders, my examination of Hall’s theories in light of Girard’s framework is an inquiry about leadership in general. So how do leaders effect society beyond the group they lead? This requires a re-thinking of the way the levels of social complexity represented within the Moral Meaning Matrix relate to one another. In chapter seven, I will look at the simultaneous interconnectedness of multiple levels of social complexity using the emerging ideas of chaos, network, and complexity theories. These theories open up the Moral Meaning Matrix into a more fluid and evolving framework that belies its rigid structural representation. The fluidity, I will demonstrate, is more in keeping with the actual ways signification processes change and adapt over time thereby converting the Moral Meaning Matrix from a descriptive model demonstrating the various relationships among components of signification processes into a model of a dynamic learning system. Theologian Richard Voyles’s adaptation of halacha or Jewish Law to a Christian context offers a paradigm for understanding the importance of the contextual and ontological portions of the matrix as entry ways for new data that will be synthesized as meaningful at various levels of social complexity.

The interjection of chaos, network, and complexity theories will reveal more than a contrast between a structural model and a dynamic model. More importantly it illuminates the difference between leadership models which deploy energy as if social
systems are closed and insulated from external influences and leadership models which tap into a freely available energy that Mark Taylor terms negentropy. The latter approach openly embraces new experiences and relationships for the sake of constantly reforming and re-shaping signification processes. This contrast will give us the language to speak in developmental terms about something as large and amorphous as a social institution.

Comprehending social institutions as learning systems suggests that social institutions grow and learn as well as regress and retrench. My analysis will show that the disintegration of Bellah et al.’s social institutions and particularly the diminution of religion and education relative to the market economy and the state cause the institution of religion, which encodes signification mechanisms for societies, to regress, at least in the United States. This regression subsequently encodes less and less developed modes of signification which ultimately privilege past meanings made over new information, new data, and new meanings. This developmentally regressive cycle, complexity theory demonstrates, can feed on itself until the system fails altogether, exhausting all past meanings, creating a real sense of meaninglessness for entire societies. Mapping the developmental regression in Girard’s terms, the modes of signification become increasingly violent. The more the sense of meaninglessness is perceived, the more social institutions will turn to violence to thwart it.

The authors of *The Good Society* call for “a third democratic transformation…to renew a serious public conversation and to strengthen the institutions that nurture and extend it.” In light of my analysis, Chapters nine and ten detail what that transformation might look like. As Bellah at al. indicate:

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We need clear standards to help us regain our environmental health, and we also need clear standards to regain our institutional health: indeed, we cannot repair the damaged environment unless we also repair our damaged social ecology.\textsuperscript{12}

Any set of standards for this transformation that takes my assessment seriously must be educational in nature. That is it must think of itself as an open learning system, always changing and adapting, privileging contextual reality over generalized norms in order to remain vital, progressive and, ultimately, non-violent. The set of standards I propose reconnects social institutions and provides the tools within which leaders can grow beyond the mythical constraints of regressive meaning-making systems, in order to participate in the creation of new signification processes. I argue for a new way to think about culture generally and cultures specifically and a way to understand how persons and groups of persons create, sustain and transmit those cultures. More than that, it is a way to de-alienate persons from the signification processes in which they participate but which they often see as reified factuality acting upon them. The re-enfranchised actors who take responsibility for these constantly reforming meaning-making processes are, by definition, leaders of a very specific type. They are cultural leaders.

\textsuperscript{12} Bellah et al., \textit{Good Society}, 292.
On the heels of the attacks of September 11, 2001, Edward Said, in *The Nation*, excoriated the seemingly prescient thesis put forward five years prior by Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* that religion plays a role in creating and delineating emerging lines of demarcation among broad transnational entities, which Huntington describes as civilizations.\(^\text{13}\) While nation-states persist in shaping civilizations, conflict between or among geographically defined political jurisdictions is less of a concern for Huntington than the divisions and wars that occur between and among these larger global factions which are held together by significant internally coherent affinities.

A civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people.\(^\text{14}\)

Huntington identifies six and possibly seven “major contemporary civilizations:” Sinic,  

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\(^{13}\) Huntington, *Clash*, 40-8.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 43.
Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Western, Latin American, and African (possibly). \(^{15}\) “Religion is a central defining characteristic of civilizations… Of [social theorist Max] Weber’s five ‘world religions,’ four – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Confucianism – are associated with major civilizations.” \(^{16}\) The centrality of religion for civilizations is not inconsequential for the divisions which distinguish one civilization from another, especially when a division escalates to the level of violent conflict.

In the course of war, multiple identities fade and the identity most meaningful in relation to the conflict comes to dominate. That identity almost always is defined by religion. Psychologically, religion provides the most reassuring and supportive justification for struggle against “godless” forces which are seen as threatening. Practically, its religious or civilizational community is the broadest community to which the local group involved in the conflict can appeal for support. If in a local war between two African tribes, one tribe can define itself as Muslim and the other as Christian, the former can hope to be bolstered by Saudi money, Afghan mujahedeen, and Iranian weapons and military advisers, while the latter can look for Western economic and humanitarian aid and political and diplomatic support from Western governments. \(^{17}\)

For Huntington, then, religion is the most meaningful identity in global groupings defined by what he terms cultural identity. Said rebuffs Huntington for using overly broad categories to describe millions of people with complex and intertwined histories in monolithic terms for the sake of drawing convenient distinctions or, more insidiously as Said and others would argue, for the sake of naming and identifying post cold-war

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 44-47. Huntington acknowledges that many scholars do not view Africa as a single and separate civilization. Rather different regions within Africa belong to other more influential transnational groupings. Northern Africa, for instance is more a part of the Islamic civilization whereas other parts of Africa may have more in common with European culture or the Western civilization. In addition, Huntington concedes that tribal identities are important throughout the continent and that there is an emerging coherent African identity. Sub-Saharan Africa, in fact, could form its own civilization. Ethiopia, historically, has also constituted its own civilization as well.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 47.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 267-8. Huntington appeals to specific examples, some of which are outdated. The potential for Afghan mujahedeen in such a scenario may be quite different following the US military action in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Still, the example is illustrative and makes the point that others in the world not party to a particular conflict may provide tangible and useful support to combatants based on religious affiliation even if other similarities or affiliations are lacking.
enemies only to shore up or preserve an artificially constructed identity labeled
“Western.”18 Yet even in his critique, Said demonstrates at least part of Huntington’s
thesis as he retreats to the ease of generalities himself when distinguishing between
Westerners and Muslims and when discussing conflicts among Muslims, Christians and
Jews:

There is still no decent history or demystification of the many-sided
contest among these three followers—not one of them by any means a
monolithic, unified camp—of the most jealous of all gods, even though
the bloody modern convergence on Palestine furnishes a rich secular
instance of what has been so tragically irreconcilable about them.19

In a 1993 article which pre-dates Said’s criticism of 2001, Huntington challenges
his critics to explain the complexity of global relations in a world without competing
superpowers. He rejects as unreal a “one-world paradigm that a universal civilization
now exists or is likely to exist in the coming years” because there is no centralized
universal power. Likewise he dismisses the suggestion that states be regarded as
controlling civilizations. Lacking an alternative to belonging to spheres of influence
during the cold war, states are increasingly identifying with civilizations - not the other
way around, according to Huntington.20 Huntington defends his position with an
emphasis on religion as key to forming the cultural identity which links transnational
civilizations. “What ultimately counts for people is not political ideology or economic

18 Edward Said, “The Clash of Ignorance,” The Nation, October 22, 2001 [journal on-line]; available from
www.thenation.com/doc/20011022/said; Internet; accessed April 13, 2007. and John Trumpbour, “The
Clash of Civilizations: Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and the Remaking of the Post-Cold War World
Order,” The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy, Emran Qureshi and Michael Sells, eds. (New
York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 89.
19 Said, on-line.
20 Samuel P. Huntington, “If Not Civilizations, What? Samuel Huntington Responds to His Critics,”
Foreign Affairs November/December 1993 [journal on-line], (accessed 13 April, 2007), Internet.
interest. Faith and family, blood and belief, are what people identify with and what they will fight and die for.”

Such an identity is powerful so its nature needs to be better understood. What, then, would make a religious identity a cultural identity, and what would make such an identity meaningful to individuals and to large groups? To pursue these questions about culture and meaning, I turn to cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Culture, for Geertz is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” Geertz’s understanding of culture is a “semiotic one. Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun, [Geertz takes] culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.”

**The Search for Meaning**

Cultures are webs of significance and the analysis of cultures is a search for meaning. If cultures, as Huntington suggests, can both transcend nationalities and divide persons from one another within nations, then cultures must exist at various levels of social complexity from interpersonal relationships to Huntington’s global civilizations. Therefore my analysis of cultures, that is the search for meaning, must take place intimate and broad scales alike. It will start with the former and move to the latter. For a look at

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21 Huntington, Responds, on-line.
22 Geertz., 89.
23 Ibid., 5.
cultures on the interpersonal scale, I turn to the work of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, in his aptly titled book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, which chronicles his experiences as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps for three years and articulates his resultant theory, which he calls logotherapy.\(^24\) His account and reflection give detail to the search for meaning, and thereby contribute to a richer understanding of the project of cultural analysis and of culture itself. Although his book is highly personal in nature, I will break down his search for meaning as a process that I will later apply to broader cultural scales as well.

In reflecting on his own experiences and in his observations of others during and beyond those three years, Frankl suggests that “three phases of an inmate’s reaction to camp life become apparent: the period following his admission; the period when he is well-entrenched in camp routine and the period following his release and liberation.”\(^25\) For each phase, Frankl identifies a characteristic “symptom.”\(^26\) The symptom of the first phase is shock; the second, apathy, and the third, depersonalization.\(^27\)

Recounting his arrival at Auschwitz, Frankl describes the hurried set of instructions he followed and the instantaneous decisions that guards made, which he later learned literally carried the weight of his fate. He and his fellow inmates suffered from a sense of delusion, he recalls, that at some point they would gain reprieve and be reacquainted with their lives which had been so starkly interrupted. His delusion came to an end when he realized that he would have to surrender the manuscript of his book, which he had smuggled into the camp at great risk. The shock of the first phase, perhaps,

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\(^{25}\) Ibid., 22.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 22.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 22, 35, 95.
is the surprise at how quickly a person can be dissociated from any semblance of life as he or she knew it, but perhaps more profoundly, the astonishment comes at the value of what is left even when everything else was gone. After the relief of verifying that the showerheads in the buildings to which he was initially led dripped water and did not effuse deadly gas, Frankl took note of his and his fellow inmates’ crowded surroundings as well as of his own quickly and profoundly altered state, physically and existentially:

> While we were waiting for the shower, our nakedness was brought home to us: we really had nothing except our bare bodies—even minus hair; all we possessed, literally, was our naked existence. What else remained for us as a material link with our former lives? For me there were my glasses and my belt; the latter I had to exchange later for a piece of bread.

Frankl’s first phase, characterized by shock, delineates in stark terms the disruption of status quo for an individual or for entire classes of persons at once.

Soon horror at the horrors of the camps gave way to the emotional blunting of the second phase. No longer surprised or even moved enough by the incessant and unjustifiable scourges of fellow inmates, for instance, the prisoners, and Frankl among them, began giving over their lives to the fate which seemed to control them. Focused on survival, they were content to surrender any responsibility for decision-making or the consequences of their actions and let destiny takes its course. Frankl discloses that toward that end, he answered all questions posed of him truthfully, not knowing how to outwit the system to survive one moment to the next. Whatever the consequences of his responses may have been, he was prepared to endure them.²⁹

The apathy was deepened by a sense that people were no longer people but numbers. Names, professions, and even states of health became unimportant as

²⁸ Ibid., 28.
²⁹ Ibid., 64.
accountant-like guards and privileged inmates were only concerned with the numbers of prisoners being transported from one place to the next, for instance, and whether or not the prisoners’ assigned numbers matched the specific numbers on the accompanying manifest.\(^{30}\)

The lack of personal responsibility, primal self-preservation, and dehumanization compounded the apathy into an utter disregard for self and others. As Frankl discovered, he narrowly escaped the consequences of such a profound lack of feeling.

Months after, after liberation, I met a friend from the old camp. He related to me how he, as camp policeman, had searched for a piece of human flesh that was missing from a pile of corpses. He confiscated it from a pot in which he found it cooking. Cannibalism had broken out. I had left just in time.\(^{31}\)

Frankl’s second phase, marked by apathy, demonstrates the consequences of a cultivated lack of feeling. He attributes the insensitivity to the survival instinct of the prisoners. It was, he contends, “a very necessary protective shell.”\(^{32}\)

Liberation, Frankl’s third phase, constituted a separation of a different sort. A reversal of the excision from society made in the first phase, the day the camp gates opened, thousands of prisoners (re-)entered yet another wholly unfamiliar environment. As Frankl noted about his and his fellow prisoners’ first unforced steps beyond the fences, “We did not yet belong to this world.”\(^{33}\) Comparing the release of the “mental pressure” of incarceration to the ascension of caisson workers whose bodies undergo enormous changes upon returning to the surface too quickly, Frankl suggests that rapid attempts to acclimate to the outside world could cause the psychological equivalent of the

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 63.  
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 66.  
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 35.  
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 95.
“bends.” Such rapid release of pressure caused a “moral deformity” in some who wished to oppress others in the way they had been oppressed as well as bitterness and disillusionment. The disillusionment was both the cause and the symptom of the depersonalization. Dreams had served a specific anesthetizing role in camp. Now the dreams-come-true were difficult to grasp.

“Freedom”- we repeated to ourselves, and yet we could not grasp it. We had said this word so often during all the years we dreamed about it, that it had lost its meaning. Its reality did not penetrate into our consciousness; we could not grasp the fact that freedom was ours.

Lack of belief that a dream was real was less injurious than the reverse, discovering that a dream would never come true.

When we spoke about attempts to give a man in camp mental courage, we said that he had to be shown something to look forward to in the future….Woe to him who found that the person whose memory had given him courage in camp did not exist any more! Woe to him who, when the day of his dreams came, found it so different than all he had longed for! Depersonalization, the symptom of the third phase, consists of a lack of continuity between one’s dreams and reality. Whether unable to distinguish reality from dream or confronted with the dissonance between reality and dream, the lack of continuity between the two makes dreams in this phase deceptive.

From naked existence to cannibalism to deceptive dreams, Frankl chronicles the bleak psychological journey he and millions of other camp prisoners endured. Yet his book and my analysis are about the search for meaning, and Frankl provides a path for discovering personal meaning even in these most primal of circumstances. But the personal process is applicable to larger scales. Peter Berger theorizes about meaning and

34 Ibid., 97
35 Ibid., 98.
36 Ibid., 99.
religion on a broader societal scale. Reading Frankl’s journey in light of the work Peter Berger has done on how entire societies make meaning begins to show the similarities between personal and collective meaning-making processes.

Naked Existence

Not only was Frankl standing unclothed in the bath house with other prisoners, in Berger’s terms Frankl’s abrupt removal from the world he had come to know and help create likely created another sense of profound vulnerability. He argues,

To be separated from society exposes the individual to a multiplicity of dangers with which he is unable to cope by himself, in the extreme case to the danger of imminent extinction. Separation from society also inflicts unbearable psychological tensions upon the individual, tensions that are grounded in the root anthropological fact of sociality. The ultimate danger of such separation, however, is the danger of meaninglessness.  

Berger, who draws on both Max Weber and Emile Durkheim to describe explicitly the relationships among religion, society, and meaning-making, understands society as “the guardian of order and meaning.” It establishes what Berger terms a “nomos” that creates and secures this sense of order and meaning. The separation from, or the breakdown of, the nomos results in what Berger refers to, in an Anglicization of Durkheim’s term, as “anomy.” The prisoners’ abrupt confrontation of their naked existence and the shock they experienced at the senseless acts of power and brutality they witnessed correspond to Berger’s appropriation of the concept of “anomic terror.”

Anomy is unbearable to the point where the individual may seek death in preference to it. Conversely, existence within the anomic world may be sought at the cost of all sorts of sacrifice and suffering—and even the cost

38 Ibid., 21.
39 Ibid., 21.
of life itself, if the individual believes that this ultimate sacrifice has
nomic significance.\textsuperscript{40}

Even Frankl, who contemplated suicide along with his fellow inmates, understood
the preference of death over life. He chose not to “run into the wire” of the electrified
fence not because it was not preferable but because there was no “point” in it – no
meaning. He calculated the odds, and he was just as likely to be spared the trouble of
committing suicide by the rate at which prisoners were dying or being killed anyway.\textsuperscript{41}

Cannibalism

Humans will fight anomy, according to Berger. In fact this is the genesis of society, which he describes as a human product that acts back on its producer.\textsuperscript{42} In the face of anomic terror and, especially in the cases in which the persons experiencing such terror have very little perceived or actual control such as in the concentration camps, humans will create social constructs which enable them to deny or disclaim their participation in that very social construction. The dialectical relationship between human being and society is denied. The world is seen as objective fact acting on the individual.\textsuperscript{43} This process, “whereby the dialectical relationship between the individual and his world is lost to consciousness” is “alienation.”\textsuperscript{44}

In the stark realities of the concentration camp, one could argue that the inmates had very little role in or responsibility for the world around them. In fact, this was very much the case. Others created the environment into which these persons found

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{41} Frankl, 31.
\textsuperscript{42} Berger, \textit{Canopy}, 3.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 85.
themselves involuntarily thrust. However, even Frankl acknowledges a sense of agency over small matters with consequences of significance. One such story contrasts one prisoner-cook with others:

He was the only cook who did not look at the men whose bowls he was filling; the only cook who dealt out the soup equally, regardless of recipient, and who did not make favorites of his personal friends and countrymen, picking out the potatoes for them, while the others got watery soup skimmed from the top.  

Even given the facts which were beyond their control, the prisoners still participated in creating a world within a world. Reaction to the realities with which they were confronted was in fact their participation in social construction.

Nevertheless, Frankl’s description of the second phase of camp life is rich with description of fate taking its course and of prisoners allowing it to do so. Frankl himself refused to try to interject his own agency, choice, or preferences into the mix of variables which could, from day to day, determine whether he lived or died. This surrender to a force greater than oneself and beyond one’s control caused Frankl and others to lose emotion as well as any sense of culpability for the horrors that surrounded them or in which they participated. He reports,

After [a typhus patient] had just died, I watched without any emotional upset the scene that followed, which was repeated over and over again with each death. One by one the prisoners approached the still warm body. One grabbed the remains of a messy meal of potatoes; another decided that the corpse’s wooden shoes were an improvement over his own, and exchanged them. A third man did the same with the dead man’s coat, and another was glad to be able to secure some—just imagine—genuine string.

Beyond alienation, the perfunctory approach to one’s actions and the moral decay, which Frankl observed at its depth in the account of cannibalism can also be attributed to

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45 Frankl, 58.
46 Ibid., 34.
what Berger terms “bad faith.” 47 This is a disruption of personal awareness of the
dialectical tension, not with the outside world, but with the inside world, the social
realities which the actor had, over time, internalized. So a prisoner or any person for that
matter, experiencing both alienation and bad faith is isolated by a “false consciousness”
from society and socialization. 48 Berger illustrates this isolation with the observation that
“the faithful executioner may tell himself that he has ‘no choice’ but to follow the
‘program’ of head-chopping, suppressing both emotional and moral inhibitions
(compassion and scruples say) to this course of action, which he posits as inexorable
necessity for himself qua executioner.” 49 In the alienated/bad faith world of the apathetic
second phase of camp life, cannibalism is a possibility, perhaps one even legitimated by a
provisional social order in which the social actors are able to distance themselves from
their roles in world-creation and from their socialized selves.

Deceptive Dreaming

The distancing from roles of the prisoners’ lives in the world joined another
distancing – a distancing from the role of the world in their lives. In part attributable to
the task of enduring the plight of a concentration camp prisoner, Frankl emphasized the
importance of the freedom of the imagination,

I did not know whether my wife was alive, and I had no means of finding
out… but at that moment [while digging a ditch under duress in frozen
soil] it ceased to matter. There was no need for me to know; nothing could
touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved.
Had I known then that my wife was dead, I think that I would still have
given myself, undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation of her

47 Berger, Canopy, 93
48 Berger, Canopy, 93.
49 Ibid.
image, and that my mental conversation with her would have been just as vivid and just as satisfying.\footnote{Frankl, 50.}

The deception of the dream was useful to at least distract Frankl from the harsh realities he faced. Even the deceptive quality of the content of the dream itself, if known, would not have interrupted the efficacy of the dream. The deception was intentional, and the illusory was preferable to the real. Upon liberation, the dream world which had replaced or become contiguous with reality confronted reality for which the dream’s service was no longer needed or no longer effective. Again moving from one social reality to another, the released prisoners experienced an anomic situation. Dreary as it was, camp life had formed its own nomos, in Berger’s terms. And now that that nomos was disrupted by liberation; the inmates experienced anomy once again.

The dreams were temporarily contiguous with reality in prison, because they had been reality – a reality socially constructed by each prisoner individually and the prisoners collectively. Their false consciousness – bad faith and alienation – was exposed upon release. The alienated bad faith which served to stave off the previously encountered anomy was no longer sufficient to comprehend the new world, but perhaps for the first time its usefulness could be fully understood as an artifact of camp life.

Such alienation can be a most effective barrier against anomy. Once the false unity of the self is established, and as long as it remains plausible, it is likely to be a source of inner strength. Ambivalences are removed. Contingencies become certainties. There is no more hesitation between alternative possibilities of conduct. The individual “knows who he is”– a psychologically most satisfactory condition…the individual who seeks to divest himself of bad faith institutionalized in his situation in society is likely to suffer psychologically and in his “conscience” quite apart from the external difficulties he will probably encounter as a result of such “unprogrammed” ventures.\footnote{Berger,Canopy, 94.}
Frankl’s stages, which I have named Naked Existence, Cannibalism, and Deceptive Dreaming, are characterized by the symptoms, in his terms, of shock, apathy, and depersonalization respectively. Berger’s social analysis explains the root cause of these symptoms as anomy, alienation, and bad faith respectively.

The Making of Meaning

Having named Frankl’s stages, their symptoms, and their root causes, I will now turn to the project of examining meaning making in each stage, respectively, in order to gain purchase on the nature of signification processes generally. Each of Frankl’s stages presented a different challenge to Frankl and his fellow inmates as they struggled with what Frankl identifies as a human’s “primary motivation,” that is “a search for meaning.” The shock of naked existence resulted from the anomy of the prisoners being dislodged from a social existence in which they were able to make sense of the conditions of most realities which they had previously encountered. The current situation, most dramatically illustrated by the initial shower in the camp, had no referent in social sense-making. The situation was so radically different from anything the prisoners had experienced before, there was no way to comprehend what was going on. The reality, which the soldiers imposed on the prisoners, was so different than what any of the prisoners thought life ought to be that many, in shock, denied the reality of the reality. Clinging to his latest written volume, Frankl did the same. It was not until Frankl realized how out of place his book was and how life-threatening his possession of it was, that he truly accepted the new reality in which he found himself. And it was not until he awakened to the harshness of his new reality that he was able to begin making meaning.

52 Frankl, 105.
again. He held onto and hid his book in the shower, a meaningless act. His notion of what ought to be was located in a past life, a society that was not operative in the prison camp. His choice, then, was to deny the new reality, his new existence, or his new is, in Geertz’s terms, in favor of living as if the former ought would never permit such an existence, or to accept that his new life, his new is was so different that making sense of it in terms of his old life was impossible.  

Meaninglessness in the Naked Existence stage of Frankl’s journey emerged from an inability to accept the new reality. Meaning came with an acceptance of the new life. Frankl and the prisoners who found meaning resisted the temptation to equate the thought, “this shouldn’t be” with “this isn’t really happening.” Meaning was found in recognizing that something that should not be happening truly was happening. While the is and the ought of Frankl’s new life and his old society were in conflict, meaning came from identifying the tension, the very strained tension between his is and his ought. Meaninglessness would have persisted had he failed to clearly identify the incompatibility of the two by denying the reality of his new reality. So the anomy of Naked Existence is made meaningful by an acknowledgement of the tension between the is and the ought and by accepting the new is as real.

The interplay between the is and the ought is of interest for meaning-making in understanding the alienation of the apathetic Cannibalism stage as well. In Naked Existence, prisoners were more acquainted with old norms than new realities and the temptation was to deny the new realities. After the reality of camp life set in, comprehension of old norms began to fade away. In fact, for most prisoners, norms

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53 My use of the terms “is” and “ought” as components in a dialectical process of meaning-making is attributable to Geertz, 126.
altogether evaporated. There was no ought by which to judge any particular is. Behavior was driven by a survival instinct that eventually had very little regard for the dignity of other persons. With no ought to counterbalance or make sense of the is, life was meaningless.

Meaning-making in the Cannibalism stage emerged for Frankl and/or for the cook in the story of the ethic of soup-serving. Whether or not the cook actually had developed and followed an ethic of fairness in the way he did not favor his friends with more than just the watery portions, we do not really know. He could have just been suffering from apathy in the extreme – not even caring about his friends and countrymen. In some ways, however, the cook’s disposition is irrelevant. The fact that Frankl imputed upon the cook’s actions a value of fairness indicates that at least Frankl had begun to develop, or had managed to adapt, a normative referent that helped camp life make sense. In other words, after all norms were stripped in the Naked Existence stage, meaning could only re-emerge as prisoners were able to reconstruct camp norms, that is some relevant ought with which to hold their awful is in tension. By so doing, Frankl and the other prisoners who managed to make meaning resisted the pervasive alienation by reclaiming responsibility for their behavior and their sense-making processes. They did not abdicate the power of social construction to their captors but retained it, at least to some degree, for themselves.

This kind of norm-referencing behavior matured over time in the camp. In fact it outgrew the reality in which the prisoners found themselves. It did so in the stage and the process I refer to as Deceptive Dreaming. For the prisoners, alienated from the collective process of shared meaning-making, personal dreams and illusions served in place of a
shared set of values or ethics. Meaninglessness was derived in the Naked Existence stage by a discontinuity between the present is and the past ought. Meaninglessness in the Cannibalism stage resulted in a discontinuity between the present is and the (non-existent) present ought. The Deceptive Dreaming stage created a future ought that was incongruous with the new (liberated) is.

Deceptive Dreaming seemed, in Frankl’s account, serviceable for survival right up until the camp gates opened for the final time. Upon re-entry into the outside world the dreams dreamed by the prisoners were tested against the unexpectedly harsh realities of the return to non-prison life. When daydreams and illusions failed to stand up to the veracity of outside life, meaninglessness set in from a different direction. This time, the prisoners, lost in their imaginations, were almost entirely influenced by a necessarily well-developed ought or ideal (even if imagined) state of affairs that allowed them to deny or ignore the harshness of the camp-life is. When confronted with a new reality, the prisoners were simultaneously challenged by the uselessness and irrelevance of their personal concept of what life ought to be like. Clinging to that ought, in fact, was damaging. So meaninglessness upon release came as a result of being consumed by an ought that was in no way relevant to the current is. In many ways, it was the same phenomenon of Naked Existence, in that the provisional nomos of camp life was inadequate to make sense of life outside the fences of the prison. In Naked Existence, however, the nomos that Frankl and the others left at the door of the shower was the collectively-constructed nomos of a society many shared. The dreams of freedom prisoners carried with them beyond the gates were highly personalized illusions that served as much to deny reality as make sense of it. To remain lost in such dreams would
have been to remain anesthetized to life. What was needed for the re-establishment of personal and collective meaning was a shedding of the bad faith, a rejection of alienation, and a re-engagement in the collective work of producing shared norms in a post-war recovering society.

The shock of anomy produced the meaninglessness of Naked Existence by dissociating society’s ought from the camp life is. Meaning making resulted from acceptance of the new is and seeing the radical discontinuity between it and everything the new prisoners knew to be normal. Acceptance of the is and forgetting one’s role and responsibility for meaning making led to the apathy of Cannibalism which thwarted meaning making by failing to provide an adequate ought with which to make sense of the is. Finally, the Deceptive Dreaming produced a sense of depersonalization as privately constructed oughts, created in bad faith to cope with harsh prison life, were tested against shared meaning-making processes beyond the camp walls. Meaning re-emerged for those able to discard the personal illusions and re-engage the public process of meaning-making in society. Whether an ought was in need of an is, an is in need of an ought, or a private ought was in need of a shared ought, meaninglessness resulted from the dissociation of the ought and the is, and meaning was found only when the tension between the two was enlivened and engaged. Frankl’s search for meaning was a search for different components of society-making at different times. In times when he was stripped of social moorings, meaning-making became more of a private act. As he integrated and re-integrated into camp life and Austrian life respectively, he located that meaning-making process in the context of shared norms. In Berger’s terms, society-
creation is a shared act and Frankl’s dislocation from shared sociality created the various levels of private angst discussed above.

However, whether on a private scale or shared scale, it was always a search for reconciling reality with a set of norms that could make sense of that reality, and it was a search for a reality that could give life to and ground a relevant set of norms as well. If successful in the quest, the search for meaning creates a vibrant tension between reality as experienced and shared norms. It seeks a dialectical tension between and synthesis of the is and the ought on a continuum, marked in Frankl’s case and Berger’s analysis of private and shared meaning respectively.

Frankl and Berger bear out Geertz’s description of meaning-making process as the synthesis of the “is” and the “ought.” In Geertz’s terms, the meanings resulting from those syntheses, to the extent that those meanings are shared, constitute cultures which pattern and transmit those meanings. In Huntington’s terms civilizations are cultural, that is transnational groups that make meaning together. They make sense of the way things are relative to the way things ought to be in similar and shared ways. Religion, Huntington claims, offers the common identity that unites the signification processes. Religious identity is powerful enough, apparently, to unite meaning-making processes across geographic boundaries and to disrupt other commonalities that, say, warring factions might otherwise share. Differences in the way religions offer meaning to large groups seem significant enough to defend with life and impose with murder.

From Frankl to Huntington, the same process of making - apparently very precious - meaning obtains. The meanings made constitute cultures on large and small scales to the extent the meanings are shared. Religion causes those cultural meanings to
cohere, even across global expanses. To understand why and how that occurs, I must first establish a model through which to understand the link between the personal and the global, so I will probe in further detail how cultures are scalable and therefore how the synthesis of the is and the ought occurs at various levels of social complexity. Further, I will examine what the implications of that scalable mechanism are for the willingness of human beings to advance and defend with violence one version of meaningful life over another.
CHAPTER TWO

MEANING, POWER, AND VIOLENCE

As Frankl, Berger, and Geertz demonstrate, meaning is found in the synthesis of the is and the ought, i.e. the ontological and the normative. While Frankl offers insight into meaning making on a personal level, Berger’s analysis begins to show the implications of the search for and creation of meaning on a societal level as well. More complex than persons and less complex than an entire society is the organization. I turn now to this intermediate level and examine an organizational crisis of meaning-making which is analogous to, but not equal in severity to, Frankl’s crisis. Nevertheless, this crisis offers additional insight into meaning making on an intermediate level of social complexity. I look at an organizational crisis, however, not so much to ask a question about how organizations mean, but rather to ask a more fundamental question. Namely, upon what sources do organizations draw when making sense of reality? I will suggest that social institutions are influential on organizational meaning making. This particular organizational crisis offers a window into the signification processes of the more socially complex level of institutions as well as into the specific meaning-making processes of the persons and groups of persons within or related to the organization itself. As a window into more and less complex levels of society (institutions and persons), this example gives me the analytical language to elaborate Geertz’s model of meaning making or

54 Geertz, 126-7.
culture creation on at least three levels of social complexity and to explicate how culture creation occurs on large and small scales. Once I establish a vocabulary for discussing culture-creation processes at various levels of social complexity, I will be able to examine the appropriation of energy at those various levels, energy that fuels the culture-creation process. Understanding how energy is appropriated as power for culture formation will provide a framework to begin discussing the connection between culture creation and violence in greater detail. In subsequent chapters, I will examine the role of social institutions in preserving and transmitting the link between violence and culture creation, so this present investigation into institutional meaning making is foundational.

**Institutional Moral Meaning**

Can social institutions participate in the meaning-making process described by Frankl, Berger, and Geertz? What would it mean to say “Institutions mean?” The authors of *The Good Society* define institution as “a pattern of expected actions of individuals or groups enforced by social sanction, both positive and negative.” 55 When activities are organized or patterned they can be made to work toward some purpose thereby giving meaning to the pattern as well as to each activity. When or if the activities are organized simply for their own sake or for the sake of the pattern, the activities, although institutionalized, are meaning-less unless of course they derive some meaning intrinsically or extrinsically - perhaps from some other institutions of which they may simultaneously be a part. So to say that one of the things that institutions do is to mean, is to say that institutions are capable of organizing activity for purposes greater than themselves. To the extent that the purposes of institutions can be characterized

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55 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 10.
normatively, that meaning is moral in nature. The term, moral, is not a normative assessment of institutions generally or an institution particularly. That is, I do not mean that one institution is qualitatively right and another wrong – moral or immoral. Rather the influence institutions have on the lives of persons is moral in nature. That is they convey a set of socially-constructed norms and standards that help form character and expectations about what is right and what is wrong. As Bellah at al. clarify,

Institutions are patterns of social activity that give shape to collective and individual experience. An institution is a complex whole that guides and sustains individual identity, as a family gives sense and purpose to the lives of its members, enabling them to realize themselves as spouses, parents, and children. Institutions form individuals by making possible or impossible certain ways of behaving and relating to others. They shape character by assigning responsibility, demanding accountability, and providing the standards in terms of which each person recognizes the excellence of his or her achievements.\textsuperscript{56}

Institutions must claim or define and continually reclaim or redefine their purposes so as not to lose moral meaning. Institutions themselves are abstractions and they exist insofar as their activities are real and their patterns are perceived by and embodied in actors. The inter-action of actors, then, creates and re-creates the institution. Once actors have created an institution, the institution then can act back upon the actors who, in the first place, gave the institution the wherewithal to enforce sanctions. As Bellah et al. argue,

\begin{quote}
In short, we are not self-created atoms manipulating or being manipulated by objective institutions. We form institutions and they form us every time we engage in a conversation that matters, and certainly every time we act as a parent or child, student or teacher, citizen or official, in each case calling on models and metaphors for the rightness or wrongness of action. Institutions are not only constraining but enabling. They are the substantial forms through which we understand our own identity and the identity of others as we seek cooperatively to achieve a decent society.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] Ibid., 40.
\item[57] Ibid., 12.
\end{footnotes}
Actors are not necessarily limited to navigating the context of only one institution. In fact the division of labor has created an institutionally differentiated modern society in which actors often navigate the contexts of more than one institution. Because actors navigate more than one institutional context they develop over time an understanding of how various institutions pattern activity, enforce sanctions, and mean.

While this free movement between and among various institutional contexts lines is inevitable and provides rich resources for making meaning, there is a risk to navigating multiple meaning-making contexts. Emile Durkheim described that risk when he observed that the increased fragmentation of society that coincides with an increased division of labor. Without a moral glue, he suggests, to hold the fabric of society together he feared it would deteriorate into a highly fragmented anomic culture. What Durkheim called organic solidarity, which he initially hypothesized would arise spontaneously from an increasingly complex economic order once the actors realized their fundamental interdependence with one another, would be that glue.\(^58\)

With that understanding in mind, it easy to comprehend how individuals can move between and among various institutions coherently. But what happens when that glue does not hold or does not spontaneously arise?\(^59\) What happens when understanding turns into con-fusion, i.e., two or more moral understandings fused with one another? Extrapolating Durkheim’s argument in light of Berger’s process of the social construction of reality leads to the conclusion that in the case of the confusion described above, actors are no longer able to discern one institutional context from another and thereby no longer know what activity to expect of themselves or others. They become alienated from

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\(^59\) Ibid.
conscious participation in and thereby the re-creation of the institution and also from the understanding of the purpose of the activity patterning. That is they become alienated from the meaning.

If enough actors have fused understandings of otherwise differentiated institutional contexts and act therefore in a confused manner within any given institution, then the institution itself, which after all is a socially constructed product of the confused activity and disintegrating expectations, begins to lose patterning, and it dissociates from its original meaning or from meaning altogether.

In *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his co-authors discuss the moral confusion that makes it difficult for individuals to relate themselves to one another and to institutions. Indeed the authors of *Habits* found not only a growing distance between individuals and between social classes but they also noted a tendency to overlook that growing disparity by using a moral language that occluded the problem of modernization presenting problems with which individuals, alone and collectively, had to deal, and the primary tool at their disposal was the understanding of the individual as the actor of primary concern. The individual understood himself or herself as atomized and unrelated in any meaningful way to the other actors around him or her.60

*Habits of the Heart* diagnosed the gulf between atomized individuals and larger social bonds or patterns, and *The Good Society* attempts to offer a way forward, a theoretical model for understanding individuals as fundamentally connected in and through social institutions. The authors describe the symptoms of the gulf between individuals and social institutions as a “malaise [which] is palpable: a loss of meaning in

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the family and job, a distrust of politics, [and] a disillusion with organized religion.”61 Is this evidence of the disintegration that Durkheim feared? If so, the salvation from this disintegration is a new moral paradigm that can act as the glue which holds together this highly divided and diverse culture. That paradigm, claim the authors of The Good Society, is one of “cultivation.”62 It should replace the current moral paradigm available to most individuals and institutions, namely an inherited transmission of Lockean individualism.

The Good Society develops the need for a new paradigm by looking at four central institutions against the backdrop of this pervasive moral paradigm of individualism, the progress of modernity, the concomitant division of labor, and the peculiar circumstances of United States history. The four institutions are, in the authors’ terms, Education, the Political Economy, Government, Law, and Politics, and The Public Church.

In Habits of the Heart, the authors show the pervasiveness of individualism, both utilitarian and expressive in the formation of self-understanding.63 In The Good Society, they parlay that understanding into a diagnosis of the problem leading to a crisis in the relationship between individuals and institutions, stating that

the culture of individualism makes the very idea of institutions inaccessible to many of us…Americans often think of individuals as pitted against institutions. It is hard for us to think of institutions as affording us the necessary context within which we become individuals; of institutions as not just restraining but enabling us; of institutions not as an arena where our character is tested but an indispensable source from which character is formed.64

The inability to understand the role of institutions and the relationships between institutions and self creates a crisis of meaning or moral confusion, hampering

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61 Bellah et al., Good Society 50
62 Ibid., 275.
64 Bellah et al., Good Society, 6.
individuals’ quests to make sense of their lives. When something goes wrong, it is interpreted as a failing of the individual or as institutional constraints on individual liberty. I will now turn to an example of a crisis involving two of the institutions described above, I will show the role that moral confusion plays in preventing actors from clearly being able to differentiate between two different social institutions. They thereby fail to understand the way others involved in the same crisis make meaning in this context.

Organizational Crisis Raises Institutional Questions

In April of 1997, an employee of Oxford College of Emory University reserved the Day Prayer Chapel on the Oxford Campus for a wedding. When the dean of the college learned that the reservation was for a wedding of two men, he consulted the president and general counsel of the university. He asked whether or not the university’s equal opportunity policy would cover the issue at hand. He was told no. His consultations resulted in his letter to the employee, which, in part, read:

Your request for the use of our facilities for this ceremony has raised weighty questions for this institution to consider. You must know that unions between persons of the same gender are not recognized by the United Methodist Church as holy marriages, they are not given legal status as marriages in this state and are uncommon in our local community and on this campus. To break with convention on this sensitive matter by permitting this ceremony to occur would require much conversation, engaging individuals in our community with various

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65 Some have used the term “commitment ceremony.” I choose to use the term wedding, because it was described that way in the request for use of the chapel. Later stories in the media indicated that the employee and his partner understood their union to be a marital one and the ceremony to be a wedding.

66 I was personally present for this telephone conversation. The conversation was also recounted on the world wide web page maintained by the Emory University Office of Gay, Lesbian, and Bi-Sexual Concerns.

67 Emory University was founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1836 and the University was chartered as an organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South again in 1917. Emory claims in its literature to be affiliated with the United Methodist Church, but exactly what that means was part of the subject of the debate to follow.
perspectives and ensuring that issues of justice and freedom were considered alongside of theology and tradition.68

Pending further discussion, the dean refunded the employee’s money and canceled his reservation for the chapel and the reception hall. The dean felt the need to act. His choice was between permitting the ceremony to go forward as planned or not.

The dean’s letter recounts his search for a precedent which might inform his activity. He found none, and he listed the possibilities he had considered. His letter did not evaluate the employee’s request as absolutely out of order; it simply declared a lack of precedent thereby highlighting a moral dilemma at the level of practice or activity, i.e., what to do. The letter even goes further to acknowledge the significance of any activity on the dean’s part, “I trust that you expect us as an institution to set precedent and policy on important matters only after due consideration.”69 It also states what would be necessary to permit the wedding to occur: “I would need to undertake deliberations with others in the College and the University with an interest in policies governing campus facilities use.”70

It is possible to extract from this letter some necessary ingredients to moral decision making on the level of practice. I will show that precedent is important to making decisions about new activity. Think about precedents as being organized into categories by the actor in question. In this case, the category of marriage between two men in the context of the United Methodist Church, the law, and on the campus had no precedent. What would the precedent search have yielded if the operative category was not wedding or marriage? What if the president and general counsel had indeed advised the dean to use the category of equal opportunity instead? In the richness of this crisis, we

68 William H. Murdy to Christopher Hightower, May 13, 1997: Personal correspondence in my possession and available upon request.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
have the answer to that question when the president, without acknowledging his
conversation to the contrary with the dean, reversed his private position on this point
upon releasing this public statement.

Owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding of the meaning and authority of the
University’s Equal Opportunity Policy (formally adopted by the Board of
Trustees in 1993) a member of the Emory employee community and his partner
were recently denied, inappropriately, the use of a university facility on the
Oxford campus in which they had sought to solemnize their commitment which
they deemed a marital one, to each other.71

In the public statement, the president was, after all, asserting equal opportunity as the
operative category, and the precedents are the various previous usages of facilities by
employees. The idea of a marital ceremony is subordinated as a facilities use within the
category of equal opportunity.

Here we see the importance of category in selecting precedents to bring to bear on
a particular situation. Different categories call upon different precedents and therefore
lead to different outcomes.

Another example of the same type of precedent search is offered by the authors of
*The Good Society*. They discuss the decision that school district administrators had to
make about whether or not to allow a child with AIDS to attend school in the district. The
question was resolved to allow the child to attend school when they found “the right
metaphor, seeing the child primarily as a human being in need of special compassion
[rather than] primarily as a source of dangerous contamination.”72 What the authors call
“metaphor,” I call category. Both children in need and health threats are metaphors or
categories available in the school district’s vocabulary, but the outcome in this case

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71 William M. Chace, “A Statement from the President,” June 2, 1997: Correspondence between Chace and
the Emory University community in my possession and available upon request.
72 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 13.
depended upon the choice of one over the other. There were precedents for caring for children and for isolating health risks. The authors go on to quote Mary Douglas, “‘the most profound decisions about justice are not made by individuals as such but by individuals thinking within and on behalf of institutions.’”\(^73\)

Category selection, then, is institutionally prescribed, but wedding is a category defined by Religion (or Public Church) in the Emory case. It was understood as holy matrimony as opposed to civil marriage. Equal opportunity is a term borrowed right out of civil rights legislation or Government/Law/Politics as an institution. How is it that these two categories were selected for a debate within an educational organization?

Emory was founded by the Methodist Church and is religiously affiliated. Likewise it exists as a publicly chartered corporation under the laws of the State of Georgia and thereby the United States. I will draw on organizational theorists to help understand the relationship between organizations and institutions. DiMaggio and Powell theorize three mechanisms for what they call institutional isomorphism: coercive isomorphism, mimetic processes, and normative pressures.\(^74\) I will focus on the first as a potential mechanism for confusing the dialogue at Emory in this case.

“Coercive Isomorphism results from both formal and informal pressures exerted by other organizations upon which [organizations are] dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function.”\(^75\) In this case, the United Methodist Church has control over the approval of trustees and provides a relatively significant amount of financial support for Oxford College. Likewise, it could

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
\(^{75}\) Ibid, 67.
be argued that founding an organization creates a dependency akin to that between parent and child. Similarly, the university operates with an extraordinary amount of government funding for research and must comply with restrictions such as Title IX and procedures for recording income and expenses.

So, if the university were to appropriate, or indeed incorporate, into its vocabulary the categories from other institutions, the theory of coercive isomorphism helps explain why the categories of religious and political/legal institutions might be likely candidates. However, remember that the individuals involved in making the decisions, the constituents, internal and external to the university but related to it, also navigate in other institutional realms as well as religious and political. The ways of operating in those arenas have, over time, been imported to the arena of education as embodied at Emory.

So, institutions select the categories which order precedents and inform decision making on the level of practice. Institutions also, however, reflect a worldview beyond the institution itself. Organizational theorists Roger Friedland and Robert Alford posit this as one of the principles of their New Institutionalism. “Institutions must be reconceptualized as simultaneously material and ideal, systems of signs and symbols, rational and transrational.”

Clifford Geertz identified the ontological assumptions of a culture as “worldview.” Emory’s president articulated the category of equal opportunity and a corresponding worldview as mediated through the institution of education and the institutionalized organization of Emory:

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77 Geertz, 127.
we endeavor to make Emory a just and good place.

In so doing we recognize that a university is a place within the larger society that does not seek to purge differences but seeks to live among them. For that reason, adherence to our policy of equal opportunity is an obligation to be met by all of us for reasons rising from the very nature of educational aspirations that ultimately bind us together.\textsuperscript{78}

A resolution proposed by the Bishop’s cabinet of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church connected the religious category of wedding within the context of the church with the Church’s corresponding worldview. In their own terms, they affirmed “the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman.”\textsuperscript{79} While not as all-encompassing as the worldview articulated by the president, it does offer an ideal type for marriage and hints at the centrality of covenant in the Christian understanding of ultimate reality and the conception of Church. But unlike the president’s remarks, it forgoes linking education in this case as an institution that embodies some portion of what ultimately exists.

So, in acting, institutional actors draw upon precedents ordered by an appropriate category prescribed by the laws or nomos of that institution. The nomos, in turn, reflects a given worldview. I represent the ontological components of scalable meaning making it what I call the Is dimension of the signification process as the Ontological Schema in Figure 1. My use of the word “Is” is not meant to convey a notion of universal truth about reality or to suggest that such a universal truth can exist, although in a socially constructed reality a group of people may regard or perceive a particular understanding of reality (or the Is) as universally true. This dimension, which Geertz’s analysis will cause

\textsuperscript{78} Chace, “A Statement from the President.”

\textsuperscript{79} Cabinet of the North Georgia Annual Conference, “Resolution Regarding Use of Emory University Chapels and Other Facilities for Same Sex Marriages or Covenant Ceremonies:” Proposed resolution in my possession and available upon request.
me later to put in conversation with a corresponding normative (or ought) schema, begins
to form the building blocks of culture creation on various levels of social complexity. In
the present form it offers insight into the Emory decision-making process. To the extent
the decisions were made inductively, the figure shows the relationship among the
components from right to left as Activity, Precedent, Category, Nomos, and Worldview.
When read from left to right, the schema shows relationally how activity can be deduced
from worldview through Nomos, Category, and Precedent.

Figure 1: Ontological Schema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is</th>
<th>Worldview</th>
<th>Nomos</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Precedent</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

From Is to Ought

Geertz understands that “worldview,” represented in Figure 1 as a part of the
ontological schema, complements what he calls “ethos” or the normative aspects of a
culture. “The ethos is made intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way
of life implied by the actual state of affairs which the worldview describes, and the
worldview is made emotionally acceptable by being presented as an image of an actual
state of affairs of which such a way of life is an authentic expression.”

Institutions are normative in that they select categories that, through precedent, allow, prescribe, and
proscribe certain activities. Since, however, activities in institutions are patterned and, if
an institution is to have meaning, then, it must be patterning activity toward an end or a
purpose. This meaning, in Geertz’s terms is “stored” in symbols.

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80 Geertz, 126-27.
81 Ibid., 127.
Alford, institutions “have non-observable, transrational referents.” Symbols in “institutionalized organizations” may be as straightforward as the “formal organization” of a corporation or as mystical as a cross or a crescent in religious organizations. In a corporation, the “formal organization” informs how the corporation ought to act or ought to appear to act. The nature of the content of symbols, then, is normative.

In the Emory case, the important symbols for the position that the president articulated were, among others, employee - conceived as a member of the Emory community, and chapel - conceived as multi-purpose space. The term multi-purpose space is disarming in its reflection of utility. Nevertheless, it has moral content. Multi-purpose space is the place where various kinds of activity are permitted. This concept is a key to the president’s position, and the meaning of the term unfolds in a document prepared by the Emory trustees as they began to grapple with this crisis.

The trustees also develop the symbol of consecrated or sacred space in an attempt to characterize the church’s understanding of church building and chapel. For the church, then, chapel as sacred space or at least worship space is a symbol as was marriage - conceived sacramentally.

As the trustees, president, and church officials talked about this crisis, they attempted to relate their symbols to the crisis. The parties were unable to talk with one another, in large part, because their relevant symbol sets were different. The president and trustees, for instance, began with and grounded their arguments in the university’s

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82 Friedland and Alford, 249.
84 Meyer and Rowan, 53.
85 Bradley Currey, Jr., “Statement from Bradley Currey, Jr., Chairman, Emory University Board of Trustees,” June 19, 1997: Public statement in my possession and available upon request.
equal opportunity policy whereas the church began with and grounded its arguments in
the nature of marriage. So when they spoke with one another they were fundamentally
speaking different languages. Sociologist and *The Good Society* co-author Steven Tipton
discusses the two languages operative here: republicanism and biblical religion. He calls
these languages traditions. In conversation with Jeffrey Stout and Ralph Potter, he agrees
that there are four moral languages seeking to “interrelate self, society, the natural order
and ultimate reality.”

Each moral tradition does indeed make an *effort* to encompass selfhood,
society, nature, and ultimate reality in its own terms as Potter contends. Each
moral tradition has a holistic, universalizing nature.

…Thus for example, the biblical tradition enables us to envision how to
love and obey God not just in worship but in business, politics, and family life.
So these activities, too become worship in their fundamental meaning, and the
church becomes the central institution in the believer’s life if not in the society’s
structure. The republican tradition enables us to extend principled concern for the
common good and reasoned dialogue regarding it to the whole of life seen as a
forum, not just the academy and the town hall.

Thus, equal opportunity and marriage enter this crisis as categories from different
moral languages. Equal opportunity is a category found in the vocabulary of civic
republicanism and marriage from that of biblical religion. The American understanding
of equal opportunity as a category (not as policy) is as a pre-condition for freedom. Free
markets, free inquiry, free speech, and academic freedom depend upon actors who are
free to participate.

From the New Testament image of Christ being the bridegroom of the church to
the marriage of Abraham and Sarah, Christian and Jews alike have understood marriage
as a covenantal relationship upon which the fulfillment of God’s promises depends. The
early church also sets aside marriage as a means by which God dispensed grace.

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87 Tipton, 168,169 (Emphasis his).
Although the strict meaning of sacrament was modified or rejected by the various Protestant reformations, marriage was at least understood as means by which one could experience or participate in the grace of God. In the biblical tradition, a wedding, if not marriage itself, is considered to be worship of God.

The category of wedding or marriage can be found in civic republicanism as a civil ceremony sealing the covenantal or contractual relationship of marriage. Similarly, categories like equal opportunity can be found in the language of biblical religion in theological articulations such as “the priesthood of all believers” or “God’s grace freely given to all.” This exemplifies the kinship of these two languages. In linguistic terms the similarities can be thought of as cognates, evidence that individuals may use parts or all of both languages and import vocabulary from one to another. But in different institutional contexts the cognates take on different meanings.

Tipton’s conversation partner on the notion of moral languages, Jeffrey Stout points out that the multiplicity of languages and the variable meanings of seemingly similar categories do not disrupt cultural coherence:

The languages of morals in our discourse are many and they have remarkably diverse historical origins, but they do not float in air and their name is not chaos. They are embedded in specific social practices and institutions - religious, political, artistic, athletic, economic and so on. We need many different moral concepts because there are many different linguistic threads woven into any fabric of practices and institutions as rich as ours.\(^8\)

Languages such as biblical religion and republicanism arise out of and are perpetuated by shared experiences. In the stories of lives lived together, the recounting of named practices, people piece together narratives that contain a history. The history is constructed only when practices are understood in relationship to one another and

practices can only be understood and identified when they are named. Here the normative stream of our understanding meets the lived experience of the ontological stream. In every day life, that which ought to be is reconciled with that which is through words.

So, in naming actions with words, actors draw upon shared stories or narratives which are structured and organized by a language communicated in a symbol system which reflects an overarching ethos. This constitutes the normative component, or Ought dimension of the signification process which, in Figure 2, shows the inductive relationship, from right to left, of Word, Narrative, Language, Symbol, and Ethos and, which when read from left to right shows relationally how Word can be deduced from Ethos through Symbol, Language, and Narrative.

**Figure 2: Normative Schema**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ought</th>
<th>Ethos</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Juxtaposing Figure 1 and Figure 2 in Figure 3 illustrates the rudiments of the signification process which I now have scaled from the general, represented by ethos and worldview, to the particular, represented by word and activity.

**Figure 3: Signification Schema**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ought</th>
<th>Ethos</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meaning as Synthesis**

As discussed above, it is in the union of the Is and the Ought that creates meaning, generally and particularly and at every point in between. While Figure 3 separates the is from the ought to isolate the components, in meaningful life the two are intertwined. In the Emory president’s letter to the community, the normative and the ontological
synthesis is represented in his statement that he and his colleagues seek to “do good.” He
did not separate the two by seeking to do something that may or may not lead to a good.\textsuperscript{89}
The is-ought combination at the level of word-activity particularity can have moral
content. Stout calls this moral content “internal goods…that can be realized only by
participating in the activity well, as judged by its standards of excellence….One can
know little about internal goods without acquiring experience and linguistic competence
in the relevant activity.”\textsuperscript{90} Here Stout underscores the role of moral language as well as
that of experience or precedent. The ontological and the normative are intertwined in
meaning. Figure 3 demonstrates the elements that are intertwined at various levels along
the general to particular continuum.

My earlier investigation of meaning-making, however, suggests that there is more
than a juxtaposition of the ontological and the normative along this continuum. There is,
in fact, a synthesis of the is and the ought. In order to name the syntheses at each point
along the continuum, I posit a new vocabulary that distinguishes the synthesis from its
constituent elements. This new schema names the meaningful activity to which Stout
refers above. It is neither simply reality nor simply value. It is both together. In short, this
new schema describes what is meaningful about life on the continuum from general to
particular and as such offers a glimpse into what conveys, expresses, and creates cultures
at each of those levels. I turn to Geertz again to help me establish this vocabulary. I will
begin with the often conflated terms of ritual, myth, and symbol and make distinctions
among them because I wish to use them in slightly different ways from within the schema
that I am developing. The distinctions, I draw however, I draw in Geertz’s own terms.

\textsuperscript{89} Chace, “A Statement from the President.”
\textsuperscript{90} Stout, 267.
Meanings can be “stored” in symbols: a cross, a crescent or a feathered serpent. Such religious symbols, dramatized in rituals or related in myths, are felt somehow to sum up, for those whom they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it.\textsuperscript{91}

Geertz goes on to say that symbols relate the normative and ontological to one another. This leads me to conclude that he understands ritual and myth as types of symbols. The distinction I wish to draw in his terms, however, is an understanding of myth as relating symbols, and rituals as dramas using the symbols. In this sense, normative symbols relate to the ontological and the normative when mediated through myth and ritual.

Again, I turn to organizational theorists. Meyer and Rowan explain how myths can express general notions of structure that frame organizational rituals. Myths, they claim, are “rationalized and impersonal prescriptions that identify various social purposes as technical ones.” They take on such importance that they are presupposed as legitimate and are not evaluated by their effect on work output.\textsuperscript{92} When such an organization experiences a conflict between the prevailing myth and production, it dissociates the two by “decoupling” structure from activity, by looking the other way and handling responsibilities informally. Attempts to reconcile production with formal structure expose the inefficiency.\textsuperscript{93}

Myth, then, in Myer and Rowan’s neo-institutionalist\textsuperscript{94} framework translates an ideal type organization as normative. Institutionalized organizations with such myths, then, must work to reconcile the myth with reality especially in the face of inefficiency.

\textsuperscript{91} Geertz, 128.
\textsuperscript{92} Meyer and Rowan, 44.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 57.
\textsuperscript{94} Neo-institutionalists at the macrolevel focus on the “role of an institutionalized environment…in legitimizing organizations and their structures.” On the microlevel, neo-institutionalists focus on the “cognitive processes involved in the creation and transmission of institutions…and upon the role of language and symbols in those processes.” Meyer and Rowan, 103-104.
and conflict. This is accomplished through ritual, and in Meyer and Rowan’s terms, the “rituals of confidence and good faith.” The examples they give are “delegation, professionalization, goal ambiguity, elimination of output data, and maintenance of face.”

The Emory chapels dispute was a debate over category selection. This was symptomatic of the president and the church invoking two different moral languages in order to choose the appropriate category. The languages relate to different symbol systems, reflecting different normative convictions as illustrated in the two relevant myths, the story of God’s relationship with the world and the story of improvement of individual participation in common life. Each of these myths have corresponding rituals which had to be followed in this case if the outcomes were to be perceived as legitimate. Here I will sum up the prelude of activity that conformed to mythologically legitimated and institutionally necessary ritual. This prelude led up to what I think is the most exemplary ritual activity in this conflict - the chaplain’s process.

**University Ritual**
1. The Oxford dean consulted with legal counsel and the president before acting.
2. The dean used ambiguous language in his letter reflecting the internal moral confusion while maintaining the legitimacy and authority of the university.
3. The president issued a public letter articulating equal opportunity and the myth of higher education. Despite the reversal of an administrative decision, the letter contains language that attempts to make sense of the inconsistency and attempts to offer face-saving shelter for the dean.

**Church Ritual**
1. The bishop drafted a resolution which was endorsed by his cabinet and submitted for consideration at Annual Conference.
2. After passing through conversation, debate and limited revision in the Committee on Resolutions, it was sent to the conference floor.

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95 Ibid., 58.
3. The conference delegation, one-half lay and one-half clergy, debated the issue according to parliamentary procedures and passed the resolution calling on the trustees to reverse the president’s decision.96

Shared Ritual
1. The president’s letter refers to the connection with the United Methodist Church but subordinates its importance in determining university policy to that of the president and trustees. It also makes a point to expose the church’s own division on issues related to homosexuality.
2. The UMC resolution used language from the university’s charter and leveraged the bishop’s position as trustee in an attempt to redefine the university in terms of the language of the church.

University Ritual Response
1. The trustees’ statement of June 19, 1997 asserted the final authority of the trustees in making decisions regarding university policy.
2. Before distinguishing between the two United Methodist Churches owned by Emory and the campus chapels, the trustees affirmed anew their commitment to both the Equal Opportunity policy and the relationship with the United Methodist Church. They used conciliatory language and legal references to make their points. They sought to legitimate their argument within the context of the church, the university, and the law.

The trustees’ first statement laid out an agenda for work. The chairman of the Board appointed the university chaplain and the Oxford College chaplain to work out a policy governing use of the chapels. What they came up with was different from what the church, president, and trustees each had called for. So how was it unanimously accepted by the Board?

The answer was in the legitimating power of ritual, germane to the university’s governing myths as well as those of the church. The operative processes were input and, to a lesser extent, research. Never did the chaplains evaluate the policy with regard to technical efficiency or production. Those measures were apparently irrelevant. In recounting the process, the chaplains describe the hundreds of conversations they had with various groups including the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church,

96 The fact that the church uses such democratic procedures and town hall like debate is in itself an interesting study in institutional isomorphism. Methodism essentially grew up with American polity. That is reflected by trans-institutional influences and affinities in both political and church life.
the research they did into the history of the relationship of the two institutions, and the letters and petitions they received. Finally they summed up the all-important qualitative aspects of the process with these words:

This process has been comprehensive and open. Integrity and honesty have undergirded this process because of the character of those involved. We have appreciated coming to know the community in a deeper way. The covenantal relationship between the University and the Church has been more deeply understood and respected. We are grateful for having been given this task, which has enhanced campus wide respect and understanding.97

Who could argue with integrity, honesty, respect, understanding, and covenant using republican or biblical language? No one. The process was legitimate in both worlds. That legitimacy would inhere, then, in their proposal. Even if they had come up with an objectionable proposal, at this point, critics would have to indict the process and maybe even the judgment or integrity of the chaplains in order to challenge the product.

Organizations engage the meaning stored in symbol sets by enacting ritual legitimated by the institutional myth. In order to be cogent, however, the ritual must engage the particular realities of the actors, participants, and organization members. These realities are described and characterized in a particular moral language. The chaplains skillfully used vocabulary from each operative moral language. Consider the use of the word covenant. This choice of words deploys the power, rather than trips over the inadequacy, of cognates. Biblical language tells the story of covenant. The story is recorded in the Bible but also in the codes of the church. Likewise, republicanism records its covenantal story in United States history, the constitution, philosophy, and law, forming a grand narrative tradition. Tradition of this sort unites language and category. It

97 “Report of the Process,” no author indicated and undated: Report distributed to members of the Emory community in my possession and available upon request.
is in the transmission and recording of stories, codified and informal, that the moral
language links available categories into coherent meaningful units. The way the tradition
is understood and deployed, how it orders and values the categories, influences category
choice and subsequently precedent selection.

Tradition emerges straight from the collective memory of individuals and,
collectively from community customs. In communities where minority opinion is valued
and preserved, categories can recall precedents even if they have been rarely used. Even
rare precedents can be given legitimacy in the memory of the community. Custom, as
collective memory, then, holds together personal and communal narrative and precedent.
The act of remembering stores precedent in narrative.

The narrative itself, of course, is made up of words which name activity.
Unreflective activity can go unnamed and un-enacted words never materialize. This
reflective activity I, and others, call praxis. Friedland and Alford show how Mary
Douglas uses this term to describe the whole set of relationships I have been describing,
even though I will locate it in the emerging schema on the level of activity and word.

Douglas argues that both rational and irrational decisions are influenced by the
“hold that institutions have on our processes of classifying and recognizing”
(1986:3). Society is thought as it is enacted, and social solidarity depends upon
the extent to which “classifications, logical operation and guiding metaphors” are
held in common. Douglas argues that institutions require a cognitive base that
naturalizes and rationalizes the conventions which constitute the institution. Thus
systems of classification are forms of social praxis.98

At all levels, the Is and the Ought are synthesized as Geertz said was necessary for
meaning making. When the ontological is compatible with the normative, actions are
meaningful.

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98 Friedland and Alford, 251-2.
So, in named action or praxis, actors draw upon storied precedents or custom which are structured and organized by a lexicon of tradition, enacted by the ritual drama between the nomos and symbol, which enlives an all-encompassing myth. This constitutes the meaning component, or Synopsis dimension, that is the is and the ought are seen together, of the signification process which in Figure 4 shows the inductive relationship, from right to left, of Praxis, Custom, Tradition, Ritual, and Myth and, which when read from left to right shows relationally how Praxis can be deduced from Myth through Ritual, Tradition, and Custom.

**Figure 4: Meaning Schema**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synopsis</th>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Ritual</th>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Custom</th>
<th>Praxis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In order to demonstrate the synthetic nature of culture, I place the schema represented in Figure 4 between the Normative and Ontological schema in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Synthetic Schema**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ought</th>
<th>Ethos</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Society Building and Culture Formation

The horizontal continuum represented in the Synthetic Schema, Figure 5, is more than the span from general (left) to particular (right). It can also represent the levels of social complexity along which cultures are able to scale. The synthesis of ethos and worldview to create myth is not only a way to generalize about what happens with multiple rituals (or symbol-nomos syntheses) and on down the line, it also represents the
degree to which meaning-making is shared among a broad grouping of social actors. The group that shares myth is broader than the group that shares ritual and that group broader than the one that shares tradition, custom, and praxis respectively.

Reading the schema from right to left corresponds more closely to the process of world-construction in which humans are engaged. Persons interact on a daily basis. To the extent that interaction is named and made meaningful, the interaction is praxis. As multiple people begin to interact and engage in multiple, sometimes conflicting praxes, customs develop to record the praxes. These customs are a shared store of precedents which the group makes sense of using common stories or an overarching narrative. As customs develop among even broader groups, the multiple customs form traditions as relations become more organized; precedents are categorized and made intelligible in a shared language. Multiple traditions created in and through multiple organizational contexts give life to ritual patterns which interpret the grounded traditions in light of universalized truths by relating the ordered categories to shared symbol. The ritual patterns create myth that offers a coherent sense of meaning for societies which share the same worldview and ethos together.

Praxis, then, constitutes culture on an interpersonal level; custom, group level; tradition, organization level; ritual, institution level, and myth on the level of society. Societies use their myth to project an understanding of universal meaning by exhibiting synoptic reconciliation of the is and the ought. This is the role of religion, according to Berger in *The Sacred Canopy*:

Religion is the enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established….Religion implies the farthest reach of man’s self-externalization, of his infusion of reality with his own meanings. Religion implies that human order is projected into the totality of being. Put
differently, religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly relevant.\textsuperscript{99}

Cultures form at each of these levels of social complexity. As Berger points out, both society and culture are products of human (or social) construction of what we perceive as real. Society is an artifact of culture, but society is also the necessary condition for structuring and maintaining culture.\textsuperscript{100}

This articulation identifies the columns across the schema as levels of social complexity and the rows as dimensions of reality. This additional level of organization is demonstrated in Figure 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Multiplicity of Cultural Life

Figure 6 shows our moral meaning framework, as persons and as institutions. This schema can be read from left to right or right to left. An example of the former in religious terms would be to understand that God created and then humans acted. An example of the latter would be to understand that humans acted and created a projection of God. What matters, in this example from religion, is God’s relatedness to human activity and human activity’s relatedness to God. The two are in a dialectical relationship of mutual formation according to Figure 6. Of course, we are not simply religious persons

\textsuperscript{99} Berger, 28.
\textsuperscript{100} Berger, 6-8.
in the modern world. We are political, social, working, consuming, and educated persons as well. We live in multiple institutional environments. Navigating the various institutional contexts gives us a repertoire of understandings and tools to approach new and challenging situations. We can import and export symbols, categories, or languages across institutional lines and can do so in a way that actively and consciously construct new social realities without devolving into anomie alienation as long as we are able to distinguish among the various institutions influencing us and avoid the moral confusion described above by Durkheim and *Habits of the Heart*. In fact, Friedland and Alford attribute a good degree of institutional change to this ability to act as subjects in multiple institutional contexts, carrying along with us the cultural tools of other institutional contexts. In conflict, people reinforce and defend symbols as well as use symbols from other contexts to transform institutions.¹⁰¹

The framework described in Figure 6 is a web. The content of one cell cannot change without affecting other cells. This interconnectedness and the lack of awareness of the significance of that interconnectedness is the fundamental problem outlined in *The Good Society*. The most pervasive and destructive example the authors of *The Good Society* offer of this problem is the aforementioned affinity for the moral language of Lockean individualism. Like all moral languages, this one had an institutional context. It became separated from that context - namely its theological framework and its institutional supports such as education, local participation in politics, and an agrarian economy. The language survived, however, and began to take on life within institutions which history had transformed. The result was a massive bureaucratic state infused with a political ethic of utilitarian individualism. Our moral discourse about political as well as

¹⁰¹ Friedland and Alford, 254 -5
economic institutions revolves around Lockean understandings of the individual, yet the Economy and the Government have grown so far away from direct democratic control that they are indeed most un-Lockean.¹⁰²

We have the illusion that we can control our fate because individual economic opportunity is indeed considerable, especially if one starts with middle-class advantages; and our political life is formally free. Yet powerful forces affecting the lives of all of us are not operating under the norm of democratic consent. In particular, the private governments of the great corporations make decisions on the basis of their own advantage, not of the public good; and even the government agencies that are supposed to regulate them are usually ineffective or in collusion with those they are supposed to regulate. The federal government has enormously increased in power, especially in the form of the military-industrial complex, in ways that are almost invulnerable to citizen knowledge, much less control, on the grounds of national defense. We have gotten the strong state that the Jeffersonians opposed on the basis not of Hamiltonian design but of national security. The private rewards and the formal freedoms have obscured from us how much we have lost in genuine democratic control of the society we live in.¹⁰³

When languages, such as the dislodged Lockeanism described above, live long enough in an organization, they become symbolic and take on formal normative characteristics in our institutions. The ethos of the society begins to change and the mythology which holds the ethos and worldview together may require re-engineering.

Normative persistence such as this, however, is no more influential than ontological persistence. The ontological circumstance of slavery, for instance, was a fact with which slaves had to live. Over time, we see the development of normative theologies of freedom, spiritual and physical. This translates today into liberation theologies of all sorts which have affinities with individualism to be sure, but which are at least as much attributable to ontological circumstance as normative language. Over time norms can be dislodged from reality only to influence or make sense of other unrelated realities as

¹⁰² Bellah et al., Good Society, 79
¹⁰³ Ibid.
symbols. Likewise, realities can become dislodged from their normative framework and give life to nomoi or understandings of the way reality is ordered. These nomoi, in turn, give life to new symbol systems and make sense of other unrelated realities. These nomoi and symbols are embodied in social institutions.

While Stout and Tipton as well as Tipton and his co-authors of Habits of the Heart and The Good Society focus on the influential effects of language and tradition, The Good Society, neo-institutionalists, and Stout discuss the influences that institutions have on one another. They think about one another and with one another because they share constituents who move among institutions and who must maintain moral coherence themselves. All underscore the role persons play as participants in institutions and thereby in the construction of culture. Likewise, they all call for conscious engagement in that co-creation.

Because institutions think about one another, the symbol systems, nomoi and rituals they embody are contingent in some manner on a larger social ordering which permits multiple institutions to make sense of life in myriad ways without disrupting the coherence of a society. For instance, United States society, Stout claims, requires a provisional telos which subordinates any concepts of the good that would dominate any other concept of the good. This provisional telos moves us to reach for the “highest good achievable under the circumstances.”104 In terms of my framework, he is talking about the myth or myths that make symbol systems and thereby multiple co-existing institutions possible. Myths about teloi that claim singular dominance threaten social cohesion. The content of the provisional telos myth amounts to what many term civil religion which calls for religious civility or tolerance of many faiths. It is both civil and religious but it

104 Stout, 292
allows, ultimately, for the dominance of no one religion any more than any one civil authority. It formally builds into the US Constitution disestablishment and free exercise of religion alongside checks and balances among the three branches of government.

Projects to shore up, save, create, or strengthen social cohesion depend upon a myth that allows for various institutions, but the institutional languages have to be similar enough to allow for inter-institutional communication. Moral languages inform activity. Conversely, shared activity is equally formative of shared customs, traditions, and, ultimately, languages.

It is in part a consequence of the division of labor that Emory and the United Methodist Church had to struggle to find a common category in the crisis under scrutiny here. The rift is symptomatic of a lack of discourse and a lack of shared activity between the two. The policy proposed by the chaplains and adopted unanimously by the Board of Trustees takes a step in the direction of creating a shared language as well as providing for shared activity in the future. The solution uses religious language but in an educational context. It leaves intact the competing institutional identities and their related symbol systems. It focuses on practice.

Drawing on United Methodism’s own tradition, it finds categories of ecumenism and campus ministry. Drawing from Emory’s parlance, it asserts the category of religious group. The chaplains fuse the categories of worship and activity into “religious activity.” They give authority to campus ministers and chaplains which is legitimate in both traditions and give jurisdiction over their activities to the respective ordaining church judicatories. However, the university, in the end, has jurisdiction over the approval of religious groups.
Under these circumstances, the categories mentioned above engage a number of precedents of religious practices that violate Methodist polity. Roman Catholics celebrate Mass in campus chapels without communing Methodists. Jewish worshipers have prayed for the first coming of the Messiah in these places of worship. These precedents can be characterized as activities approved by the religious institutions who have extension organizations with credentialed clergy on campus. It follows, then, that if an approved organization’s related church allows same sex marriages - just as it might allow closed communion - then a same-sex marriage would be permitted.105

Those, including, perhaps, the president, who had argued for “equal opportunity” as a category, have found disappointment in the fact that this category was not engaged here although same-sex ceremonies are not prohibited per se under this policy. Church-related opponents to same-sex marriages are disappointed in the possibility that a same-sex ceremony might occur.106 To object to the outcome, however, would require ignoring or arguing against parts of one’s own moral language(s). Neither Methodists nor members of the Emory community have to agree with the chaplains. That is not what I am arguing. Nevertheless, the chaplains did skillfully constructed a way forward that prescribed activity that would be legitimate in the language of an educational organization and a religious organization. To take issue with the decision would require more than asserting the outcome was illegitimate; it would take equally skilful deployment of the respective moral languages in order to attempt to socially delegitimize the conclusions the chaplains drew.

105 “Procedures for Use of the University Chapels,” no author indicated and undated: Report distributed to members of the Emory community in my possession and available upon request.
106 Interestingly enough, the couple whose requested use of the chapel precipitated this debate would not be permitted to marry on campus under this policy. Their denomination is not recognized on campus, nor is their minister related to Emory in an official capacity as required by the policy.
Subsequent to the crisis, the representatives of the two institutions engaged in mending the torn fabric. They are joining again in the enterprise of culture building through their own institutions, by interpreting the other institution relative to their own. They import each other’s language. In their words:

Emory University is a highly complex, multicultural institution of higher learning. The faculty and students represent values and traditions from the global community. Emory University is not the church and is more diverse than most of our congregations. Many in the university community have significant disagreement with our United Methodist position on homosexuality.

-Bishop G. Lindsey Davis

Emory is related to the United Methodist Church through the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. The church through the conference has a legitimate and appropriate interest in the character of Emory as an institution expressing the values and principles of the church.

-Emory Board of Trustees Chairman Bradley Currey, Jr.

A deeper crisis would have been if these two institutions did not care enough about their purposes or each other’s purposes and meanings to debate this issue, or if the hegemony of one institution disallowed debate and discourse altogether. This particular moral dilemma was one of differing languages and traditions. The organizations had to re-visit their respective institutional self-understandings and their understandings of the other to make sense of it and in order to know how to act. Institutions can mean; they mean differently, yet they mean together and that meaning is tied intimately to what organizations do and how they do it.

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Moral Meaning Matrix

Institutional meaning making holds a central place in the synthetic schema I have been discussing. The Emory example demonstrates the way a single organization can draw on multiple institutional referents to make meaning. Further, it demonstrates the scalability of the processes Frankl and Berger outlined. I attempt to represent that scalability along the horizontal axis of the schema. Interpersonal and shared meaning making is represented in its various dimensions of reality and levels of social complexity by Figure 7 below (a reproduction of figure 6 above) which is an artificial construct intended to aid understanding and social analysis. The first row is made up of column headings which become increasingly complex from right to left. These headings represent levels of social complexity. The first column represents the dimensions of reality which weave together to form culture at each level of social complexity.

**Figure 7: Synthetic Schema with Levels of Social Complexity Identified**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The normative dimension (Ought in Figure 7) describes human and cultural values. Generally this refers to what we think, know, or feel we ought to do or ought to be at the interpersonal, group, organizational, institutional, and societal levels. The ontological dimension (Is in Figure 7) refers to the way things are from what we experience in daily life to what we project to be true about the way the universe works. The latter exposes our worldview. The meaning dimension (Synopsis in Figure 7) represents the ways we synthesize meaning in the world and make meaning in our lives.
This is an extrapolation of Geertz’s proposition that meaning-making is the result of such a synthesis.\textsuperscript{109} It is also an extrapolation of educator Paolo Freire’s model of praxis, discussed below. While Geertz speaks of the ontological and normative in general terms, on the levels I call Universe and Society, Freire’s model focuses more on the primacy and particularity of context and interpersonal relationships. The figure attempts to fill in the gaps between the levels described as Universe and Interpersonal. This span also demonstrates the mutually informative and constitutive relationship between private and shared meaning as discussed above.

Leaving the horizontal axis for a moment, I will now discuss the vertical relationships in the schema. Geertz explains the relationship between the ontological and the normative in his discussion of the double sense of the word model. A model can be a model “of ‘reality’” or a model “for ‘reality.’”\textsuperscript{110} He explores symbols and theories as models in the example of how a theory of hydraulics can describe how a dam works. The theory is the symbolic system which describes the non-symbolic reality of water flow (model of). Yet the symbolic or theoretical can be deployed to construct a new dam in a new context. The symbolic can be used to manipulate another non-symbolic reality (model for). He translates the phenomenon into social terms:

For psychological and social systems, and for cultural models that we would not ordinarily refer to as “theories,” but rather as “doctrines,” “melodies,” or “rites,” the case is in no way different. Unlike genes, and other non-symbolic information sources, which are only models for and not models of, culture patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form to social and psychological reality both by shaping to it and by shaping it to themselves.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} Geertz, 126-7.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
While Geertz understands symbols as storing meaning and as relating an
“ontology or cosmology to an aesthetics and a morality,” I locate symbol in the
normative rather than the meaning dimension of my matrix because the meaning can only
be expressed or realized when mediated, when “dramatized in rituals or related in
myths.” In the same way that words describe actions, symbols describe a fundamental
order of reality. Geertz describes the relationship between symbol and order in Paul
Radin’s case study of how the Oglala regard the circle. Everything “good” in nature, the
sun, the moon, and the earth are circles. The observable world is “named” in a sense by
the circle. Because of its association with good phenomena in the observable world, it
takes on a moral dimension. The circular form, then, becomes the basis of ritual,
celebrating the relationship between the observable and the moral. The world is given
moral meaning in such rituals, and moral meaning is connected with an empirically
verifiable reality in the same rituals. This normative-ontological connection and
expression is powerful. The model of becomes the model for. Tipis and other structures
are built as circles, not for practical reasons, but for meaningful ones. The ordinary
participates in the synthesis or synopsis (i.e. they are seen together) of the normative and
ontological. For Geertz,

ethos [the normative] is made intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life implied by the actual state of affairs which the world view [ontological] describes, and the world view is made emotionally acceptable by being presented as an actual state of affairs of which such a way of life is an authentic expression.

\[112\] Ibid., 127.
\[113\] Ibid., 128.
\[114\] Ibid.
\[115\] Ibid., 127.
This vertical relationship among the components of the schema operates at all levels of social complexity represented by the horizontal axis of the schema. While Geertz discusses the way particular circumstances are given universal significance, represented on the left side of the schema, Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* concentrates on efforts described by the right side of the schema demonstrating how universal conceptions can be imposed on particular realities. It is important to keep separate the operation of the two axes of the matrix, one distinguishing the universal from the contextual or particular (left to right) and the other distinguishing between the normative and the ontological (top to bottom). The struggle for liberation, in Freire's analysis, is contextual and involves action and reflection. The oppressed’s “discovery [of oppression] cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis.” Freire underscores the necessity of praxis in emancipatory education.

As noted above, action without reflection for Freire is pure “activism.” Similarly, words without action is pure “verbalism.” Rather than making the sharp distinctions between ontological and normative as I attempt to do in my schema, Freire coins the term “true word” which is work and reflection at the same time and which when spoken is tantamount to transforming the world. In the Synthetic Schema, I isolate the reflective

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117 Ibid., 66.
118 Ibid., 87.
119 Ibid.
element in a term I call “word” and the work in my term, “activity.” Conceptually, words can exist for Freire without action, thus verbalism, so the synonym for Freire’s “true word” is praxis both in Freire’s work and in my Synthetic Schema.¹²⁰

Freire holds praxis out not simply as a theoretical construct to be considered but as a pedagogical method to be employed in order to begin seeing that reality is constructed by humans and that all people, even – and especially for Freire – the oppressed have a role in constructing that reality. This critical consideration of reality is one way of understanding Freire’s concept of “critical consciousness.”¹²¹

Freire describes what he calls the “banking model of education” as a contrast to praxis. The banking model regards reality as a static objective reality which must be transmitted from teacher to student and which perpetuates a single notion of what reality is. This, ultimately, is dehumanizing, according to Freire.¹²² This process moves against people’s “ontological vocation to be more fully human.”¹²³ Praxis, then, illuminates “reality as a process” and is thereby humanizing and liberating.¹²⁴ Practically, praxis requires teachers and students to inquire together rather than participate in the falsely conceived relationship of a knowledgeable teacher transferring knowledge to the empty-vessel student.¹²⁵ The role of the teacher is not dispensable, however. Freire is not arguing for independent learning, but for mutuality between the student and the teacher. Freire insists that students cannot be self-taught, but that praxis, and therefore learning, occurs in relationships.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Ibid.
¹²¹ Ibid., 73.
¹²² Ibid., 74-75.
¹²³ Ibid., 74.
¹²⁴ Ibid., 75.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 80.
¹²⁶ Ibid.
This reveals the need for a new dimension to the schema – a dimension of reality I refer to as the dynamic. The normative-ontological synthesis necessary for meaning-making and culture construction at every level of complexity is a dialectical relationship. The two poles held in tension with one another require a source of energy. Relationships provide the energy that holds together word and action to give life to praxis. When energy is balanced between the two poles, then the energy exchange is in a state of equilibrium. If, however, the normative is imposed upon the ontological, then the equilibrium of the dialectic is disrupted. In contrast to the balanced dialectic, the imposition of the normative on the ontological is endothermic. The process requires energy to be put into the system. In other words it takes work to shape the “what is” into the “what ought to be.” On the interpersonal level, the energy required is an unbalanced relationship. One person has the power and is able to conflate one description of reality with reality itself.

This is the problem with the banking model of education, as described by Freire. He elucidates the power cooption that must go on for a teacher’s words to be allowed to be the only understanding of what reality is. Freire advocates, therefore, an equal relationship between teacher and student, terming it: “teacher-student with students-teachers.” Learning, or meaning-making, takes place as a “co-intentional” enterprise. The power dynamics in pedagogical and social relationships is at the heart of Freire’s work. Undoing the power structure which maintains an oppressive order is the goal of emancipatory education. Those who hold and wield the power to

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127 Ibid.
128 Ibid., 69.
oppress may understand emancipation and liberation as an upsetting of equilibrium, but Freire reproves those who would confuse status quo with equilibrium. Liberation and emancipation are often associated with violent revolution, for instance. Freire points out that a revolution of freedom is not the initiation of violence; it is the response to it. “Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is violence.”\textsuperscript{129} This is a tough charge to levy on traditional notions of pedagogy and on social power relationships on a grander scale. Exhibiting the principles of the conservation of energy discussed above, Freire posits that “consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed [is] (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors).”\textsuperscript{130} Rebellion, emancipation, and liberation are exothermic processes. Energy is released. Furthermore, the more energy pumped into the unequal relationship to shape reality in terms of one normative viewpoint - namely that of the dominant class - the more energy that will be released when emancipation occurs. But Freire’s goal is not a re-imposition of a new power structure but the establishment of equality or equilibrium. Revolution for the sake of seizing power over the original oppressors is simply activism which may release energy that will eventually have to be returned to the system when the oppressed and oppressors change roles and a new static notion of single-normed reality is forced into place.\textsuperscript{131} This can happen at any level of social complexity. Myths, for instance, identify power sources for entire societies.

\begin{quote}
Such a monopoly [over all ultimate definitions of reality] means that a single symbolic tradition maintains the universe in question. To be in the society then implies acceptance of this tradition....In such a situation the
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 85. \\
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 56. \\
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 57-61.
\end{flushright}
monopolistic tradition and its expert administrators are sustained by a unified power structure. Those who occupy the decisive power positions are ready to use their power to impose traditional definitions of reality on the population under their authority. Potentially competitive conceptualizations of the universe are liquidated as soon as they appear—either physically destroyed…or integrated within the tradition itself.\textsuperscript{132}

Within societies, institutions define and appropriate jurisdiction as described in the Emory disagreement; tradition builds up and legitimates authority as the chaplain’s decision demonstrated; custom accounts for an accumulation of cultural and other resources in the way that it stores precedents in narrative, and, as Freire demonstrates, reality is lived in and through relationships. Taking into account the role this energy plays in synthesizing the normative and the ontological leads me to add one more dimension to the Synthetic Schema. I call this new dimension the dynamic dimension. Note the relationship between the dynamic and meaning dimensions of reality. They are mutually constitutive. Meaning defines what is and is not powerful in a society’s culture and power preserves and protects a particular set of meanings made.

The ways energy is manifested in the dynamic dimension of reality at the various levels of social complexity, when integrated into the synthetic schema, completes the model for society building and culture formation in a figure that details signification at various levels of complexity. I call this figure the Moral Meaning Matrix.

My analysis suggests, especially after the introduction of the dynamic dimension, that the very process of meaning-making at any level of social complexity, from Universe to the Interpersonal, has the capacity to be oppressive or emancipatory but in each case violent. Paying attention to the role of power in signification or culture-building processes reveals that the process of synthesizing the normative and the ontological in and of itself can make meaning at the expense of peace, justice, and life.

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CHAPTER THREE
RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

The Moral Meaning Matrix makes possible an analysis of meaning making at various levels. Further, it draws into focus the relationship between meaning making and the use of energy to make that meaning. So the Moral Meaning Matrix becomes a tool for analyzing the violent use of energy to make meaning at the various levels of social complexity. Societies and interpersonal relationships have a common mechanism for meaning-making, the synthesis of the ontological with the normative. That meaning-making process can be, by the mechanism demonstrated in chapter two, inherently violent. Societies and interpersonal relationships also share in the influence of a particular level of social complexity that mediates the relationship between the general and the particular. This level of social complexity is the level described in the Moral Meaning matrix (Figure 8) as institution.

I have already discussed the significant influence of institutions on organizations in the Emory example, now I will deepen and broaden the analysis of the nature of that influence. Institutions play a significant role along each axis of the Moral Meaning Matrix. They are represented in one level of social complexity, like any other, seeking vertical integration of the dimensions of reality in the matrix, but it is also a level which can offer horizontal integration of the matrix as well, connecting the universe with the
interpersonal. This integrative function demands a more thorough examination of the way in which I am using the term institution.

Social institutions, which the authors of *The Good Society* define as “normative patterns embedded in and enforced by laws and mores (informal customs and practices),” mediate the connections between interpersonal relationships and global social arrangements. With this understanding of institutions they examine the impact of modernity and increasing individualism on four institutions in the United States: The Political Economy; Government, Law, and Politics; Education, and the Public Church.  

Noting that the social sciences have methods for studying individuals and organizations, *The Good Society* authors ask,

But how does one study institutions? Simply studying organizations is not enough. It runs the risk of confusing the organizations with institutional patterns that define their purpose and meaning….A social science with a commitment to address institutions would be a substantial contribution to a renewed public philosophy.

Bellah et al.’s understanding of institutions as patterns thereby distinguishes them from organizations which are discrete manifestations of those more pervasive and enduring patterned expectations. Institutions, in other words, define what organizations are, or what they can be in the first place. Common understandings of the term institution often overplay the role of small and large organizations which operate in broader institutional contexts as described by Bellah et al. Conversely, common references to expected patterns of behavior often downplay their significance by referring to them as custom or tradition without acknowledging the pervasive influence of the

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134 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 11.
135 Ibid., 82, 111, 145, 179.
136 Ibid., 302.
137 Ibid., 10.
myriad tacit rules which govern behavior within any given society. Lack of clarity about
the influence of institutions, particularly in the United States, leads to a lack of
appreciation of their role and to inattention to the relationship between the health of
institutions and the health of interpersonal (and inter-civilizational) relationships.

Given the increasingly dominant role of the United States in the world, our
society and the health of United States social institutions will inevitably influence not
only Western societies or “civilization,” in Huntington’s terms, but also the other patterns
of expected behavior in other societies throughout the world. As the United States has
grown, some of its social institutions have grown with it, but growth is not always
healthy and positive. In fact Bellah et al. attribute a good deal of our confusion about the
role of social institutions in our lives to the fact that “some of our institutions have indeed
grown out of control and beyond our comprehension. But the answer is to change them,
for it is illusory to imagine that we can escape them.”

So horizontally on the matrix, institutions connect the personal with the global as
“patterns of social activity which give shape to collective and individual experience.”
Vertically in the matrix, particular institutions such as the ones described and discussed
by Bellah et al. each convey meaning. As patterns, it is possible to understand institutions
as influencing the shape of the societies we construct because they define how the
particular is connected to the general. They also are patterns which are meaningful in
their own right too. They influence the shape of cultures by conveying patterns for the
meaning-making activity itself to constituent organizations and beyond just as education,
religion and government/law/politics all influenced Emory as an organization. In this

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138 Huntington, Clash, 40-8.
139 Bellah et al., Good Society, 6.
140 Ibid., 40.
double role, institutions both define societies and participate in the project of culture creation.

**Religion**

With an understanding of institutions as meaning makers which influence meaning making on large and small scales, it is now possible to take a closer look at the role and function of the social institution with which I initially associated the problems of conflict and global violence. In order to investigate this institution in greater detail, I will look at its function in the United States. Beyond the functional analysis, though I will also examine Christian theology in particular because of its pervasiveness in the United States. Limiting my investigation in this way still offers the opportunity to look at the issue of religious violence on a global scale because of the influence of Christianity in the United States and the influence and, transitively, because of the United States in the world. I will examine later the mechanism by which that influence is translated into larger and smaller contexts.

Bellah et al. identify Public Church as a US social institution, and Huntington observes that religion is the one of the most tenacious of cultural identities relative to war. So when it comes to the phenomenon of global violence, the conversation that I have constructed among Geertz, Bellah et al., and Huntington gives religion the distinction of being the most meaningful meaning-making institution, pervasively influencing the ways people and groups make meaning on large and small scales.

What is it about religion that distinguishes it from other institutions? Like other social institutions, it has the double role of making meaning and influencing broader
patterns of meaning making, yet I want to suggest a third role for religion which differentiates it from other social institutions. In terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix, it is the meaning dimension. Praxis, Custom, Tradition, Ritual, Myth, and Synopsis describe the activity of religion at various levels of social complexity. This is not to suggest that a particular religion or religious denomination or its theological content suffices to describe what occurs in this dimension of reality, nor is it to suggest – and I shall show later that such is not the case in the United States at least – that religion always (if ever) succeeds in balancing syntheses of the normative and ontological, but this is to suggest that in societies meaning is made by seeing the is and the ought as combined into one. This gives coherent meaning to shared life in a way that we can describe generally as religious. Such a concept of the term religious is a functional one. It implies no particular theology or religious practice, not even a god. It simply identifies the meaning dimension of reality with the activity of making sense of the normative and the ontological together.

A fully developed meaning system or religion would project universal claims (this is where theology would re-enter) as well as deepen contextual commitments (this is where religious practice would re-enter), thus connecting the general with the particular. As Geertz argues,

The religious perspective differs from the common-sensical in that, as already pointed out, it moves beyond the realities of everyday life to wider ones which correct and complete them, and its defining concern is not action upon those wider realities but acceptance of them, faith in them. It differs from the scientific perspective in that it questions the realities of everyday life not out of an institutionalized skepticism which dissolves the world’s givenness into a swirl of probabilistic hypotheses, but in terms of what it takes to be wider, non-hypothetical truths. Rather than detachment, its watchword is commitment; rather than analysis, encounter. And it differs from art in that instead of effecting a disengagement from the whole question of factuality, deliberately manufacturing an air of semblance and illusion, it deepens the concern with fact and seeks to
create an aura of utter actuality. It is this sense of the “really real” upon which the religious perspective rests and which symbolic activities of religion as a cultural system are devoted to producing, intensifying, and so far as possible, rendering inviolable by the discordant revelations of secular experience.¹⁴¹

While other perspectives explicate one cultural dimension, religion is concerned with all dimensions of culture and in holding them together with integrity, synoptically. It endeavors to make meaning out of otherwise unrelated or even contradictory experiences and knowledge. Religion is meaning making and meaning making is religion. I use religion, here, in a functional way. This is not to imply that a theology per se is necessary for meaning, but insofar as the ontological and the normative are synthesized into something meaningful, that synthesis, even if expressed as atheism, functions as a religion functions. Insofar as other institutions in a society engage in meaning making in the manner discussed above, they engage in a religious practice of sorts. As an institution, religion, then, encodes meaning-making for societies. Through its myth, it encodes the meaning-making patterns for other social institutions in those respective societies. These religious patterns, therefore, influence thoroughly the degree to which meaning-making activity in a society’s constituent cultures are endothermic or exothermic; oppressive or emancipatory; violent or pacific.

Western Hegemony

In an apparent contradiction of the claims I just set forth, only two of Huntington’s seven contemporary civilizations are named for world religions: Hindu and Islamic. Despite the role he suggests religion plays in civilizational conflict, there are other characteristics which distinguish civilizations from each other. Although

¹⁴¹ Geertz, 113.
Huntington does not discount the role that Christianity has played in defining the civilization he terms the West and the role that Christianity has played historically, and in recent times, in wars with non-Christians, particularly with Muslims, he also describes a macro scale conflict between the West and the rest of the world whose causation, on the surface, depends very little on Christian identity. 142 “The West, and especially the United States, which has always been a missionary nation, believe that the non-Western peoples should commit themselves to the Western values of democracy, free markets, limited government, human rights, individualism, the rule of law, and should embody these values in their institutions.”143 In short the West is attempting to impose its norms on other societies around the globe. In terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix, the West is trying to make meaning globally by imposing its notions of the universally normative in foreign contexts, that is on various and particular incarnations of the ontological. This is the global version of what Freire fought in the banking model of education. It is endothermic. It requires energy to be pumped into the system and is oppressive. It is experienced by non-Western societies as “imperialism,” according to Huntington.144 This sort of imposition of the normative on the ontological is only possible with sufficient resources in the dynamic dimension of the matrix. In this case, the power is economic.

The West is, for instance, attempting to integrate the economies of non-Western societies into a global economic system which it dominates. Through the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and other international economic institutions, the West promotes its economic interests and imposes on other nations the economic policies it thinks appropriate. The lethal extension of economic power and this zeal to impose norms, or resist such imperialism, is the proliferation of “nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and the means to deliver them….The diffusion of

142 Huntington, 209-18.
143 Ibid., 184.
144 Ibid.
military capabilities is the consequence of global economic and social development.\textsuperscript{145}

On the surface, this discussion of economics, political values, and military might seems to contradict the definitive role of religion in global inter-civilizational conflict. But if religion is the process of meaning making itself, then it is incumbent upon us to dig a little deeper and ask the question, what is it about conflicts between the West and the balance of the globe that is similar to conflicts which are more obviously defined by religious difference? What has happened in the West, particularly in the United States, one of the core states of the West, to create a society with a culture prone to conflict, if not violence?\textsuperscript{146}

Religion in The United States

The answer (or part of it at least) rests in the relationship between religion and the other dominant institutions in the United States. The authors of \textit{The Good Society} suggest that the welfare state and the market economy have grown to overshadow other institutions in the United States. What they see in the relationship among these four institutions in the Untied States may be akin to what sociologist Emile Durkheim feared from modernity’s push toward a division of labor. The developing complexity he saw in the economic and social order could deteriorate into a fragmented anomic culture if an “organic solidarity” does not arise spontaneously for persons when they realize their fundamental interdependence with one another.\textsuperscript{147} This fragmentation, Bellah et al. suggest, arises because people in the Untied States are profoundly influenced by an

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 155-63.
\textsuperscript{147} Durkheim, 85.
eighteenth century interpretation of John Locke’s notion of individual freedom and autonomy.\textsuperscript{148} The incongruity between the Lockean language and ideals on the one hand with the reality of our un-Lockean social institutions on the other creates institutions that have grown to the point to which they no longer connect individuals, but seem, rather, to stand apart from and exist independently of individuals and interpersonal relationships. This, they suggest, is the source of a cultural “impasse.”\textsuperscript{149} We are “trying to live by the Lockean language of individualism in an institutional world it can no longer describe, and yet the Lockean language still seduces us at every turn.”\textsuperscript{150}

As a result, the authors of \textit{The Good Society} observe that religion has become increasingly individualized or privatized and, therefore, devoid of engagement in public life. For Bellah et al., “‘public’ in their discussion of the Public Church does not mean governmental but is a contrast term to it.”\textsuperscript{151} With the disestablishment of religion in the United States, the distinction between public and government is at once easy to comprehend and hard to develop as a concept. It is easier to comprehend because the United States takes great pains not to privilege or create disadvantages for particular religious groups by explicit use of law. It is harder to develop this concept of religion as public, however, for precisely the same reason. Public and governmental are often conflated. Reacting to the desire to preserve disestablishment and free exercise, religion is often relegated to the realm of the private. Religion also has succumbed to the “Lockean consensus” that “led to an expressive individualism that complements rather

\textsuperscript{148} Bellah et al., \textit{Good Society}, 68.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 179.
than questions the dominant utilitarian mood.”¹⁵² The authors ask whether religion “can offer a genuine alternative to tendencies that we have argued are deeply destructive in our current patterns of institutions, or whether religious institutions are simply one more instance of the problem.”¹⁵³ As far as these authors are concerned, in order for religion to be part of the solution rather than the problem, it must “contribute to the search for the common good,” and it will only be able to do that insofar as it is able to “understand and respect different-faith communities in our pluralistic society.”¹⁵⁴ In general, the authors see the potential of religion assuming a transcendental role in overcoming the problem of increasing fragmentation and individualization by “orient(ing) the quest to create a world community in which individual dignity can be realized and not crushed by military, political or market forces.”¹⁵⁵

But *The Good Society*’s current diagnosis is that religion in the United States disorients society, contributes to destructive tendencies, and reinforces utilitarianism. In their analysis, religion in the United States is a destructive, rather than constructive force. Though it has the potential to be constructive, it is not currently behaving relative to the other social institutions in a way that builds up society. Functionally destructive is not necessarily the same as violent. In order to investigate the potentially violent dimensions of religion in the United States, I turn to the particular example of Christian theology, not that it represents religion in its entirety in the United States, but that it offers us one lens through which to understand how theology and religious practice combine with social

¹⁵² Ibid., 183.
¹⁵³ Ibid., 184.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 218
¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 219.
functionality to have an even more profound impact on culture. For this discussion of Christian theology, I turn to French literary critic René Girard.

**Christian Violence**

Girard’s observations about human nature and social order are informed by his work in the field of literary criticism.\(^{156}\) Positing that recurring themes in great works of literature, especially in religious myth, both reflect (model of) and inform (model for) human social relationships, Girard detects a mechanism that shapes relations between and among individuals and within entire societies. This mechanism goes largely undetected, and, in fact, elements of it must be imperceptible or at least misinterpreted if they are to be effective.\(^{157}\)

The basic premise of this mechanism is that humans imitate one another. This is fundamental to our learning processes and to our development of interpersonal relationships. Girard uses the term mimesis to describe this process in a manner that dissociates it from the idea of one-sided mimicry. In so doing he underscores the reciprocity and mutuality of the imitation.\(^{158}\) In the simplest case, mimesis involves two individuals who are imitating one another. They even imitate the mutual imitation, so “each becomes the imitator of his [or her] own imitator and the model of his [or her] own model.”\(^{159}\)

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\(^{158}\) Williams, 33.

Mimesis, in and of itself, is not problematic for Girard. In fact, one can understand the process as one which creates an intimacy between two parties. In the extreme, knowing oneself is knowing the other, and knowing the other is knowing oneself. Girard complicates mimesis and theories of imitation by interjecting the notion of acquisition or appropriation. If one of the parties caught up in the mimetic process desires to acquire or appropriate a particular object, his or her imitator will then also reflect that desire. Mimesis intensifies the desire to appropriate that object simultaneously and reciprocally in both parties, who are now trading roles as model and imitator for one another. Eventually the urge to appropriate the object develops into the need to prevent the other from acquiring that object. “Violence,” says Girard, “is the process itself when two or more partners try to prevent one another from appropriating the object they all desire through physical or other means.” Girard refers to the “partners” as “rivals” and the process as “mimetic rivalry.” Similarly, he refers to the imitated and modeled desire for an object as “mimetic desire.”

The intensity of the rivalry which develops between and among people leads, if left unchecked, to the ultimate action of preventing another actor from acquiring the desired object. That ultimate action is murder of the rival. According to Girard, in order to avoid mutual (imitated) murder, the rivals will channel their violent energy to a third party, to which they will assign all the guilt and aspersions otherwise assigned by one rival to the other. The sacrifice or scapegoating of the third party (victim/scapegoat), or scapegoat, relieves the violent desires of the relationship and re-establishes order. At that point the previous rivals recognize the sacrificed victim as being responsible for re-

160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid., 9-10, 12.
establishing order, and they celebrate the power that the victim wields to create unity and social stability.\footnote{Williams, 69.}

A closer look at what Huntington identifies as the predominant religion of the West, Christianity, in light of Girard’s thesis offers insight into how this meaning-making institution makes meaning and establishes violent patterns of meaning-making. While Girard contends that Christianity, as presented in the Gospel in particular, actually contradicts the mythic mechanism of scapegoating and sacrifice as a way to diffuse violence, he acknowledges that a classic misreading of the Gospel in terms of these greater and longer enduring myths of humanity is possible and, indeed prevalent.\footnote{Williams, 176.} The misinterpretation involves understanding Christ’s death as sacrificial and, therefore, a perpetuation of the myth and a reinforcement of social acceptance that avoiding violence requires a sacrifice. While Girard claims that the Gospel in fact disrupts the myth in several important ways, such as making explicit the innocence of the victim, in this case Christ, he laments theology which understands Christ as taking away sin (and thereby violence) with his death. Girard argues that the Gospel and Christ rather than taking away sin through sacrifice, actually expose the sin of sacrifices altogether.\footnote{Ibid., 178.}

So in spite of itself, according to Girard, Christianity actually conflates into and conforms with the great myths of humanity that not only prescribe scapegoating and sacrifice as a way to mitigate interpersonal and collective violence, but it goes a step further. It makes such sacrifice and scapegoating a holy act.

This discussion foreshadows a consideration of religion – and Christianity in particular – as having the capacity to reinterpret itself in a way that Girard sees as more
authentic and non-sacrificial. But the need for such a reinterpretation demonstrates precisely that Christianity actually makes meaning in sacrificial and violent ways.

So Christianity, as an expression of religion or Public Church in the United States or the West, actually makes meaning for itself in a violent way. Since religion is the meaning-making institution which encodes meaning-making patterns for other social institutions, this sacrificial interpretation of Christianity informs the meaning-making processes of US society generally and thereby each of the other three institutions more particularly.

Reading *The Good Society* against a Girardian backdrop reveals on the level of society that market patterns thrive on mimetic rivalry and state policies channel the inevitable violence by legitimating forms of scapegoating and sacrifice. Further, and on an institutional level, education’s subordination generally places it in service to the market economy, inculcating and perpetuating patterns of rivalry while the increasingly privatized church, in Bellah et al.’s terms, simultaneously exhibits and sanctifies the scapegoating practices of the welfare state.¹⁶⁶

The diminution of religion, which perhaps legitimated its own scapegoating on a societal level, in the United States could very well explain both why Huntington describes Western influence in secular terms and why the West’s conflicts with the rest of the world are as stark as those more marked by religious identities. The market economy and the political ideals actually make meaning in ways which are informed wholly by a particular interpretation of Christianity, even if that interpretation no longer requires a fully participatory religious institution on the societal or global scene. So the economic influences in the West seek to engage more of the world in a mimetic rivalry — a rivalry

¹⁶⁶ Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 170, 216.
which it now dominates, while the political institutions legitimate and celebrate acts of scapegoating, such as sacrificial military engagements. The post September 11, 2001 US-led strikes in Afghanistan, for example, exhibited mimetic rivalry to the extent they were retaliatory, and the hunt for Osama bin Laden was an elaborate exercise that had the same unifying effect of rallying a large disparate group at the expense of a scapegoat even though bin Laden’s admissions and other evidence would disqualify him as a scapegoat which is otherwise presumed to be innocent. The unsatisfactory (lack of sacrificial) resolution of that hunt helped energize the war against, and later the search for, capture, and execution of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.¹⁶⁷

Religion, the institution of meaning, has encoded its fellow institutions with a pattern of meaning-making which legitimates mimetic rivalry and scapegoating. The Public Church, Education, The Political Economy, and Government/Law/Politics make meaning in sacrificial ways as they shape the webs of significance that constitute the cultures of society in the United States. Western civilization is greatly influenced by these webs, and US citizens are surrounded by them, with few other, if any, resources for synthesizing the is and the ought to make life meaningful.

Individuals are disconnected from one another not because of the lack of social institutions to connect them, but because social institutions have grown so big that they dwarf individuals and communal life. The meaning-making patterns embedded by the sacrificial web of significance finds a victim-rich society of Lockean-defined mimetic rivals. Finally, the most devastating symptom of this syndrome is the absence of religion in public life. Without religion or a Public Church there is no place in which to engage in

¹⁶⁷ Again, I make no claim of innocence on behalf of bin Laden or Hussein. The Girardian mechanism of redirecting violence nevertheless obtains.
a common conversation about reconstituting the meaning-making processes themselves. Since religious discourse is marginalized, then, public conversation about the meaning-making processes it encodes are taboo subjects or at best private matters. There is no public forum in which to question or reformulate the meaning-making patterns themselves. Rivalry and sacrifice seem permanently encoded.

So Christianity in the United States makes meaning in violent ways. As a major religion in the United States it functions to encode violent meaning-making mechanisms in other social institutions. It can have this effect on other social institutions but because of the private place to which religion has enabled United States society to relegate it, the influence is not reciprocal. Public discourse about religion is minimized in United States society, leaving other social institutions to synthesize meaning according to patterns that are seemingly beyond the reach of reform. The role of social institutions in defining interpersonal and global relationships makes this circumstance particularly toxic in the United States and, given the role of the United States, in the world. The condition creates a global environment in which the violence of sacrifice and scapegoating, even if germane to other cultures as well, takes on hegemonic proportions. Reviving public discourse about religion (at least in the United States), it would seem, is a pre-condition for understanding and reforming a violent global culture. Until such a discourse takes place, religion will continue to influence other institutions with its violent patterns for meaning making. One of the institutions it influences is education. It is also education, as a social institution which can provide the means to revive public discourse about religion. In chapter four I will examine the way religion influences education and the way the two
institutions are related historically and currently. In chapter five and beyond I explore how the interdependence of education and religion illuminates a path for mutual revival.
One of the social institutions that religion’s apparently regressive and increasingly violent patterns continue to influence is that of education. But specifically how and what are the consequences of that influence? To investigate the mechanism by which religion can influence education and education, in turn, global violence, I offer two examples from the turn of two different centuries. By counter-example, these case studies suggest a particular moral purpose for education in the milieu of social institutions. These studies also simultaneously offer insight into why religion and education have had little to do with one another in the US since World War I and why it is imperative to bridge that gulf as we move into the twenty-first century.

**Touching Transcendence**

In *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of Higher Learning in America*, Carol Gruber describes what, on the surface, seems to be a struggle for the right relationship between Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom and Mars, the Roman

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god of war for US academics. However, I investigate the possibility that Gruber’s account of higher education during World War I in fact demonstrates the advent of the broad celebration of the values each of these deities represents in American life rather than an Olympian feud. Gruber’s account reveals the monsters and giants that were created by the commingling of gods and mortals by showing how the otherwise transcendent ideal of service to society was conflated by academics with the relatively truncated telos of serving the state.

In her book, Gruber uses the crisis of World War I as a window into the increasingly close relationship between academic institutions in the United States and the United States government. The changing nature of this relationship influences and is influenced by the way academics regarded their roles and the role of scholarship in society. Her analysis traces what she judges to be a compromise in academic integrity as scholars increasingly devote their work to the needs of the government as a wartime exigency with lasting implications for the relationship of the academy and the state.

In a pursuit Gruber casts as a seemingly desperate search for relevance, scholars in the United States struggled to realize (make real) the ideal of service to society and, to the extent they were successful, they indeed touched the transcendent, bringing the normative to bear on the ontological. A precept valued because of its ability to outlast any particular historical circumstance, institution or individual, the ideal of service in American higher education ceased to be a transcendent goal. In the grasp of academics, the notion of society was artificially limited to the notion of state, and service became an

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169 Please indulge the fluidity with which I move between metaphors borrowed from both ancient and latter day Roman theologies.
170 Gruber, 120.
instrument deployed by the academic community and, thereby, the government, to achieve ends largely unrelated to the purposes of the academy.\footnote{Gruber, 259.}

The reduction of academic purpose extended beyond the notion of service. This same time period saw a movement away from inquiry for its own sake toward the application of knowledge. This transition was as evident in the realm of the sciences as anywhere. While the post-Civil War period saw a sharp increase in the value of “pure science,” historian Laurence Veysey points out that the years immediately leading up to World War I saw a reversal of this trend. “The Progressive Era brought with it the expectation of prominently displayed altruistic motives in all lines of endeavor. As a result, first-rate scientists began to produce numerous statements linking their work to practical social benefit.”\footnote{Laurence Veysey, \textit{The Emergence of the American University} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 121-124.} While this phenomenon frames Veysey’s theory about the rise in prominence of all sorts of research, it also provided the backdrop for the development of what Dorothy Ross calls a “scientific view of the world [which was] an essential element in the increasingly rational character of modern society” in the nineteenth century.\footnote{Dorothy Ross, “The Development of the Social Sciences,” \textit{The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860-1920}, ed. Alexandra Oleson and John Voss (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 112.} Ross discusses the development of the social sciences after the Civil War and points to the founding of the Social Sciences Research Council after World War I as the symbol of the emergence of the social sciences professions and their respective independent academic disciplines. However social scientists, especially those she terms the “heterodox,” found expression, legitimacy, and “refuge” in the founding of the New School for Social Research in 1918 just after the war had begun.\footnote{Ibid., 125.}
Just as the social sciences were applying the technical expertise of empirical investigation to social problems, liberal Protestant theologians were grappling with a Christian faith that had increasingly become intellectually untenable in the face of the rapid advances in the sciences and the increasingly prominent role of science in society. Darwinism particularly challenged previously held beliefs about the nature of creation (and the creation of nature), and participated in the dissociation of seeking truth from seeking the divine.\textsuperscript{175} In their own struggle for relevance, liberal Protestants applied theology and the newfound tools of the social sciences to the troubling problems of the day in a movement whose theology became known as the Social Gospel.\textsuperscript{176}

While the scholars Gruber describes nationalized the ideal of service to society, social scientists applied empirical inquiry, and Protestant theologians took deliberate steps toward establishing the kingdom of God on earth, particularly in the United States.\textsuperscript{177} In each case, the pure had mingled with the practical. By touching transcendence, the scholars, social scientists, and theologians unleashed unforeseen powers while diminishing the potency of enduring educational and religious purposes by fashioning them into provisional and temporal tools.

In order to understand the effects of the power which was unleashed by three interdependent moves toward utility, I wish to consider not how the reduction of the ideal to the practical was, in of itself, operative, but how that reduction functioned to create and sustain relationships between and among social actors, including groups of individuals and institutions. The relationships I wish to examine are between US intellectuals and

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 162.
German academics, United States scholars, and the United States Government, and, finally, social scientists and liberal Protestants.

Each of these paired relationships can be characterized as mimetic rivalries. Girard’s theory of mimetic relationships explains the apparent contradictions of these unlikely partnerships such as the adoption of language and practices native to one institutional context by another seemingly unrelated, and often competitive, institutional context. Such rivalrous relationships reduce conflict between the actors whether they are individuals or institutions but do so at the expense of a victim, the sacrifice of which, brings unity between (or among) the rivals. The act of sacrifice, however, actually elevates the victim as a god whose immolation brought unity to a relationship (or multiple relationships) which otherwise may have been headed toward the mutual destruction of the parties involved.178

Mimesis: Mars and Minerva

I read Gruber’s account not as one demonstrating how the power of the ideal of service to society was deployed on behalf of Mars or Minerva at the expense of the other. Rather, it illustrates how service became the mechanism for mediating relationships between United States scholars and their German intellectual parents, on the one hand, and between US academics and the United States government on the other.179 Rather than read Gruber’s work as an account of the struggle between the forces of Mars and Minerva, I believe it is possible to read her book as a record of the metaphorical birth of both deities in the twentieth century United States.

178 Williams, 69.
179 Gruber, 22.
The relationship between US scholars and their German counterparts as well as
the relationship between these same US educators and the United States government can
be understood in terms of mimetic rivalry. Doing so brings consistency to the apparent
contradiction between the US educators’ indebtedness to German scholarship and their
willingness to indict Germans as militaristic and imperialistic.\footnote{Ibid., 22, 1, 53.} Mimetic rivalry also
offers a coherent explanation for the willingness with which otherwise independent
academic institutions freely gave over facilities and faculties to the state for the war
fighting effort.\footnote{Ibid., 213-252.}

Gruber outlines the relationship between German scholars and US scholars in the
latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. That this
relationship was mimetic is illustrated by the degree to which United States colleges and
universities adapted the German model of higher education to the US context.\footnote{Ibid., 22.} She also
lays out the indebtedness German scholars expected their US students and colleagues to
feel when many of the former took it upon themselves to become apologists for the
Kaiser’s cause.\footnote{Ibid., 20.} United States scholars responded to the German defense with ridicule,
criticizing their German colleagues of abandoning their commitment to objectivity to
which they had been so dedicated and which they had imbued in their US students.
Nevertheless, the balance of the book, \textit{Mars and Minerva,} demonstrates how keenly US
scholars continued to learn from their German tutors even if the lesson was, as Gruber’s
argument demonstrates, how to lay objectivity aside for the needs of the state.\footnote{This is the case throughout the book, but particularly demonstrated in the chapter “Scholars in the Service of the State.” Ibid., 118-162.}
The transatlantic criticism continued and intensified throughout the war, according to Gruber, as the two intellectual communities vied for the position of being interpreters of the truth about the war. Though not a tangible object, the authoritative role for interpreting the “facts” surrounding the war became the object of mutual desire for the two communities whose relationship was reinforced with frequent communication and professional association.\textsuperscript{185}

In their competing attempts to frame the war intellectually, academics sacrificed the prized goal of objective and dispassionate scholarship. The sacrifice redirected their increasing hostility for one another toward the ideal that lay at the foundation upon which the integrity of the emerging profession depended, namely the objective search for truth.\textsuperscript{186}

At the same time that United States scholars were in relationship with their German counterparts, they were also trying to find the right relationship with those in power within the United States government, especially the president and the military.\textsuperscript{187} US higher education had long associated its purposes with the project of building up democratic society. In fact, the project of civilizing the new world had been the province of education just as administering that society was the project of government.\textsuperscript{188} The events leading up to World War I beckoned the US out of its isolationist posture and, perhaps, for the first time opened up the question of exporting the US project by creating and promoting a United States style democratic society beyond US shores. As President Wilson increasingly framed resistance to the Kaiser’s expansionism as the promotion of

\textsuperscript{185} The debate and communication are most clearly laid out in her chapter “Neutrality Years.” Ibid., 46-80.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 35-41.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 118-62.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 12.
democratic ideals, the two institutions involved in the creation and sustaining of democracy vied for jurisdiction over the project of central European democracy. US higher education and US government were involved in a mimetic relationship that drew them closer and closer to one another. In fact, the two institutions began to look more and more alike as the mutual imitation intensified. In competing for the role of democratizing Germany, the two joined forces in denouncing what Gruber identified as German militarism. While the rivalry faded to the background in this relationship more so than the rivalry between German and US scholars, the dynamic was no different. The effects of the dynamic were most clearly identified by Gruber in her chapter, “Colleges and Commandants.”

Gruber marvels at the ease with which United States intellectuals handed over their institutions and their talents to the needs of the government. It seems that the transfer of power was one-way. She does not note as much of a compromise by the government as she does on the part of the academy. However, as she points out, the military chose to forgo immediate conscription of much needed young men in order to work with the academic institutions and keep them afloat during an otherwise disastrous economic circumstance. At the very least, the decision to use the colleges as training grounds, if you will, could be read as the government giving in to the needs of higher education in a way that mimicked higher education’s giving in to increasing government control of schools.

189 Ibid., 75.
190 This is most pronounced in Gruber’s chapter “Colleges and Commandants.” Ibid., 213-52.
191 Ibid., 48.
192 Ibid., 213-52.
193 One place to gain perspective on the economic impact of the partnership between school and state is Gruber’s discussion in her “Conclusion.” Ibid., 253-59.
Mimesis: Faith and Knowledge

These mimetic relationships were evolving against another institutional backdrop which was shifting as well. Notably, the relationship between the US social institutions of education and religion was transforming by a similar mechanism. This shift precedes the analysis of *The Good Society* and may have been a significant condition for the state of religion (as privatized) and education (as subordinate to the state) in the US later in the twentieth century even though the two institutions, by mimesis grew very close together during World War I itself. This qualitatively influenced the nature of the US academy which was in turn mimicking and being mimicked by the state and, likewise, by the German academy.

The years leading up to the extremely close wartime relationship between colleges and the military were marked by a great deal of curricular change and identity shifts for institutions of higher learning, especially insofar as it relates to the place of religion in education. James Turner contrasts colleges before and after the Civil War by noting the loss of the unified understanding of knowledge provided by the Bible and the consequential coherent structuring of the curriculum around the epistemological supremacy of sacred revelation.\(^{194}\) There were several attempts to restore a sense of integrity to a more secularized curriculum and, Turner suggests that, at least for awhile, the notion of liberal culture provided a substantive unifying principle.\(^{195}\) Veysey echoes this assessment and chronicles the diminished role of religion in the curriculum as well as the easing of compulsory religious practices at colleges and universities of all sizes.\(^{196}\)

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\(^{195}\) Ibid., 57-8

\(^{196}\) Veysey, 203-4.
While there were many colleges and universities established by religious orders and denominations between the Civil War and World War I, many of these were founded in order to resist a growing trend toward secularization in the nation. The creation of new colleges, however, could not undo the epistemological shift which unseated divine revelation as the source of knowledge and the unifying principle for teaching and learning. Religion, in many cases, became one part of the curriculum and one dimension of a school’s identity. Once the coherent driver of college curriculum, the Bible was properly studied only among other great works of literature according to some faculty members at Yale and Brown.

I do not wish to paint colleges and universities as faithless secular deserts during this time period. Certainly that is not the case and certainly not all institutions followed these trends. In the main, however, the point I wish to make is that knowledge was no longer defined by faith, and education for liberal culture by and large had replaced, in Veysey’s terms, “piety and discipline.”

The feeling was mutual. The church just as much as the academy was responsible for the widening gulf between faith and knowledge. During what William McLoughlin calls the “Third Great Awakening,” a “national prophet” with the most appropriate name, Billy Sunday, arose on the heels of the urban revival ministry of D.L. Moody. Carrying on the nascent fundamentalism, Sunday attacked new scientific theories which had caused a good deal of confusion and fear for many Christian believers. “Evolution and the naturalistic, pragmatic philosophy of the ‘new social science’...seemed to undermine

198 Veysey, *University*, 204.
199 Ibid., 21-56.
200 McLoughlin, 146.
the whole basis of the Christian faith as the romantic evangelicals understood it.”

Sunday and other fundamentalists articulated a notion of salvation that was personal, and academics seemed pleased to cede that sphere in exchange for their universal self-defined relevance.

Against the backdrop of this widening gulf between personal faith and universal knowledge developed attention to what became a contested middle ground, the social. The academy and the church demonstrated a common concern for a better and more just social order and to make sense of the newfound understanding of the place and role of the human being in that order. An atheist, and the first professor of sociology at Brown University, Lester Ward applied Darwin’s theory of evolution to human activity in the world in a way that refuted the association of natural selection with laissez-faire approach to social interaction. With an understanding of the human brain as both a product and an influencer of evolution, Ward advocated what he called “‘fraternalism [as] the basis of political order and progress, not competition. Finally, he declared that education is the key to man’s mastery of his environment and therefore that the highly trained social scientist must assume an active role…in setting the wisest policies for…progress.”

Around the same time theologians were coming to terms with a new theological coherence developed in light of emerging scientific understanding and prevailing humanism. Progressive theologians’ acceptance of the Darwinian theory of evolution led to an understanding of “the imminence of God, the organic or solidaristic view of society,

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201 Ibid.
202 Ibid, 163.
and the presence of the kingdom of heaven on earth…[thus linking] moral and religious improvement to the current optimistic belief in progress.\textsuperscript{203}

These two philosophical positions did not develop in isolation from one another.\textsuperscript{204} Both academics and clerics desired social progress and each group had its own way of achieving it. As liberal Protestants worked toward the social salvation of realizing the kingdom of God on earth, social scientists engaged in social engineering to foster liberal culture. These two schools of reformers were in frequent communication, but a “post-Christian” humanist element developed in the academy just as the Christo-centric Social Gospel was beginning to take its own shape in the church.\textsuperscript{205}

The distinction between the academy and the church was not pure to be sure and, as the common pursuit of a social good began to take shape, the way each articulated their positions began to sound very much like the other. In fact, McLoughlin points out the advantage of the difference between Ward’s voice as progressive academic spokesperson and that of, perhaps his successor in that role, John Dewey who was willing “to speak in accents of liberal Protestantism.”\textsuperscript{206} The relationship between progressive academics and liberal Protestants was increasingly mimetic to the point of creating a kind of unity embodied by Richard T. Ely who facilitated the formation of the United States Economic Association which was as much grounded in liberal theology as it was in social science.\textsuperscript{207}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[203] Hopkins, 123.
\item[204] McLoughlin, 152.
\item[205] Ibid., 166–169.
\item[206] Ibid., 167.
\item[207] Ibid., 169.
\end{footnotes}
Not only was the mimetic relationship in which both (groups of) actors desired to articulate a place for human action in the advancement of society personified by Ely’s integration of academic and religious approaches, it was institutionalized at the University of Wisconsin under John Bascom and others at the turn of the century. David Hoeveler describes Bascom, Ely, and John Commons as bringing “perspectives on the educational functions of the university that were shaped by their own efforts to define a Social Gospel program for America. But the “Wisconsin Idea” was not in any strict sense a religious concept.”

What had begun as two distinct approaches to social progress began to look more and more alike as theologians adapted social science for their use in framing and spreading the Gospel and as social scientists used the force of religion to invade personal and corporate sentiment and retain a social cohesion for their ideas. Even atheistic Ward valued religion as a “‘social instinct’ for the conservation of existing institutions.”

Ely called for “‘profound revival of religion’ and employed all the force and style of evangelical rhetoric…[shifting] attention to the state…[as] the critical vehicle of social improvement and moral power.” Thus, the social sciences became evangelical and the Gospel became social.

From Rivalry to Sacrifice - Faith and Knowledge

As lecterns looked more and more like pulpits, the looming war put academics and theologians alike to the test. President Wilson, the son of a Presbyterian minister and

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209 Hopkins, 267-272.

210 Hoeveler, 243.
former academic, articulated a justification for the war that resonated with the object of mimetic desire for progressive academics and liberal Protestants, namely social transformation.\textsuperscript{211} By framing the war as one to end all war and by insisting on its ability to make the world safe for democracy, Wilson offered the rivalrous partners the ultimate progressive transformation. The mimetic rivalry had intensified between the two so much that the means for transformation was essentially ignored. Never mind the fact that progressive academics had originally placed their faith in the capacity of the human mind in a social context to bring about liberal culture, and that liberal Protestants had counted on the power of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace to realize the kingdom of heaven on earth, academics and theologians alike had become preoccupied with their desired outcome through intense imitation of the desire of the other. Their perspectives ultimately merged into an almost wholesale support of the war effort.\textsuperscript{212}

After the war, the Federal Council of Churches, an organizational manifestation of the Social Gospel movement, would lament its support of the war, but Social Gospel advocates and progressive academics were quite articulate, if not passionate, about their support before and during the war.\textsuperscript{213} “Dewey justified the war as a means of social control in both a more immediate and more wide-ranging sense…Dewey saw the prospect of permanent socialization, permanent replacement of private and possessive interest by public and social interest, both within and among nations.”\textsuperscript{214}

\textsuperscript{212} McLoughlin, 177.
\textsuperscript{214} Gruber, 92.
Ely, the personification of the unity of faith and knowledge, displayed a great deal of regret at not being able to fight in the war himself. In addition he led a campaign against his gubernatorial ally in the development of the “Wisconsin Idea,” Senator Robert LaFollette who had expressed anti-war sentiment.\footnote{Ibid., 113-4, 208.}

US entry into World War I provided the opportunity for academics and theologians alike to display their highly intensified, mutual, and competitive desire for social change, apparently even at the cost of war. Their rational origins and evolutionary hope had given way to a lust for immediate transformation. The two institutions had grown mimetically so closely together that Ely’s argument did not have to draw explicitly on theology or sociology to embody a relatively united position. The war had effectively completed a sacrifice of the previous separation of faith and knowledge which had grown important to the church and the academy prior to the rise of the Social Gospel movement. Insofar as higher education was represented by progressive social scientists and insofar as the church was represented by liberal Protestants, their common and competitive desire for social transformation led to a radical unity of faith and knowledge, sacrificing their previous relatively well-defined isolation from one another.

From Rivalry to Sacrifice – Mars and Minerva

In a parallel and simultaneous process, as the war continued, colleges also looked more and more like military camps, and commanders more and more assumed the role of instructor, tutor, or dorm monitor. Not only was the academy caught up in a mimetic relationship with the church, its wartime service had created a similar dynamic with the state. Both institutions were reshaped by the relationship. The latter two were
united in a common cause, suppressing (German) militarism. In joining together to “defeat the Hun,” education and government essentially scapegoated militarism as embodied by the German aggression.\footnote{Ibid., 1.} While it is not until the end of her book that Gruber began to note any discord between academics and bureaucrats, the fact that these two entities were not in conflict, but allied is only stronger evidence that the common enemy or object of derision had brought them together and kept them together. The unity of school and fort continued beyond World War I, even if expressed in new and less drastic ways. The successful completion of the sacrifice of German militarism in wartime victory forged a relationship between school and state that was explicitly stronger than any relationship between German and U.S scholars, at least as far as Gruber is concerned.

Not only did US scholars participate in the sacrifice of German militarism in partnership with the US government, they also participated in the sacrifice of objective inquiry in conjunction with German intellectuals. Both of these sacrificial mechanisms grew out of mimetic rivalries. While the sacrifice of militarism was, on the surface, inimical to any prospect of unity in a relationship among United States and German scholars, I suggest that a deeper analysis reveals the emergence of a renewed and common commitment on the part of both German and US scholars to the objective pursuit of truth. Intellectuals on both sides of World War I, by sacrificing intellectual objectivity, actually participated in a process which led to its veneration. This sanctification, if you will, occurred not in spite of, but because of the sacrifice.\footnote{Williams, 69.}
Likewise, the joint defeat of militarism by US professors and generals resulted in the “absence of a principled objection to the militarization of the campus” and the re-establishment of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). These phenomena signal the dawn of a new era of United States military might that depended on a cooperative relationship between school and state, the consequences of which Gruber foreshadows in her brief discussion of World War II.

God-making and Integrity at the Dawn of a New Century

The operative sacrifices of the faith - knowledge duality, objective inquiry, and militarism during World War I did not destroy any of the three. In fact it made them all the more important. James Williams points to the Latin roots of the word sacrifice – to make sacred – in order to demonstrate that the ultimate power of scapegoating is the power to make gods. Communities celebrate the victim whose immolation brought them unity in the face of severe rivalry. The mutual destruction of academic objectivity by German and US professors and the defeat of the German military machine gave birth to twentieth century versions of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and Mars, the god of war respectively. Similarly, the sacrifice of the separation of faith and knowledge beatified the duality, again distancing the relationship between school and church.

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218 Gruber, 251.
219 Ibid., 248.
220 Ibid., 250. It would be a fruitful continuation of this study to investigate to what extent objectivity in scientific research and cooperation among German and American scholars led to the development of rocket and atomic technology, which escalated and ended World War II.
221 Williams, 69.
Gruber laments the professors’ abdication of the position of “critical independence” for the sake of pursuing military victory.\textsuperscript{222} This abdication, and the compromise position on academic freedom assumed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), are cast as a lack of personal and organizational integrity.\textsuperscript{223} While it is true that these changes are reversals from previous practice and that they lack integrity from the standpoint of conventional academic practice of the day, they have integrity when understood in light of the mimetic relationships at work. While perhaps a departure from what their German tutors initially taught them, US professors’ forfeiture of objectivity on matters of war was wholly consistent with the concurrent actions of those whom they regarded as mentors and guides. The mimetic relationship across the ocean was intact and unified, even if the action and practices seem inconsistent from one year to the next.

Similarly, the giving over of college campuses and aims to the War Department on one hand compromised the relative independence and isolation college campuses enjoyed prior to World War I, but on the other hand demonstrated the coherence of the relationship between school and state in the project of building society.\textsuperscript{224} In Gruber’s terms, it was a natural extension of the ideal of service to society, especially when, as she observes, the notion of society is conflated with the notion of state.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{222} Gruber., 254.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 256. Professors who disagreed with the war effort risked their livelihoods if they resigned from the universities they served. If they spoke out against the war, they risked being fired, according to Gruber. The AAUP, which would normally defend a professor’s tenure, especially on the grounds of academic freedom “reneged on a principled commitment to unconditional academic freedom, in part because the organization identified itself totally with the government’s purposes in the war and felt obliged to forestall even the most contingent threats to those purposes.”
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 259.
Gruber also observes that professors seemed to be oblivious to the compromises they were making and seemed to be swept up in a hysterical movement in the same way that the Federal Council of Churches confessed what it termed “‘the blind servility with which the Christian Church gave itself to the government of the United States in 1917 and 1918.’” Misapprehension and denial of the scapegoating process are essential elements of Girard’s theory. If the actors in a given mimetic rivalry are aware of the scapegoating they are effecting, then the sacrifice becomes impotent relative to the goal of diminishing the rivalry between the protagonists. One key mechanism for preserving and intensifying this misapprehension is the dynamic of mob violence or what Gruber might call hysteria which explains why “the legion of learned men…prostituted themselves by offering ‘their intellectual gifts upon the altar of the nation.’”

The gods of the ideal of service to society, pure scientific inquiry, and of personal salvation fell from Olympus when US intellectuals reduced service to relevant practice, and inquiry to application, and when clergy sent Jesus to war. In reaching out and realizing (making real) otherwise transcendent ideals, colleges, universities, and churches stripped moral purpose of its power to inspire intellectuals and believers to greater causes that survive time and cross national boundaries. The power deployed toward the end of obtaining the defined objectives of the war and of a good society ultimately consummated those goals and gave birth to two new transcendent gods, Mars and Minerva while dismissing Jesus, i.e. the previously dominant Christian faith, from any clearly defined substantive public role in the academy. So while relationships with state and federal governments and burgeoning research agendas settle into academic life after

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226 Federal Council of Churches as quoted in Gruber, 254, 5.
227 Girard, Berkshire Review, 11-16.; Gruber, 255, 1.
World War I, the academy engages in a search for its soul as the church struggles with its exile from the academy it had helped create.\textsuperscript{228}

Clearly at least three of the four major social institutions described by Bellah et al., namely religion, education and government, are engaged in the social transformations at the beginning of the twentieth century. A Griardian analysis shows how easily mimesis can lead to the conflation of institutional frameworks in which there is very little difference among church, academy, and state. Recall the role of religion as the institution that encodes meaning-making processes for society. If religion - in the US, Christianity - is writing and rewriting the violent myth described by Girard that each of these social systems continues to deploy, then it infects education and government as the two draw closer and closer together. This analysis demonstrated that education during World War I at last gave up its role as objective inquirer the more it imitated the state. Education, which, in Gruber’s estimation, should have served as the gateway for the ontological, sought to impose norms on society. This search intensified in and through the mimetic rivalries with German academics and the US Government.

While the subject of this example is not a particular leader, in Gruber’s account it is clear that all the social actors were seeking to impose norms on reality. If Government indeed does embody the norms of a society, at least in a democracy, then what happened during the “war to end all wars” was a conflation of education - otherwise the gateway to the ontological through learning and reasoning – and church – the would-be synthesizer of moral meaning – into the normative dimension embodied institutionally by the state.

The collective meaning-making strategy of imposing the normative on the ontological led

to the abdication of two social institutions, education, and religion and thereby kept the
system from opening up to objective inquiry and new information, and from synthesizing
the is and the ought respectively.

The is and the ought should have been kept in tension with one another rather
than being completely aligned. The normative dominance led to a developmental
regression on an institutional scale. This regression was encoded by the myth-making
religion – Christianity – as a rivalry which ultimately devolved into a system death in
need of a sacrifice to re-establish order. The Germans, along with the ideals outlined
above, filled the role of the scapegoat and victim necessary to re-establish order.

Neglected to this point is the role of the market economy in funding the
imposition of the normative on the ontological, driving education and religion into the
hegemonic purview of the state. As I have shown, however, a source of power such as
economic energy is vital to the continued endothermic imposition of the normative on the
ontological, particularly on the international scale. When such a conflation of Moral
Meaning Matrix dimensions, embodied by social institutions, occurs, the hunger for that
energy can redirect the moral purpose of those institutions toward the prospect of
maximizing resources. Once that final conflation, a conflation with the dynamic
dimension of the Moral Meaning Matrix, is complete, the consequences can be global
and deadly.

Colleges at War

In the United States, at least, on the level of social complexity identified in the
Moral Meaning Matrix as society, education institutionalizes the ontological dimension,
prescribing the expected patterns of behavior relative to generalizing from the particular and reasoning about information gleaned from learning. Education functions for the ontological in the same way that religion institutionalizes signification. On the level of complexity, described as institution in the Moral Meaning Matrix, education has, in its own right, symbol, ritual, and a nomos within the realms over which society gives it jurisdiction. In that way, education conveys and creates normative as well as ontological elements. However, when education is contributing to the larger society, its rituals prescribe and govern the way society makes sense of the ontological. So, my claim that education institutionalizes the ontological is not to say that it is free of normative elements nor is it to say that its norms and symbols are not translated into a societal worldview. It is a claim, however, that education, functionally serves to establish and legitimate the means and the terms by which society learns and forms a collective worldview which is put into conversation with, and thereby influences, a society’s ethos.

Similarly, my analysis of Gruber’s account demonstrates how the government or Government/Law/Politics in Bellah et al.’s terms institutionalizes the normative, setting forth the means and the terms by which society establishes that ethos. This is evident in the government’s elaborate policy making, interpretation, and execution functions. With police and military power, it can, in very real ways, impose sanctions to enforce expected patterns of institutionalized behavior. This leaves the dynamic dimension of reality and one of The Good Society’s institutions remaining. In capitalistic US society, it may go without saying that the economy is associated with power and therefore the dynamic dimension of reality and the matrix. Yet the proposition bears testing. In order to test it however, I will draw on examples outside the United States context. This will do two
things. First it permits a functional understanding of the broader institutional pattern of economy, and with that functional understanding, apart from a strict identity with US capitalism, I can demonstrate the power necessary to make meaning. Second, it allows me to explore the particular ways the economy institutionalizes violence by setting up the power sources in the dynamic dimension of reality as objects of desire and, thereby catalyzes rivalry and sacrifice.

In the following example drawn from two universities in the hotly contested Middle East, I will use the term utilitarian to describe the phenomenon which equates economic gains with citizenship demonstrating the conflating of the normative and dynamic dimensions of the Moral Meaning Matrix. In other words, economic achievement, development, and advancement show themselves to be, at least in the mission statements and operational behavior of these educational organizations, pre-conditions for political identity. The economy in this example co-opts notions of statehood and those notions of statehood co-opt the purposes of education.

A bomb exploded in the Frank Sinatra cafeteria on Hebrew University’s Mount Scopus campus in Jerusalem. According to the “Embassy of Israel Briefing” of July 31, 2002, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas claimed responsibility for the bombing that day which killed nine students, faculty members, and staff members, as an act of revenge for the “recent counter-terrorist operation against Hamas Military Commander Salah Shehada in Gaza.” Israeli troops had killed Shehada just days before.\(^\text{229}\)


In January 2003 Israeli authorities closed the doors of two Palestinian Universities in Hebron (Hebron University and Palestine Polytechnic University) apparently in response to previous suicide bomb attacks in Tel Aviv.\textsuperscript{231} The move was denounced by the American Council on Education and the Canadian Association of University Teachers and spawned a debate among United Kingdom educators about an “academic boycott of Israel.”\textsuperscript{232} Israeli officials justified the closures on the grounds that the “chemistry and computer labs at the universities were being used to research and train terrorists to build bombs.”\textsuperscript{233}

In recent years, institutions of higher education have moved to the front lines of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Again Girard’s lens is useful. Understanding Hebrew University, Hebron University, and Palestine Polytechnic University as instruments used to gain advantage over rivals in the quest for land and economic empowerment exposes the perils of a utilitarian or technical purpose for higher education, which are more pronounced in the Middle East because it provides an acutely competitive and a particularly violent context.\textsuperscript{234}

The development of the organizational purposes of these three universities contributes to their perceived legitimacy as military and terrorist targets. Participation of

\textsuperscript{231} Education Guardian, January 17, 2003; available from http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/worldwide/story/0,9959,876961,00.html; Internet; accessed February 23, 2003.


\textsuperscript{233} Ibid.

such organizations in mimetic rivalry sets up the universities as unwitting participants in an increasingly violent social competition.

Rethinking of the purposes of the modern university in favor of one which understands and exposes the mimetic mechanism could help universities escape participation in such a destructive process and, moreover, act as an alternative to it. This new conception of purpose will depend upon a more profound moral understanding of the university than the prevailing technical or utilitarian model. Such a purpose will have to cross national and political borders in order to sustain a notion of society-building that is a broader and more profound endeavor than nation-building.  

The language of retaliation and revenge in the rhetoric surrounding the closures and the bombing discussed above is emblematic of the mimetic process involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict.  Each act is linked to a previous act. The violence feeds upon itself to the point that no one is sure who acted first. The mimetic process makes that question irrelevant. Each actor, the Israeli government and various Palestinian militants in this case, perpetrate violent acts in response to violent acts. This type of war-like context makes explicit what otherwise might be more subtle acts of mimetic violence. But is the mimesis related to a common mimetic desire? If so, then is the violence more than just mutual imitation? Has it become mimetic rivalry over that same object?

I suggest that the answer to all of these questions is yes. It is almost cliché to talk about the Israel-Palestine conflict as a battle for land, but truly that is what it is. It is a battle for land, but it is also a battle for independent statehood. In order to move beyond

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235 Bellah et al., Good Society, 170-8.
236 That this is part of a long-established pattern is reflected in Gary C. Gambill, “The Balance of Terror: War by Other Means in the Contemporary Middle East,” Journal of Palestine Studies 28, 1 (Autumn 1998): 51-66.
this assertion, I will examine how the desire to establish two states in the same land is expressed by the three key subjects of this discussion: Hebrew University, Hebron University, and Palestine Polytechnic University.

Universities as Mimetic Rivals

Hebrew University was established in 1925, the fulfillment of a dream articulated as early as 1918 that “establishing a ‘University of the Jewish People’ in the Land of Israel formed an integral part of the early Zionist vision.” The Zionist dream was encouraged at that time by British influence, and later rule, over the region after World War I and by Britain’s explicit support for a Jewish homeland in a land populated largely by Arabs. The history of Hebrew University traces that school’s development through the various wars of the last century, which repeatedly moved borders and boundaries, sometimes leaving the original campus isolated from what has evolved into Israel proper.

The undulating demarcations also took their toll on the Palestinian side. To battle the sense and effect of isolation, the mayor of Hebron in 1967 established a college, later to become Hebron University, when he “realized that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza would eventually lead to isolating the cities and towns attempting to create uneducated, easily ruled Palestinians.” Established in 1978, Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), also located in Hebron, states its mission in the

239 Ibid.
240 Hebron University website; available from www.hebron.edu; Internet; accessed February 23, 2003.
affirmative, perhaps building on Hebron University’s earlier commitment to being a
countervailing force against Israeli occupation. PPU’s mission is “to produce and support
the leaders of tomorrow...for Palestine and the world.”

Hebrew University grew up with and fostered the very idea of Jewish statehood.
The two Palestinian universities developed as a response to the state of Israel insofar as
they were attempting to hold onto or define what Palestinian identity would be in this
new context. Holding onto that identity was particularly challenging during this time
period because it was marked by a series of wars and accords which shifted boundaries
both between Israelis and Palestinians and between Israel and neighboring states.

The purposes of all three of these institutions are closely linked with the
establishment of national identities, if not formal states, and the related issue of having a
place for those states to call home. While a case can be made for the theoretical
independence of the ideas of national identity and land, I think it is quite a different story
to dissociate the idea of an independent nation-state from the acquisition and control of
the land to serve as a nation’s home. Hebrew University, Hebron University, and
Palestine Polytechnic University, therefore define themselves by the quest for
independent nationhood and to elaborate national success through the preparation of
individuals for participatory and advanced citizenship.

Israel and Palestine each desire an independent nation on the same land. Israeli
and Palestinian higher education institutions express and strengthen those simultaneous

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241 Palestine Polytechnic University website; available from
242 CNN.com. and David Hirst, “Rush to Annexation: Israel in Jerusalem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3,
30-52.
desires to preserve, in the case of Israel, or establish, in the case of Palestine, competing
nation-states. The Israel-Palestine conflict, insofar as it involves establishing two nations
with the same borders, exemplifies mimetic desire for the land as well as for independent
nationhood. The three universities under discussion focus and symbolize this desire and
provide the means for more effective participation in the rivalrous relationship between
Israelis and Palestinians. Not only does academe exacerbate the mimetic desire, it
becomes an instrument of mimetic rivalry. As instruments of the rivalry, these
universities, therefore, participate in the process of violence.

Nation-building and Utilitarianism

Originating with the founding purposes, and within the context of war and quests
for independence, the Middle East academy’s role as an instrument of mimetic rivalry is
complicated by two related factors: the conflation of the idea of society-building with
nation-building and, consequently, the triumph of utilitarian aims over moral identity.244
In his message on Hebrew University’s website, President Menachem Magidor mourns
the loss of the nine members of his community, but in doing so he describes Hebrew
University as “an inseparable part of the society fabric of the State of Israel.” 245
Similarly, the Hebron University website reflects on the persistence of the University’s
mission in light of Israeli actions: “Despite such hardships, the University continues to
expand in new and creative ways in order to better meet the needs of the Palestinian

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245 Menachem Magidor, Hebrew University website; available from
While PPU does not seem to make the link as generally and as explicitly as the other two, the mission statement of the College of Engineering Technology describes its programs and curricula as “carefully designed to address the current and future needs of the Palestinian community.”

On the surface, these statements do not seem dissimilar to what sociologist and The Good Society co-author William Sullivan advocates as education’s role in building a democratic society when he contrasts twentieth-century US higher education with “its founding conception of itself as a participant in the life of civil society.” In America, he illustrates a shift in purpose from that founding concept to what he calls “instrumental individualism.”

Each of the statements above orients education toward a particular telos or end of establishing or preserving the society of a particular nation. While Sullivan’s loftiest goals for US higher education only relate to cultivating United States democracy, I wish to appropriate his utilitarian description of education as a critique of any model which seeks to advance the goals of a particular nation rather than the goals of society generally. In this respect, this discussion also serves as a critique, not of the rationale offered by Sullivan, but of his limiting his discussion to the project of forwarding US democracy only. His arguments and evidence are squarely situated in the US context, so it is justifiable for him to make claims only about the potential for US civic life. However, the

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246 Hebron University website, previously cited.
247 Palestine Polytechnic University website, previously cited. Also, the case for the economic need for such education in the Palestinian territories is discussed in Majed El-Farra and Alan Wakelan, “Internal Constraints on the Process of Industrialization in Gaza,” British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 26, (May 1999): 63-88.
248 Sullivan, 21.
249 Ibid.
lessons from United States higher education, which Sullivan lifts up, might be instructive in other contexts, especially those heavily influenced by US notions of the academy.

Sullivan describes post World War II higher education in US as “advancing…major tasks then seen as essential to national interest.”\textsuperscript{250} This, he notes, is evidence of a trend toward instrumentalism marked by projects that were “aimed at particular strategic outcomes….focusing so relentlessly on contributing to external goals… [thereby losing]…the inclination to address these ends from its own intrinsic responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{251} Sullivan continues by discussing the indispensable role of science, particularly in military applications and by pointing out the aims of education being oriented toward economic empowerment.\textsuperscript{252}

These same aspirations seem to be reflected in the development of the three Middle East universities. They are as ambitious about their own national security and enhancement as US institutions. The curricular offerings of the Middle East universities exemplify commitments to the specialties that provide for technological advancement and economic empowerment. Hebron and Hebrew Universities have faculties of arts and humanities respectively, but the bulk of the academic programs reflect a bias toward professional education and the application of, rather than the pursuit of knowledge.\textsuperscript{253} PPU is the most extreme example of this phenomenon with a “College of Applied Science” and a “College of Applied Professions.”\textsuperscript{254} Not only do the universities understand themselves as instruments at the service of nation-states, they perform their duties as instruments in an almost thoroughly instrumental or utilitarian manner.

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, 22.
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid, 23.
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid, 24-5.
\textsuperscript{253} Hebrew and Hebron University websites. See especially the academic pages.
\textsuperscript{254} PPU website.
As instrumental instruments of nation-states, Hebron University, Hebrew University, and Palestine Polytechnic University not only participate in, but are also key loci of mimetic rivalry between Palestine and Israel. Palestinians and Israelis are both training themselves for economic advantage and for technological superiority in order to lay claim to the same land as home for their respective, yet competitive, nation-states. In this way, these institutions in this superheated context illustrate the link between Girard’s notion of mimetic rivalry and a utilitarian understanding of higher education.

Further, as instruments of the rivalry with strategic goals aligned in support of two nations, which are essentially at war with each other, the universities also become strategic targets for military or terrorist violence. When examined in this way, the involvement of higher education on the front lines of the Middle East conflict is not as surprising as it might seem to be on the surface. These universities are rivals preparing rivals for the sake of domination.

Nevertheless the targeting of the universities for closure and for terrorist attacks is dissonant with our concept of the place that academe ought to occupy in society as evidenced by numerous protests from educators. The attacks and closures of the universities, judged by many in the international education community to be despicable, are acts which are consistent with the utilitarian, state-serving role higher education has carved out for itself in Israel and Palestine as well as in the US. So the dissonance originates, not in the way universities are being treated in battle, but in the fact which the battle illustrates, namely the diminished teleological role of the university in modern

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255 In many ways the closure of the Palestinian universities exhibits the attributes of the scapegoating process suggested by Girard. Similarly the terrorist attack on Hebrew University seems to reflect some of the same characteristics for some people within the Palestinian society.

256 See the previously cited ACE, CAUT, and AUT protests of the school closings and see the Hebrew University website for a statement of support for the University which denounces the terrorist attack.
society. Sullivan, in “Institutional Identity and Social Responsibility in Higher Education,” and in conjunction with his colleagues in *The Good Society*, calls for a reversal of the trend which understands higher education as subordinate to government or other institutions, and he calls for an assertion of education as an institution in its own right, free from the hegemonic control of the institutions of politics and the economy.  

While associated with these other social institutions, education ought not be in service to them.

**The Moral Purpose of Education**

One way to approach the liberation of education from the more dominant spheres of influence of economy and government is to consider how academe can serve to thwart the mechanism of mimetic rivalry. Higher education certainly cannot thwart such a mechanism while participating in it. Yet, education is, arguably, the home of mimesis which serves as a fundamental component of learning. Perhaps higher education can leverage its familiarity with mimesis to help it avoid mimetic rivalry.

Girard suggests two ways to avoid mimetic rivalry. The first is through a rigid observance of prohibitions such as religious codes. Laws which prohibit coveting, stealing, and murder, for instance, act as a check on mimetic rivalry. These prohibitions, however, flow into rituals which ultimately demand a sacrifice to effectively restore a sense of order to a community. Girard shows how emphasis on such codes only leads to controlled victimization and not to an eradication of violence altogether.

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257 Sullivan; Bellah et al., 153-6.  
Because mimetic rivalry, scapegoating, and sacrifice for Girard all depend on a misapprehension of the process, participants in the violence are unaware of the role they are playing in the mimetic rivalry, much like the universities I discussed are unaware of their contributions to their own troubles. What Girard suggests will end the rivalry, violence, and victimization is the exposure of the rivalrous mechanism itself.

If these three universities wish to contribute to a peaceful settlement of the conflict, or at the very least remove themselves from the frontlines, they should expose the mimetic dynamic for what it is and open an international, trans-cultural debate over the question of how two nations can occupy the same land at the same time.\textsuperscript{259} To overlook the rivalry at the heart of the tension is to ignore the violence. To illuminate the imitation and modeling going on in the struggle would disarm the mechanism of mutual vilification by holding a mirror up to the imitator who is a model to his or her own imitator and to the model who is an imitator of his or her own model. No aspersion of wrongdoing could be cast without taking into consideration the reflexive and reciprocal dynamic at work. This exposure of the mechanism first requires the educational organizations themselves to be self-critical and, further, to pass along the self-critiquing practices to those who would study there. Perhaps elevating critical thought and the practice of mutual engagement is what prompts the authors of \textit{The Good Society} to call for diminishing the emphasis on specializations and applied technologies and “reintegrate cognition with a more fully human understanding.”\textsuperscript{260}

\textsuperscript{259} As recently as 1994, but therefore prior to the most recent violence, many Palestinian students at another Palestinian institution, Birzeit University, indicated an openness to normalizing cultural relations with Israel through certain kinds of collaboration and cooperation. For a complete discussion, see Mahmoud Mi'Ari, “Attitudes of Palestinians toward Normalization with Israel,” \textit{Journal of Peace Research} 36 (May 1999): 339-348.

\textsuperscript{260} Bellah et al., \textit{Good Society}, 178.
“Genuine education” continue the authors of *The Good Society*, “knows no boundaries….A concern for understanding our own society inevitably raises the question of where we are in relation to all other human cultures, past as well as present.”

Spanning national and cultural borders will not be possible without a fundamental reorientation of the purposes of the university away from the utilitarian understanding now prevalent. Only by reversing this trend toward utilitarian education can academe take its first step away from participating in the process of violence in our society and toward the integration of society in a way that does not artificially conflate the broader more inclusive notion with the needs and interests of a particular nation-state, but is authentically interested in the well-being of all of humanity.

Religion needs education to open society’s meaning-making process to the ontological dimension of reality in order to re-write the religion-governed myths of myth-making. But education’s signification processes are regressing into utilitarianism because religion, the institution which prescribes modes of meaning-making, has been relegated to the realm of the private and has very little, if any, standing in the academy. Even if it did have standing in the academy, religion has been regressing itself, so any meaning-making processes it would encode would be increasingly violent.

So, simultaneously, education needs to rehabilitate its self-understanding in order to establish moral meaning in its own institutional terms. In so doing, it will have the capacity to rehabilitate religion. Religion simultaneously needs to help education think

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261 Ibid.
262 That this orientation is consistent with what others have found to be movement toward peace is exhibited in Herbert C. Kelman, “Building a Sustainable Peace: The Limits of Pragmatism in the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, (Autumn 1998): 36-50.
through how to synthesize meaning in a way that is native to and authentic to education and not pointed toward religious, governmental, or economic ends.
CHAPTER FIVE

LEADERSHIP AS MEANING-MAKING

To revive and advance public discourse about the relationship between religion and education, I wish to explore the proposition that it is possible to change the signification processes of persons, not apart from institutional contexts but as a part of those contexts. The change must occur with full knowledge that the institution(s) is (are) acting on the person just as the person is influencing institutional change. The persons upon whom I wish to focus are those whose roles, skills, or access to resources give them the capacity to facilitate meaning making for groups of people – leaders. By examining a process of leadership development as an exercise in growing meaning-making capacity beyond what the current institutional contexts prescribe and allow with the hope of creating more pacific meaning-making processes and institutional patterns, I suggest a theory of leadership development that cannot only rehabilitate education and religion in their own terms in the United States to make way for more public discourse on what is meaningful in United States society, why it is meaningful and what makes it meaningful, but also to begin to establish new precedents for signification processes other than those which are prevalent in the Untied States today. This would begin to reform institutions and thereby reshape US society, its constituent cultures and those of the societies influenced by US global hegemony. This exploration must begin with a more critical examination of leaders and leadership.
Leadership and Authority

It is difficult, if not impossible, to engage in any serious conversation about leadership without appreciating the contributions to this field made by Max Weber. Though his German to English translators infrequently use the terms leader or leadership themselves, many of the prevailing concepts – or perhaps conflations of concepts – of leadership emerge from and/or react to his rich school of social thought.263

More important for Weber than a notion of leadership is the idea of authority and what makes authority legitimate. Legitimate authority makes possible what Weber terms Imperative Co-ordination.264 For Weber, there are “three pure types of legitimate authority” which, correspondingly, create the possibility of three types of imperative co-ordination: Legal authority, legitimated on rational grounds, Traditional authority, legitimated on traditional grounds and Charismatic authority, legitimated on charismatic grounds.265 The one who exercises legal authority in a rational bureaucracy is regarded by Weber as the person “in authority who occupies an office.” The person and the office are separable. The person’s authority is derived from the office and the office is derived from the rationality of the bureaucratic structure. Any orders issued by the officeholder are, thereby, impersonal edicts from the office more than they are orders from the person.266 In such a bureaucracy the offices are organized in a hierarchy and the officeholders are often selected by virtue of possessing a certain set of technical skills required for the efficient execution of the duties of that particular office.267

264 Ibid., 324.
265 Ibid., 324-29.
266 Ibid., 330.
267 Ibid., 338.
Traditional authority, however, derives legitimacy from an understanding of how power has been transmitted over time. As such it is dependent on a collectively held understanding of the past. The authority rests with a person, perhaps in a monarchic line of succession, and not with his or her office, even though the person might derive such personal loyalty and power as a result of rules established beyond the memory of any one particular individual, including, say, the queen, the leader, or “chief.”\textsuperscript{268}

Charismatic authority also accrues to the person possessing it as opposed to accruing to the impersonal entity of the office. However, unlike traditional authority, charismatic authority is imparted to someone by the group because of personal qualities or attributes. Those characteristics are described by Weber as being “supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”\textsuperscript{269} Despite the fact that charismatic authority is highly personal, it can endure over time through a process of “routinization.” Routinization perpetuates the social group which responds to the charisma and which, in turn, seeks a successor to the charismatic leader. The successor necessarily will be someone who is judged by the group to possess many of the same qualities and characteristics as the original leader. While hereditary succession may play a role in the selection of a new leader, this type of succession should not be confused with the mantle which is passed down through generations in a structure retaining a traditional type of authority.\textsuperscript{270}

Weber describes each of these models as ideal types and suggests that often groups of people respond to a mixture of these types of authority. He goes into great

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid., 328, 341
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., 359.
\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., 364.
detail about sub-classifications of each of these and discusses ways in which types of authority may complement one another in various circumstances.

While Weber describes the various types of authority, he does so without being explicit about the purposes of such authority. He simply describes how it works, rather than why such authority is warranted, desired, or useful. To get at his understanding of the relevance of authority requires a review of some of the foundational points in his work leading up to his own discussion of charismatic, traditional, and legal authority. Authority, for Weber, “is the legitimate exercise of imperative control.” Imperative control is the likelihood that a command will be obeyed by a group of persons. A corporate group, a technical term for Weber that obeys such commands from a legitimate authority is, in Weber’s terms, an “imperatively coordinated” group.\footnote{Ibid., 151-2.} Constitutive of all corporate groups is the presence of a head, chief, or leader or, that is, a person in authority.\footnote{Ibid., 146.} A corporate group is a specific type of social relationship, which, Weber insists, exists only in the presence of the likelihood of a course of social action.\footnote{Ibid., 118.} In turn, he clarifies that social action is meaningful human behavior which, “by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course.”\footnote{Ibid., 88.} In his explicit treatment of meaning, Weber paints a somewhat utilitarian understanding, linking an object or organism to a purpose. It must serve as a means or an end to be intelligible or meaningful.\footnote{Ibid., 93.} However, a more thorough reading of his basic definitions of sociology and social action allows for the possibility that meaning is derived from “ultimate ends or
values” or from other altruistic aspirations which may or may not be intelligible to anyone other than the persons whose actions they orient.\textsuperscript{276}

Sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt explores the linkage between Weber’s understanding of authority and meaning by examining more closely the concept of charisma for Weber and for sociological analysis beyond Weber. Weber’s distinctions between charismatic authority and the other two pure types of authority begin to wear down once charisma is routinized. In fact, Eisenstadt points out that Weber coins terms to express the institutionalized charisma one finds in successive officeholders, “charisma of office,” and in holders of familial, inherited, and transferred posts, “kinship, hereditary, and contact” charisma respectively.\textsuperscript{277} Eisenstadt acknowledges that several studies in the research of charisma follow Weber’s lead in assuming that charismatic authority, institutionalized or originary, is most saliently effective in times of extreme crisis and with people who are feeling a deep sense of personal alienation.\textsuperscript{278} However, drawing primarily on the work of Edward Shils, Eisenstadt concludes that charisma, which he links even more closely with the search for meaning than Weber, is elementary in any ordered set of social relationships.

The search for meaning, consistency, and order is not always something extraordinary, something which exists only in extreme disruptive situations or among pathological personalities, but also in all stable social situations even if it is necessarily focused within some specific parts of the social structure and of an individual’s life space.\textsuperscript{279}

Eisenstadt contends that this presence of charisma in ordinary life is borne out in contemporary sociological research. Within that area of research, he identifies charisma’s

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid., 176.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid., 179.
prominent role at times of transitions or “rites of passage.”\textsuperscript{280} The necessity or the effectiveness of charisma correlates to times when persons or groups actively participate in life events which cause them to “experience some shattering of the existing social and cultural order to which they are bound.”\textsuperscript{281} After such shattering, the persons or groups look to the charismatic for re-establishing that order.

Hence in such situations they become more sensitive to those symbols or messages which attempt to symbolize such order, and more ready to respond to people who present to them new symbols which could give meaning to their experiences in terms of some fundamental cosmic, social, or political order, to prescribe the proper norms of behavior, to relate the individual to collective identification, and to reassure him of his status and of his place in a given collectivity.\textsuperscript{282}

Again, it is important to emphasize that Eisenstadt does not view the advent or appreciation of charisma as an extraordinary occurrence. The studies he reviews indicate that it is “part of any orderly social life—of the life of individuals as they pass from one stage in their lifespan to another, or from one sphere of activities to another, and of the organization of groups and societies.”\textsuperscript{283} So charisma may be no less rare an occurrence than is the regular need for making meaning or sense out of changing life circumstances. Perhaps the seemingly regular need for charisma is the reason it surfaces as an attribute in many leaders holding various types of positions and exhibiting any of Weber’s ideal types of authority.

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., 181.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.
Routine Charisma

In describing a particular leader in an academic setting, F. Stuart Gulley notices the presence of a mixture of Weberian ideal types, including that marked by charisma. While the position of university president is sufficient enough of an office to imbue the officeholder with power, especially early in a president’s tenure, the personal traits of the president become increasingly important as his or her tenure lengthens. Although charisma is not something that all higher education leaders share, in Gulley’s estimation, former Emory University President James T. Laney did exhibit this specific set of traits in his academic presidency.

In remembering Laney, many of his senior staff describe him in charismatic terms. They refer to his ability to listen, his oratorical skills, his facility with language, his sharp penetrating mind, his energy, his tenacity, his competitive and entrepreneurial instincts, his pastoral sensitivities, a combination that made him a rare academic leader.284

While Gulley treats charisma as but one trait of many that made Laney a successful and effective president, by his own analysis, Gulley makes the case that it is, in fact, charisma, that made the other traits powerful, if not altogether possible. As Laney lived out his own model of teamwork, his ability to listen and his pastoral sensitivities surely made him more prone to know and understand “the importance of those on the margin having their rightful voice in the decision making of the institution.”285 His articulation of a vision in a way that would “gain the support of others” would have been more anemic without oratorical skills, facility with language and a penetrating mind.286 In the midst of “diverse constituent groups and varying agendas” Laney found ways to

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284 F. Stuart Gulley, The Academic President at Moral Leader: James T. Laney at Emory University 1977-1993 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001), 216. To avoid confusion, I should point out that Laney’s presidency of Emory ended prior to the crisis described in Chapter Two.
285 Ibid., 209.
286 Ibid., 201.
“make ambiguity work for him” because of, most likely, his energy, tenacity, competitiveness, and entrepreneurial instincts.287 And finally, and Gulley makes this link explicit, it was Laney’s charisma that allowed him to serve as a mentor and example for his staff engaging the “moral dimensions of the office” by demonstrating “a model of fairness and integrity that won him the respect of his followers.”288

Gulley’s account of Laney’s leadership gives a contextual grounding for Weber’s connection between authority and meaning. Especially when read through Eisenstadt’s interpretation of Weber in light of more recent studies, Laney’s approach to what Gulley interchangeably terms “moral leadership” and “effective leadership” demonstrated genuine concern for persons, especially in times of great transition.289 Some close staff members credit him as “one of the most important and influential figures in their lives.”290

He remembered people, expressed interest in their concerns, shared his grief with them when they experienced disappointment or loss and happiness and pride at a major accomplishment or marker event; such as birthdays and anniversaries.291

On a broader level, Gulley commends Laney for successfully articulating a vision for Emory. A vision, in Gulley’s terms, must answer the following questions: “Whom does the institution serve? How might it better and more effectively offer its services? Why does it exist?”292

Laney’s leadership was effective because it was meaningful in the lives of the persons who made up the organization as well as meaningful in the organization’s life.

287 Ibid., 204, 6.
288 Ibid., 218, 220.
289 Ibid., 197, 208.
290 Ibid., 216.
291 Ibid., 216-7.
292 Ibid., 200-1.
itself. Whether applying Weber’s utilitarian means-ends test for meaning, his test for a referent of ultimate values or use Eisenstadt's test for consistency in times of transition, Laney’s leadership, his gift, his *charism*, was the ability to create, evoke, articulate, and sustain a sense of meaning.

In Laney’s presidency, Eisenstadt’s evaluation, and Weber’s definitions, a leader makes meaning. But what about leaders in other settings, perhaps less accurately described by Weber’s mechanistic notions of bureaucracy or who exhibit leadership styles which deviate from or intentionally thwart traditional notions of authority and leadership as defined by Weber?

Estella Bensimon and Anna Neumann contend that the shape of the university presidency is changing as the organizations presidents serve also undergo transformation. In *Redesigning Collegiate Leadership*, the pair observes that the role of any single individual is diminishing in favor of group efforts, which Bensimon and Neumann refer to as a “leadership team.” In examining the way fifteen different college and university presidents used the teams at their disposal, Bensimon and Neumann observed varying degrees of optimization of the collective group. The more presidents truly relied on the team to share in the governance of the institution the more they were able to exert strength in Bensimon and Neumann’s evaluation of their leadership capacity. Interestingly Bensimon and Neumann identify teams with strong cognitive functioning, that is a team that “thinks together,” as exhibiting “significant leadership.” The reason? “They are actively involved in the interpretation of meaning.”

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294 Ibid., 52-3.
responses to a particular situation, including the understanding and interpretation that the
president himself or herself brings to the circumstance.\textsuperscript{295} They argue that even those who
depart from the mechanistic organizational models of the past hold onto this fundamental
tenet. Whether found in a single individual or in a group of individuals, “leadership
requires skill in the creation of meaning that is authentic to oneself and to one’s
community.”\textsuperscript{296}

Going beyond the walls of colleges and universities provides other examples of
leaders who also exhibit the principles observed and commended by Bensimon and
Neumann. Such is the case with Carol Bartz, for instance, chairman of the board,
president and CEO of Autodesk, a leading maker of design software and related
technology products. Michael J. Marquardt and Nancy O. Berger profile Bartz and other
leaders in \textit{Global Leaders for the 21st Century}.\textsuperscript{297} Their portrait of Bartz describes her as
believing “in the importance of shared decision-making.”\textsuperscript{298} Much as Gulley describes
Laney, she attempts to lead by example acknowledging that “she must set the example by
not micromanaging her staff, and that they, in turn, must not micromanage their
employees.”\textsuperscript{299} This approach and her other attributes as leader suggest to Marquardt and
Berger the image of a symphony conductor who believes a leader’s role involves
facilitating goal-setting and promise-keeping while instilling purpose and urgency.\textsuperscript{300}

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid., xv.
\textsuperscript{297} Michael J. Marquardt and Nancy O. Berger, \textit{Global Leaders for the Twenty-First Century} (Albany: State
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{300} Ibid., 96.
Management researcher and theorist Warren Bennis, along with his co-authors of

*Beyond Leadership*, Jagdish Parikh and Ronnie Lessem, credits a leader’s vision as crucial to instilling that sense of purpose and goal-setting.

When the organization has a clear sense of its purpose, direction, and desired future state, and when this image is widely shared, individuals are able to find their own roles both in the organization and in the larger society of which they are a part. This empowers individuals and confers status upon them because they can see themselves as part of a worthwhile enterprise. They gain a sense of importance, as they are transformed from robots blindly following instructions to human beings engaged in a creative and purposeful venture.\textsuperscript{301}

So Bennis joins Gulley and others in establishing vision as a key element in leadership. But notice the peculiar relationship among vision, charisma, and meaning. Charisma, according to Eisenstadt, is necessary to enable leaders to provide stability in times of transition. It is this stability, which bridges the unsettled middle that provides meaning for persons within organizations and/or the entire organizations themselves. However, the articulation of a vision seems to be precisely geared toward destabilizing the status quo and articulating a future self-concept for the organization. Again charisma is necessary for persuading others to share the mental image of the future. It seems to be irrelevant for many analysts whether or not the status quo needs changing, although some will contend that the absence of change at this time in history, particularly in the business world, portends death to the organization.\textsuperscript{302} In many ways that taken-for-granted maxim is moot. Whether the times demanded change or not, the leadership examples I have examined, whether alone or as part of a team, evoked a desire for change by charismatic


\textsuperscript{302} Marquardt and Berger, 1.
means and, by those same means, provided the support and guidance necessary to navigate such change.

While Weber anticipated routinized charisma in organizations that outlived their leaders, this seems to be something different.\textsuperscript{303} Rather than routinized charisma, it seems to be routine charisma. It is almost as if charisma is the object or end of leadership and not only the means of securing and conveying authority. It is no longer simply an attribute of leaders, it is, as Gulley makes it out to be, synonymous with effective leadership. So leaders, no matter their style and no matter which of Weber’s ideal types best describe the authority they wield, can create meaning, but to a certain extent they can also create the need for meaning-making itself. They do so by articulating a vision that bridges the gap between the past and the future through an uncertain middle. As Gulley puts it, “Only by understanding the past of the followers in the organization can the leader move the followers into the future.”\textsuperscript{304} Bennis confirms, “With a vision, the executive provides the all important bridge from the present to the future.”\textsuperscript{305} Not only do leaders facilitate meaning-making, often during times of personal or organizational crises during which time seems to stand still, but, they also do so in the very real context of a group’s history. Charisma, then, becomes descriptive of a quality or a tool that any leader of any type may or may not possess – a quality or tool that enables him or her to facilitate meaning-making for persons and groups of persons.

Clearly Weber could conceive of organizations that exist without experiencing such disruptive crises or major organizational shifts through time, and he could conceive of authority that did not derive from charisma. However, his suggestion that his ideal

\textsuperscript{304} Gulley, 200.
\textsuperscript{305} Bennis, 50.
types could blend seems to be true to the observations in the accounts we have considered thus far. But whether crises come without evocation or are created by the leaders, they come, and the role of the leader is to bridge the gap of uncertainty with a meaningful vision.

Meaningful Leadership

This role for meaning making in leadership informs my theory of leaders as meaning makers. Frankl’s situation offers a laboratory of extreme conditions which allows us to distill some principles of the meaning-making process more clearly than from situations in less extreme conditions in which other circumstances occlude or distract from the fundamental processes at work. Frankl’s journey from a relatively speaking stable life before being taken prisoner through Naked Existence and then through Cannibalism and then through Deceptive Dreaming offers a baseline anatomy of the impact change has on social construction and meaning-making.

While Frankl’s change was forcibly thrust upon him, even voluntary change requires a person or a group to question old norms in light of the facts of a new reality, to move through a phase of generating provisional norms to cope with the temporary reality of transition and adjusting those provisional norms to suit the facts of the new reality on the other side of the change. While organizational change can happen with more rapidity than the three years Frankl spent in the concentration camp, the search for meaning at each stage is the same. The actors in society struggle with Berger’s anomy, alienation, and bad faith until they again become co-builders of society.
Eisenstadt’s demonstration that Weberian charisma, read through subsequent social research, links the effectiveness and need for charisma with persons experiencing deep senses of alienation. Further he discusses the important role charismatic authority plays in helping persons put together pieces of shattered lives or worlds. His association of charisma particularly with times of great transitions and rites of passage link this fundamental attribute of leadership to the type of change and search for meaning so poignantly described in Frankl’s account.

Further, each of the leadership case studies discussed above suggests that leaders, in their meaning-making capacity, offer groups consistency through times of transition, even if the leader or leadership team, himself, herself, or itself had dislodged the group from the status quo to begin with. Both the stability through the transition as well as the motivation of the group members to enter that transition emanate from the articulation and sustaining of a vision of a future state. In other words, a leader deploys charisma to articulate and sustain a synthesis between the is and the ought, even if the ought is a future state relative to the group’s experience of the is. The charismatic motivators contrast the future with the present in normative terms and create a sense that the future is better than the present. Vision shields the group’s members from the anomy of Naked Existence by supplanting the current ought with a newly articulated version of what should be. It sustains the group through the harsh realities of the transition itself, by preventing alienation with a sense of working toward a common purpose and vision. Perhaps most importantly it has to ring true for the group as plausible, when the reality-check of the future arrives, lest it be judged to have been a bad faith effort or a deceptive dream.
Note, however, particularly in Gulley’s description of Laney, that the charismatic leader not only has the skill to motivate people to undertake the transitions which risk plunging individuals and groups into successive and severe crises of meaninglessness, charisma also entails being able to meet people in crisis, or times of transition, and help them create a sense of meaning in those times. On the personal and organizational level, persons experience anomie, alienation, and bad faith. They find themselves, for a variety of reasons, dislodged from that which once made sense out of life. Leaders can deploy charisma to aid persons in their quests to create, discover, or reclaim meaning during times of loss or life transition.

**The Ritual of Meaning Making**

Whether the leader evokes a change or simply supports others through such times, making meaning must attend to the dynamics of life transition. For a thorough discussion of what happens during moments of substantive change, I turn to anthropologist’s Victor Turner’s book, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*.\(^{306}\) The subtitle offers clues to his discussion as well as to the shape of this analysis.

Turner observes commonalities among some of the rituals of the Ndembu people of central Africa and some movements and social processes of twentieth century United States. Among the themes he abstracts, Turner describes the phenomenon of “liminality.” He attributes his understanding of liminality to Arnold Van Gennep’s “liminal phase” during rites of passage. The word liminal, Turner points out, is from the Latin, *limen* or threshold. The liminal is one of three phases found in times of transition from one state to

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another. On either sequential side of the liminal phase are separation and aggregation respectively.\textsuperscript{307}

The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both. During the intervening “liminal” period the characteristics of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase, the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and “structural” type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions.\textsuperscript{308}

Turner’s work, drawing on his field experience and Van Gennep’s concepts, reduces otherwise complex social behavior into three discernable points of analysis. The three phases, in fact, describe well the experiences chronicled by Frankl on a grand scale, over the three years of internment as well as on a miniature scale in any number of the micro-transitions Frankl experienced.

On a macrocosmic scale, it is possible to see Frankl’s three years as a rite of passage from separation from his wife, profession and Austrian society through the liminal period of the prison camps and back into Austrian society again - this time without his wife. It is also possible to view, in microcosm, his transition into camp as a rite of passage, one that required a shift from the state of his position in Austrian society to that of a prisoner in the camp through the liminal moment of physical and existential nakedness in the shower. Similarly his re-entry into Austrian society likewise required a separation from camp life, coming to grips in the margins with his Deceptive Dreaming, and assimilating to a new life in his old home. Certainly there were many other such

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 94.  
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid, 94 -95
microcosmic transitions during his time there. Nevertheless, the process seems to be roughly the same. Whether from Naked Existence, through Cannibalism and beyond Deceptive Dreaming, or through each of those stages respectively, it is possible to discern Turner’s phases and, therefore, possible to probe more deeply into the dynamics of all of them.

Turner draws our attention to the middle phase of the rites of passage. In so doing, he exposes the profundity of what Berger terms anomy.

The attributes of liminality…are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.\(^\text{309}\)

Macrocosmically, and relative to his life before and after camp, Frankl’s imprisonment was marked by many of these attributes. Microcosmically, each stage of Frankl’s journey also had such characteristics relative to the before and after states of each transition respectively.

So Frankl’s journey, Naked Existence-Cannibalism-Deceptive Dreaming, my anatomy of social construction and meaning-making, is a rite of passage, which, in turn, potentially consists of multiple rites of passage. In the middle of each passage is a complete dissociation from social structure. Berger’s analysis shows, and Frankl’s observations suggest, the importance of not only regaining a sense of that social structure

\(^{309}\) Ibid., 95.
but claiming one’s responsibility for co-shaping it with others to avoid the alienation and bad faith which can follow anomy.

Leadership, as a meaning-making endeavor, therefore, requires a leader to motivate others to join him or her on the threshold between the rooms of past and future states, to experience this anomy and the liminality together. Charisma, as described in Laney by Gulley, requires a leader to exhibit his or her ability to make meaning within that threshold space, by showing concern at times of major life transitions during which the passenger, to use Turner’s term, is experiencing liminality outside of the urging of the leader, but simply in response to what he or she has encountered in life.

Communitas and Meaning

Whether inspiring others to join the trek into and through liminality or meeting others in those marginal points of existence, the work of a leader or a leadership team implies relationship with others. For this reason, liminality, if it has anything to do with group processes, must be considered not only on the personal level but also in the plural. Relying on the work of social psychologist Martin Buber, Turner develops the concept of communitas to describe the collective experience of that which “breaks through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure in marginality; and from beneath the structure, in inferiority.”\(^{310}\) It is important for comprehending this concept to distinguish it from the structures of society which normally provide the only artifacts for social scientific inquiry and are therefore often mistaken for the totality of society itself.

Turner understands communitas as another “dimension” of society which is

\(^{310}\) Ibid., 128.
“spontaneous, immediate [and] concrete” in contrast “to the norm-governed, institutionalized, abstract nature of social structure.”

It is the human connectedness experienced in and through communitas which provides the substance of society. The bonds which society’s structures order are formed, discovered, celebrated, and experienced most fully in communitas. In fact, the experience of the liminal is so energizing in this respect, Turner observes and analyzes several instances of, ironically, structured attempts to preserve the experience of communitas for what would otherwise be non-liminal moments. The process for doing this, of course, is a perpetual seeking of liminality. Turner turns to St. Francis of Assisi and his rules for the Franciscan order of monks as an example.

In all of this, Francis appears quite deliberately to be compelling the friars to inhabit the fringes and interstices of the social structure of his time, and to keep them in a permanently liminal state, where, so the argument in this book would suggest, the optimal conditions inhere for the realization of communitas.

The pursuit of liminality for the sake of perpetuating communitas requires the monks to disregard and disavow structures – at least structures other than, ironically, the rules which govern the order. The anti-structural symbol of the Franciscan order relates to the relationship Turner sees between property and structure. Disavowing property and thereby all structure, except of course the Rule of St. Francis itself, is represented for Francis by nakedness which symbolized “emancipation from structural and economic bondage.”

So was it communitas that Viktor Frankl discovered in the bath house? It was certainly liminality. Losing his book was a symbol of losing structure or at least

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311 Ibid., 126, 7.
312 Ibid., 145.
313 Ibid., 146.
connections with social structure he had internalized. The anomy described by Berger, then, is the unstructured environment necessary for the experience of communitas. Naked Existence, insofar as it homogenized differences in that bath house, created an experience of human connectedness and the fertile circumstance for collective meaning-making.

Communitas has also an aspect of potentiality; it is often in the subjunctive mood. Relations between total beings are generative of symbols and metaphors and comparisons; art and religion are their products rather than legal and political structures. 314

Far from being unstructured, camp life was highly organized and required conformity with the discipline meted out by the guards. However, the dissociation from the structures of Austrian society provided the opportunity to experience communitas within the walls of the camp. Perhaps it was the structure of the prison that complicated life as inmates moved from Frankl’s Naked Existence phase to Cannibalism. While one understandable path is the dehumanizing one of alienation, the path of meaning-making requires one to look around the edges of the camp structures. The restrictions of the camp and the authoritarian environment crowded out with structure almost every opportunity to experience anti-structure. It was not orderliness, curfews, or uniforms that provided the opportunities to synthesize the is and the ought, it was on the fringes of the order that Frankl found purpose and inspiration - in the cook who ladled soup fairly, and in recounting stories with fellow prisoners after lights out and in daydreaming while digging ditches.

Again, upon release and finding that his wife had died and that life would not be ordered as it had been in his imagination, structure fled and left the void for communitas. Those acting in bad faith without realizing the delusion of their Deceptive Dreaming

314 Ibid., 127-28.
were unable to re-engage life outside the camp in meaningful ways. It was the coming to grips with the lack of structure again, that allowed the regeneration of meaning to commence. Whether with prisoners from various countries, ethnicities, and stations in life staring at the fixtures in the bath house ceiling, or with a dying inmate in the bunk above, or with the Austrian neighbor who had never experienced a concentration camp but whose life had been disrupted by the war, or even with his wife – living or dead – but removed from his presence, Frankl experienced the human connectedness of communitas. Frankl and those with whom he discovered he was profoundly and thoroughly, connected, made meaning on the edges, the fringes, especially at moments during which he was making transitions from one known structure, through a liminal state into another structure. These transitions were brought into relief by the strictures of camp life, as Turner observes: “Yet communitas is made evident or accessible, so to speak, only through its juxtaposition to, or hybridization with, aspects of social structure.”

To use the analytical terms from above, Frankl did not allow the abundant oughts of his life to crowd out completely an experience of the is.

Communitas, in its purest form, is an existential experience in the extreme. It is important here, however, to restate Turner’s description of communitas as a dimension of society, not an alternative to it. The existential qualities of society are always present alongside the structural qualities. Even if communitas is the generative source of symbol and other

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315 Ibid., 127.
316 Ibid., 127.
artifacts of meaning, it becomes so, only in relation to social structure. Even in the case of the Franciscans, the pursuit of communitas is an activity governed by norms. Meaning is found in the synthesis of the is and the ought, the movement between communitas and structure, or more precisely in Turner’s analysis, between anti-structure and structure. “In other words, each individual’s life experience contains alternating exposure to structure and communitas, and to states and transitions.”\textsuperscript{317} For Turner, this latter proposition is a developmental one.

There is a dialectic here, for the immediacy of communitas gives way to the mediacy of structure, while in \textit{rites de passage}, men are released from structure into communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas. What is certain is that no society can function adequately without this dialectic. Exaggeration of structure may well lead to pathological manifestations of communitas outside or against the “law.” Exaggeration of communitas, in certain religious or political movements of the leveling type, may be speedily followed by despotism, over bureaucratization, or other modes of structural rigidification.\textsuperscript{318}

Turner’s advocacy for balance has implications beyond individualistic existential experience. It clearly suggests that adequate meaning-making processes are essential components of ordering life together. In Turner’s terms, then, effective leadership is a function of the health of the balance between anti-structure and structure.

\textbf{Charisma and Communitas}

With Turner’s descriptions as a backdrop, Weber’s ideal types of authority, now, can be read back into the process of meaning making. Regarding traditional authority as that which symbolizes continuity and derives imperative control over groups from heredity shows leadership in the mode of preserver of social structure. Even the most

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., 129.
structured societies, and perhaps especially the most structured societies, provide opportunities to experience communitas. Such leadership transmits norms or oughts from the past, into and through the present for a vision of the future which is by and large a continuation, if not expansion, of the status quo. It is from such structures that charismatic authority breaks and against which it defines itself. Charismatic leadership is liminal leadership. It articulates a vision that is decidedly different from the status quo or intercepts an already disrupted status quo. Whether the structures are fading away or the vision itself calls for a rejection of those structures, the charismatic leader must be adept at making meaning in the wilderness of change. It is here that the group, which has entrusted a charismatic leader with the role of facilitating meaning-making, experiences communitas and begins to construct shared modes of signification. The experience of communitas without structure, is, however, inadequate and requires the preservation of that meaning made in new forms of order and differentiation.

Here, bureaucratic authority is required to capture and perpetuate the meaning in a structure that provides order and differentiation. The bureaucratic leader does so, however, in increasingly less personal ways and in ways that create structures that eventually, again, crowd out the experience of anti-structure, against which the anti-structure will begin to appear in stark relief.

Other than the movement to routinize charisma, it is an oversimplification of Weber to suggest that he was articulating a historical procession from traditional to bureaucratic authority, and I do not mean to imply a cycle of authority that begins again, necessarily, with a charismatic response to bureaucracy. What is clear, I think from Weber’s ideal types, however, when read against the backdrop of the stories and
processes I have examined, is that leaders make meaning. Both traditional authority and bureaucratic authority impose norms on realities by creating hierarchies, systems, laws, and power structures. While traditional forms of leadership derive normative power from an ontological reality, such as heredity, and bureaucratic authority presumes the extant normative power of the organization’s structure or, in the case of an individual, of his or her specialization, both forms attempt to shape the is by the ought. The cases of bureaucratic leaders I examined above showed effectiveness in breaking down hierarchies and specializations, in effect breaking apart the bureaucracy. Now we can examine those moves as making way for interstitial spaces within the structure for the necessary experiences of liminality and, subsequently, communitas. In this way, the bureaucratic leader, or, perhaps even an empowering monarch can incorporate charismatic qualities in the imposition of power. Without such interventions, however, the ability for the group to make meaning for itself is limited. Rather, it is imposed as the is and the ought are fused by, literally, the powers that be. This leads to, in the case of traditional authority, disaffected alienation as seen in the Cannibalism stage of Frankl’s analysis. In the case of bureaucratic authority, it can lead to the bad faith of Deceptive Dreaming because the normative is perpetuated without respect to changing existential or ontological realities.

Only charismatic authority (or incorporation of some of its qualities) seems to have the capacity for allowing the is to be in conversation with the ought. An anti-structure virtuoso, the charismatic leader releases those who go with him or her from the bonds of extant structures and norms. What the charismatic leader does with that meaning-making opportunity is the subject of this inquiry. Charismatic leaders, by having
access to the powerful resource of communitas, are engaged in collective meaning-making, the powerful outcome of which will be shared.

How will the charismatic leader influence the shape of that meaning and what influences the leader? It is possible to conceive of charismatic leaders facilitating meaning making in more and less desirable ways. What are those ways and how can we influence more desirable and fewer undesirable outcomes? And finally, what is at stake in this project of influencing the meaning-making capacity of leaders?

Leaders are meaning makers. Frankl’s theory generalizes that every person searches for meaning and is capable of synthesizing the is and the ought alone, but not outside the context of relationships. Leaders facilitate meaning making for groups of people at various levels of social complexity. In a relationship between two people, even, one may exhibit more influence over the common praxis than the other. In groups, one or more persons may be the repository and interpreter of custom, in organizations, leaders are charged with articulating and enforcing tradition and, institutionally, it is the leaders who act out the rituals that locate those traditions in the mythic framework of society. On the societal level, it is leaders who interpret and author the myths that situate the society in light of universal reality.

In this chapter, I identified charisma as the quality of a leader that enables him or her to make meaning no matter what leadership style he or she employs and no matter which of Weber’s ideal types of legitimate authority brought him or her into a position of imperative coordination. Charisma is the leadership quality that imbues the leader with the confidence of those within his or her sphere of influence to evoke a sense of
communitas in times of liminality and, in many cases to also be the one who calls the group or causes the group to muster the fortitude to endure liminality in the first place. Change agents, perhaps, but whether or not the leader evokes the change, when familiar structures fade into anti-structure, the charismatic leader, or more properly the leader who possesses a sufficient degree of charisma will make sense of that change.
Leaders use charisma to make meaning. Earlier I discussed more and less violent modes of signification. It follows then that some forms of leadership can make meaning in explicitly violent way. In other words it is possible to conceive of more and less violent types of charisma. Such is the case with some political dictators, for instance. Hitler was known for his charisma, but the ways he made meaning for Nazi German society set the context for the tragedy with which Frankl had to come to terms and millions more just like him. Other forms of leadership appear orderly and peaceful and therefore seem to defy this axiom. These instances of leadership are either in fact non-violent or trade on a manner of imperceptible sublimated violence. Such may be the case with the United States Presidency since World War II at least. While great conservators of the status quo in many cases, the status quo preserved served to reinforce a power structure which the US dominated or shared with the Soviet Union at times. Many in smaller countries around the world would view the way the status quo was preserved as violent and, in some cases terrifying. Pax Americana may only be Pax for Americans. In this chapter, I will examine the meaning-making mechanisms employed or the way charisma is used by various leadership styles – those overtly oppressive and those subtly so. I will also look at the potential for leadership styles or ways of making meaning that trade on a less violent form of charisma.
There are a number of ways to classify leadership styles. I will choose one such taxonomy offered by Brian Hall in a number of works, the latest of which is *The Genesis Effect: Personal and Organizational Transformations*. I choose Hall not only because of his close personal work with Paolo Freire, but also because his discussion of leadership is based on a latter day developmental theory which takes into account many of the classical developmental theorists and which has learned from many of the critiques of those theories. Hall also has developed a corresponding evaluative system for identifying leadership style on which he based his theory of human development. So one’s leadership skills and capacity do not simply reflect, for Hall, a choice from a menu of style options, they emerge from the complexity with which one understands and relates to the world. I will examine his seven leadership styles in terms of René Girard’s theory of mimetic rivalry and violence to detect the potential for sublimated violence in various leadership styles.

Hall’s Taxonomy

Brian Hall approaches leadership from the standpoint of his own work in values theory. He developed his theory over decades as a result of Christian missionary work in Central America with the Anglican Church of Canada. “It was there that I met and was

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320 Hall, *Genesis*, 14-5; 89-92, for example. Although any developmental theory – and Hall’s is no exception – implies that some ways of behaving, knowing, leading or believing are more advanced or more desirable than others, Hall seems to pay particular attention to the way this has, in the past, emerged in a manner that portrays (what is often described as) masculine normative biases. Much of Hall’s work attends to an integration of (what is often described as) feminine and masculine dimensions in every person at every point of development. In fact, the higher levels of development seem to correspond with a notion of complexity and connectedness associated more with feminine epistemologies in Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women’s Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1997), 228-229.
321 Hall, *Genesis* 239-241, for example.
influenced by Paolo Freire, Ivan Illich, and Erich Fromm. Their main impact was to conscientize me to the dynamic relationship among languages, cultural, societal, and institutional development." Hall continued his work in the field of Christian pastoral counseling and, with a number of collaborators, began to expand his understanding of values which he describes as “a quality information system that when understood tells about what drives human beings and organizations and causes them to be exceptional.” Unapologetically developmental in concept, Hall’s framework builds on the work of Abraham Maslow and Milton Rokeach and specifically defines 125 values which he maps onto four phases and eight stages of development. The transitions between stages correspond to seven different leadership styles: Authoritarian, Paternalist, Manager, Facilitator, Collaborator, Servant, and Visionary. Hall’s investigations revealed that the seven leadership styles corresponded to what he, and his fellow researchers, came to realize were “seven cycles of human and spiritual development, and the leadership stages were simply one aspect of a far greater whole.” I will discuss each of these leadership styles in terms of Hall’s corresponding developmental phases, stages and worldviews as I explore the implications of Girard’s mimetic theory for each stage, and the theory in general. I include a highly abridged version of Hall’s Development Map below for a brief overview and introduction. Although my presentation of Hall’s developmental model is linear in appearance, a person’s or organization's movement through stages may not be as sequential and as linear as the process might appear on paper.

323 Hall, *Genesis*, 1.
326 Hall, *Genesis*, 93.
327 Ibid.
In the following sections, I will depart temporarily from an active discussion of education and religion. However, following the examination of leadership styles, I will re-engage the notions of education and religion as institutions which sustain patterns of behavior related to explicating reality (education) and synthesizing meaning (religion) at various stages of development. I will also discuss the need for the institutions themselves to be healthy in order to support healthy meaning-making patterns and processes.

**Leadership and Mimetic Rivalry**

The violent processes of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating as described by Girard involve five main elements: Rival 1, Rival 2, the object of desire, the scapegoat, and the hero (or sacrificed scapegoat which brings order). Each of Hall’s first five leadership styles involves relational arrangements which reflect the rivalrous violence of mimetic relationships. I will refer to the mimetic and scapegoating aspects of each leadership style as a relational posture - that is as a position taken by the leader relative to others for whom he or she serves as a leader, and, to some extent, relative to the social or relational

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entity in which the group finds or places itself. The postures relate to the way in which the leader appropriates energy for himself or herself or facilitates the deployment of energy within the social system in which he or she leads. It is the appropriation (or deployment) of energy that fuels the meaning-making synthesis which, as we have seen, is the project of leadership. Energy is simply the ability to do work. The work of leaders is to synthesize meaning. Power is the rate at which energy is consumed to do that work. What is powerful, i.e. what has the ability to deploy energy effectively, varies from social context to social context and is prescribed by the dominant myths of the relevant society. In one society, economic wealth may indicate power, another military might, in yet another religious piety, and in yet another some combination of the aforementioned or a different set of qualities altogether. Whatever power is in different contexts, how it is used determines the level of violence inhering in the leader’s charisma.

Authoritarian as Dominant Rival

The first, and therefore developmentally least advanced, of Hall’s leadership styles is that of the Authoritarian or Autocrat. The authoritarian leadership style corresponds to Hall’s “Cycle One: The Primal Cycle.” In this cycle “the adult is motivated by the need for security and material ownership, and the struggle for physical survival. Ethical choices are based on self-interest which is viewed as the most practical way for all to survive.” Rooted in the safety and security stages of Phase I: Surviving, leadership in this cycle is “necessarily Autocratic on a day to day basis, and control of

328 I am referring to the levels of social complexity in the Moral Meaning Matrix. So a leader could be taking this posture relative to an organization, institution or society.
329 Over time, Hall has shifted terms. Dictator, Authoritarian, Autocrat, and their respective derivatives are used in different publications but represent the same set of concepts.
330 Hall, *Genesis*, 94.
property, profit margin and financial flow, are of utmost importance.\textsuperscript{331} Loyalty to the organization through its leader [is an] overriding criterion for ethical choices.\textsuperscript{332}

While operation at this level is helpful in the midst of life and death crises when barked directives to get out of a burning building, for instance, would be preferable to a facilitated conversation about perceived danger in the same instance, it loses its efficacy and can even be destructive when the context for leadership is not that dire.\textsuperscript{333} The leader postures himself or herself as a dominant rival whether the leader is hurrying people out of a burning building or placing “unrealistic expectations on others” at work for the sake of controlling property, making a profit, or acting out of a deeply insecure fear about one’s place in the world. In any case, the directive nature of this leadership relationship is one of a dominant rival, the surviving fittest. In its worst form, it can take the character of “domination…a form of manipulation where the individual bullies or threatens persons into doing what he or she wants.”\textsuperscript{334} One rival has appropriated power relative to the other or others in the case of the authoritarian leader. The leader, in this case, is able to obtain and control the object of desire, whatever it is, as long as he or she maintains that power differential. The autocrat concentrates the energy needed for the meaning-making synthesis and is able to impose his or her own norms or values on the system. In that way the leader gets to decide and define whether or not the way things are is the way things ought to be. With this kind of control, the leader can direct resources to adapt the is to his or her preferred ought, or simply assert a new ought by fiat.

\textsuperscript{331} I will make reference, without further citation, to the Development Map above and which can be found in a number of Hall’s publications.
\textsuperscript{332} Hall, \textit{Genesis}, 97.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{334} Hall, \textit{Genesis}, 101.
Paternalist/Maternalist as Object of Desire

Rivalries in relationships spring up out of a common and mimetically intensified desire for an object. The centrality of the object of desire gives it a special place outside of the relationship itself. The Paternalist leaders, situated in Hall’s Cycle Two: The Familial Cycle which bridges the transition between Phase I: Surviving and Phase II: Belonging, act according to the values related to stages two and three: security and family respectively. Self worth, belonging, and being liked are among the possible values for individuals who find themselves at this particular stage and with this particular leadership style. A benevolent autocrat, this leader reserves decisions for himself or herself while listening and caring for those who are subordinate within the hierarchy. Potentially concerned with social prestige, this parental leader is as interested in looking good to his or her superior as being loved and supported by his or her peers and underlings.\(^{335}\) The followers in this case, says Hall, still feel “oppressed relative to the expression of ideas and personal authority, but feel cared for much like a child feels about a parent.”\(^{336}\) While Hall discusses the perspective of the follower in the singular, in a group setting this metaphor would suggest that fellow followers are like siblings who must curry favor with the parent. If the parent’s favor is limited in any sense then seeking it, i.e., the object of desire, is a source of rivalry and competition.

Being concerned with external desirability, the leader in this cycle avoids the conflict of the rivalry himself or herself but remains in control by taking the position as the object of desire fostering the rivalry. The Paternalist/Maternalist thereby retains the power that others in the social system want. This leader uses that energy to synthesize the

\(^{335}\) Hall, *Genesis*, 107.
\(^{336}\) Ibid., 108.
is and the ought, again in the way he or she wishes, but the others in the system assent to
and affirm the synthesis in the spirit of one-upsmanship in the competition with fellow
rivals for the affection of the synthesizer-leader.

Manager as Scapegoater

Hall characterizes the Cycle Three leader as one dedicated to “Efficient
Management.” This person, who is moving from a family-oriented life perspective to one
that is more centered in institutional life, is deepening values such as self worth,
control/duty, and tradition and discovering emergent values such as worship, work/
confidence, and law/duty.\textsuperscript{337} This leader’s worldview has shifted from “The world is a
mystery over which I have no control” to “The world is a problem with which I must
cope,” according to Hall.\textsuperscript{338}

This transition begets a leadership style that understands business as “ordered,
efficient, and productive. It is therefore managed bureaucratically through the principles
of scientific management… [such as] management by objectives… [and has a high regard
for]…respect for superiors and the rules of the…organization.”\textsuperscript{339} The manager is able to
muster the organizational team around objectives or a set of principles and practices
which are less dependent upon the subjectivity of his or her own dicta than in the two
leadership styles previously examined. Within the mimetic and rivalrous relationship at
work, then, the effective manager points away from himself or herself and away from the
group to a set of goals or rules which organize activity.

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{338} Hall, Omega, 5.
\textsuperscript{339} Hall, \textit{Genesis}, 111.
In the earlier stages, the rivalry among individuals in the system is controlled by the autocrat’s appropriation of power which gives him or her the ability to dominate the relationship entirely and the more benevolent dictator’s (Cycle Two) success in situating himself or herself as the object of desire. Still the locus of power and authority, the manager has subordinates who compete with each other for access to that power.

As discussed above, rivals ultimately wish to prevent the other in the relationship from acquiring that which they so intensely desire. Insidiously this acquisition prevention is intensified by the mimetic effects of the relationship. As the violence intensifies in the relationship, effective leaders must channel and redirect that energy. In the relationships described by Girard, communities will identify a scapegoat upon which to direct that violent energy and, in some cases, hatred. In the rawest, most "primitive" societies this might involve the actual ritual sacrifice or immolation of a human or animal victim.  

For Girard, religious sacrifices are related to religious codes, “Religious prohibitions [are] efforts to prevent mimetic rivalry from spreading throughout human communities.”  Both ritual sacrifice and religious rules manage escalating interpersonal rivalry. I suggest that attention to law and duty is attention to the same sort of control. A leader with these values recognizes, perhaps on an unconscious level, the disorder which is just beneath the surface. Organizational rules also help sustain differentiation within the system. As people increasingly imitate one another, the distinctions between and among people begin to break down. Rules, guidelines, roles, and specializations help people distinguish themselves from each other when their desires are drawing them increasingly closer to non-differentiation. Picture the classic US bureaucratic workplace

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340 Williams, 292.  
festooned with identical cubicles. The more the differentiation breaks down, the more the group moves toward a chaotic violent free-for-all.\textsuperscript{342} Girard asserts that rituals shore up the group’s ability to deal with its “loss of differentiation whose ultimate expression is the creation of a ‘mob.’”\textsuperscript{343} The effective manager attempts to control this mob dynamic with rules and practices that support and sustain the differentiation and shores up that effort with rituals that actually re-enact scapegoating. Policy-making on the one hand, which prescribes rules and procedures and defines roles relative to those rules and procedures represents the orderly way that managers try to create and preserve distinctions. On the other hand, engaging in strategic planning process that evoke “out of the box” thinking when the rules ostensibly do not apply provide (albeit a muted bureaucratic version of) a ritual that places planning goals and objectives outside the group – often on the altar of a flip chart or PowerPoint slide. By directing and focusing the attention and energy of the would-be mob outside the system of relationships on objectives, the manager gains unanimity in the group, not unlike that experienced after actual religious sacrifices which “assuage the desire for violence.”\textsuperscript{344}

With less blood and fanfare, a manager might lead a group in a planning process which outlines future goals. If the goals are thought of as the inverse of negative elements which the group desires to reverse, expel, modify or otherwise cast out or destroy, then it is easy to see, in Girard’s terms how “management by objective” can “relieve” a group of their “tensions” helping them “coalesce into a more harmonious group.”\textsuperscript{345}

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 10-11.
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{345} Hall, \textit{Genesis}, 111; Girard, \textit{Berkshire Review}, 11-12.
As Hall points out, one of the tendencies of those operating in Cycle Three is to be overly competitive and alienating of persons who are not loyal to the system.\textsuperscript{346} In either case the identification and expulsion now gives the group what Girard would identify as “a single purpose, which is to prevent the scapegoat from harming them, by expelling and destroying him.”\textsuperscript{347} Managers execute plans. Managers are executives. They “carry out” problems from within the community and on behalf of the community. Sometimes the problems they carry out of the system are the employees whose salaries must be cut from the budget in order to protect, for example, the third quarter earnings statement since it is, after all, the celebrated (i.e. holier than personnel) objective of the flip chart ritual.

The executive or manager acts, in religious analogue as a priest, organizing communities around a set of rules and rituals which translate the violence of mimetically rivalrous relationship into orderly differentiation and/or rallying around common efforts. The effective manager exploits this dynamic to maintain order and create meaning. The energy necessary to synthesize the is and the ought comes from the energy of the rivalries themselves. That energy is re-channeled by the manager for the maintenance of the community. In so doing, he or she creates legitimacy and plausibility for the actions necessary to manage the community. The manager does not have to inject his or her own power into the system, but must effectively appropriate the energy brought to the system by the group members. The least dictatorial of what Hall describes as three levels of autocracy, the manager leads by managing the scapegoating tendencies of the group.

\textsuperscript{346} Hall, \textit{Genesis}, 114.
\textsuperscript{347} Girard, \textit{Berkshire Review}, 12.
Facilitator as Victim

For Hall the next transition is an important one. The move from Phase II to Phase III signals a move from an “Autocratic” to a “Participative” lifestyle. The person making this transition is now beginning to see the world as “a project in which [he/she] must participate.” Emerging values for the person in Cycle Four, which Hall labels the “Intrapersonal Cycle,” include equality, service, actualization/wholeness, and empathy/generosity. “The strong institutional values of Phase IIb and Phase IIIA [cause] the feeling of uncertainty in the areas of decision making….Ethical issues no longer seem black and white [for instance].

In “The Omega Factor,” Hall refers to Cycle Three’s leadership style as “Facilitator.” In *Genesis Effect* he uses the term “Enabler…an interim style due to its conflictual nature. The leader is caught between adherence to institutional demands, and a new view of human dignity and sense of self. The leader/follower distinction is not clear for this person.” For these reasons, it is important to consider this cycle and this leadership style in relation to the one preceding it and the one following it. It is the transition between manager and collaborator. The group-defined self must give way to the interpersonally and intrapersonally defined self. Unlike the autocrat whose identity derives from the rivalry which he or she dominates, unlike the Paternalist/Maternalist whose identity is derived from sustaining desirability, and unlike the manager who looks for identity outside of himself or herself and the group, the locus of authority and identity

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348 Hall, Omega, 12.
349 Hall, *Genesis*, 117.
350 Ibid., 119.
351 Hall, Omega, 5.
352 Hall, *Genesis*, 120.
begins to shift internally at this point. The facilitator or enabler is beginning to put the group process above his or her own needs or direction.

At the center of the group process, the facilitator or enabler begins to diminish himself or herself for the sake of the community. In a metaphorical sense, the self as center of power dies as the leader begins an inward search for personal authority and direction. In this way, the leader is offering himself or herself as a scapegoat to the group, allowing them to unify around his or her own self-sacrifice. The scapegoated leader facilitates the process of meaning-making by enabling the members of the group to begin synthesizing the is and the ought with their counterparts who are brought together by the harmonizing effects of the relative diminution of the leader. It is possible that some of the leadership teams examined by Bensimon and Neumann involved university presidents who were operating out of this – or a later – cycle of leadership development. The concept of leadership team would only begin to make sense at this level of personal development.

Collaborator as Hero

In Hall’s terms, this diminution results in a leader who now transcends the group dynamics, whose presence is not integral to the function of the group, but whose influence has the effect of unifying the group, empowering its members to the point where the leader should be able to delegate to a competent colleague anything for which the leader has responsibility. “This person sees the whole first and the parts second” and

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353 Hall, Omega, 12.
354 Apparently Girard at one time shied away from using the term “sacrifice” in a way that he now admits has some positive dimensions to it. Understanding it as the “willingness to give oneself to others” is a possible positive reading of the term. Williams, 292.
is susceptible to the “corrupting influences of power, particularly manifest in the person’s inability to accept personal limitations.”

Based in Cycle Five which is a transition between values which emphasize “Vocation” and those which emphasize “New Order,” this self-initiating Phase II leader move[s] beyond personal human issues to integrating a human systems perspective. The Collaborator-Hero has died to himself or herself and to the group, and has moved into a (developmentally) unprecedented place from which to empower the group to realize its potential for partnerships and for meaning making in a context that transcends the interpersonal and intra-group dynamics.

While the sacrifice of the leader in the previous cycle is not a bloody one and does not involve the type of violence directed at a victim that we might observe in other social situations, the leader’s diminution of himself or herself is for the sake of the order and harmony of the group. Antithetically, then, the leader’s prominence, if reasserted, could threaten the order and may be treated as such. When the sacrificial transition is complete and the leader is no longer a central figure, the leader may experience what Girard calls “double transference.” Prior to the sacrifice, those perpetrating the violence blame the victim as a scapegoat responsible for the disorder of the group. Once the sacrifice is complete and the desire for violence is satisfied, those who previously converged upon the scapegoat now celebrate the victim whose sacrifice restored order and assuaged violent impulses that otherwise would have run rampant throughout the group. So, not only is the scapegoat seen as a threat to the order of the group prior to sacrifice, but also he or she is venerated as a god or hero once the group’s order is also attributed to his or her sacrifice. So the leader gets the blame for the disorder and the credit for restoration or

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355 Hall, Genesis, 124.
356 Hall, Omega, 5.
357 Ibid., 293.
preservation of order. The collaborator is the transcendent leader to whom such credit accrues.

Servant as Transformer

“Servant leadership,” according to Hall, “is different than all other forms, in that it not only moves beyond any form of autocratic tendency, but it also transforms the value of independence into interdependence.”  

358 This style thwarts rivalry, scapegoating, and acquisitive desire by causing “creative synergy in the group that cannot be obtained by any one individual alone. In other words, leadership beyond this cycle is always plural in form.”  

359 Meaning is made by the group which shares energy as it synthesizes the is and the ought. Leaders in this category are beginning to understand the world as “a mystery for which we must care.”  

360 As the leader moves away from embodying a mythic understanding of leadership and relational dynamics, he or she exposes a new way to sustain order and meaning at the expense of no one, thus demythologizing the organization’s behavior and values. In so doing, he or she aids in the transformation of the organization into a non-rivalrous and, therefore, non-violent community.

Up to this point, the discussion has centered on leadership styles that are based in Girard's assessment of rivalry in human relationships. Moreover, that rivalry is mimetic and, by that mechanism, self-intensifying. Each leadership style thus far has described different ways for leaders to locate themselves relative to that human dynamic for the purpose of channeling, coping with, or exploiting the power of the underlying violence for the purpose of meaning-making. For Girard, this is a “basic principle behind the
mechanism which, in a single decisive moment, curtails reciprocal violence and imposes structure on the community.”

Further, Girard suggests that “in order to retain its structuring influence the generative violence must remain hidden.” Understanding human relationships in this way is unattractive and confounded by the fact that the mechanism’s effectiveness depends on its own misunderstanding. Modernity hides the mythic mechanism with claims that modernity and myth are antonyms. “We are not dealing with the sort of repressed desires that everyone is really eager to put on public display, but with the most tenacious myths of modernization; with everything, in short, that claims to be free of all mythical influence.” The understanding that modernity is free of myths is in itself a myth that helps conceal the influence of the mythic mechanisms that Girard suggests are insidiously most effective when hidden or concealed. The servant leader exposes this myth and thereby the underlying violence of the mimetic rivalry in all the previous stages, fundamentally disrupting the mechanism and thereby interrupting the cycle of acquisitive desire and violence that humans perpetuate for the sake of maintaining order which we, ironically, confuse with peace.

Girard argues that the most effective exposition of the mimetic mechanism is one which reveals the innocence of the scapegoat or sacrificial victim. The dynamics leading up to the identification and expulsion or immolation of the scapegoat ascribe to that person or problem the guilt for causing disorder and lack of differentiation. In religious terms, the scapegoat embodies the sins of the community. The community must be rid of

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362 By “generative violence,” Girard refers to the source within human nature of mythic stories of rivalry and violence such as that between Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel, etc. The sacralization of these texts and stories in some ways enshrouds the violence itself in a holy opacity that allows the dynamic to perpetuate itself without the perpetrators’ awareness of its inherently violent nature. Ibid., 310.

363 Ibid., 318.
the sin and therefore rid of the scapegoat. Revealing the social utility of the mechanism, which depends on absolute conviction that the scapegoat is, in fact, guilty of the above, requires demonstrating that the scapegoat is innocent of that which the community has ascribed to him or her. For Girard, the Christian Gospel demonstrates that “Jesus…provides the scapegoat par excellence – he is the most arbitrary of victims because he is also the least violent. At the same time he is the least arbitrary and the most meaningful because he is the least violent.”

Girard argues that the insight of the Gospel is itself misunderstood for the sake of perpetuating the violent structures which underlie all institutional forms, including religious ones. The mythic misunderstanding of the Gospel Scapegoat is that Christ was modeling a self-sacrifice or that God the Father required the sacrifice of Christ for the expiation of sin. Girard points out that “Jesus dies, not as a sacrifice, but in order that there may be no more sacrifices.” Exposing this insight distinguishes the servant phase of leadership from the scapegoat-hero coupling of cycles four and five, which depend upon a (self-)sacrificial system of meaning-making. So whether the scapegoat was the manager’s set of planning objectives, the facilitator, or the collaborator, the servant-transformer exposes the scapegoat as a social artifact and not an inherently necessary component of group order. By so doing, the servant-transformer offers a new paradigm for group meaning-making that is collective and cooperative in nature.

365 Ibid.
366 Ibid., 210.
Visionary as Strange Attractor

Hall’s developmental model is linear in appearance, but recall that a person’s or organization’s movement through stages may not be as sequential and as linear as the process might appear on paper. Hall relies on metaphors and principles from physics and mathematics’ chaos theory to describe his system. A values-based vision draws one into the future as if it were a “strange attractor” giving order to what might otherwise seem to be a set of disconnected events, relationships, and behavior.

The most developed vision-level values which draw one into the future are represented in Cycle Seven, among them are wisdom and transcendence/ecority. For Girard, the quest for peace and wisdom are intertwined and mutually confounding; “You cannot become aware of the truth unless you act in opposition to the laws of violence, and you cannot act in opposition to the laws of violence unless you already grasp the truth.” This is rare and difficult to achieve. In chapter ten, I will flesh out a specific example of a Palestinian Melkite priest whose actions and influence seem consistent with visionary leadership in that they embody Girard’s admonition that “the Gospels tell us that to escape violence it is necessary to love one’s brother completely – to abandon the violent mimesis.” Notice Girard modifies the word mimeses. Mimesis itself is fundamental to human relationships and “is not to be done away with, but is to be


\[368\] Hall, Omega, 4.

\[369\] Hall describes wisdom as “Knowledge of what is true and right coupled with just judgment to action” and transcendence/ecority as “Simultaneous awareness of the finite and the infinite as one comprehends the ecological balance of the world.” Hall, *Genesis*, 268, 269.


\[371\] Ibid., 215.
fulfilled, transformed, and ‘converted.’” Imitating love at the level described above uses the mimetic effect, not for rivalry and violence but for peace.

Hall describes the leader in this cycle as “Visionary” in “The Omega Factor” and as “Prophetic” in The Genesis Effect. In either case, leadership at this level involves “interdependent governance by a peer team, [which manages] a system on the basis of pre-chosen value clusters.” In addition Cycle Seven – and the people and organizations operating within that cycle reconnect with values and people in Phase I.” The whole person at this cycle therefore integrates the values of survival, security and self-preservation as they are experienced by others at a global level…. Issues of world peace and poverty are going to be major action concerns.

If leaders in Cycle Seven are embodying Girard’s love in community and are, as Hall suggests, able to relate to any person at any level of values development, then not only do the vision values act as strange attractors, but also the visionaries themselves do, if by no other means than through the mimetic mechanism so well-rehearsed at any of the stages of previous development. Visionaries as strange attractors draw people into their own futures through mimesis but replace acquisitive desire and rivalry with interdependence, wisdom, transcendence/ecority, and love. The future into which others, then, are being drawn is one not founded on violence and sustained by the myths which mask the inherency of violence, but one formed in community that understands leadership as a community proposition. Because leadership is a meaning-making activity and, in Cycle Seven is a community act, synthesizing the is and the ought in this Cycle

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373 For Girard this requires the imitation of Christ which the Gospels advocate. Ibid., 24-25.
374 Hall, Genesis, 130.
375 Ibid., 131.
generates its own self-sustaining energy as meaning is internalized, expressed, and synthesized simultaneously by a synergetic interdependent community whose mimetic love intensifies and compounds as rapidly as mimetic rivalry.

Hall places Gandhi and Saint Francis of Assisi at Cycle Seven. My appropriation of Girard’s work for Cycle Seven comes from a chapter entitled the “Divinity of Christ,” underscoring the rarity of Cycle Seven leaders. However, Hall suggests that technology, global communication, and advances in education are combining to produce an increasing number of Cycle Six leaders who may later be capable of advancing into Cycle Seven.

Hall’s analysis is very much informed by his experience with the Christian faith. Girard grounds his anthropological insights in his understanding of Christianity as well. Both would claim that the theories they have put forward can be generalized beyond Christianity. However, for the sake of this dissertation, it is sufficient to understand simply the correlation between an example of a religious myth system and a particular taxonomy which I have shown it influences. My analysis to this point is clearly through the lenses of Christianity, particularly as it is practiced in the United States. The conclusions I have drawn thus far do not need to be extrapolated to other contexts in a strict manner. The particular influence of Christian theology on a particular taxonomy of leadership styles merely demonstrates the functional relationship between the deployment of power by leaders to make meaning on the one hand and a religious symbol system on the other. It also provides landmarks by which to judge various ways of making meaning in violent and non-violent ways. In other words, it documents the existence of various types of charisma.

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In subsequent analysis, I will examine how this functional relationship that is capable of encoding violence in social systems, such as the organizations led by those who operate with Hall’s first five leadership types, can translate through to broader and narrower levels of social complexity and influence culture formation on various levels. Recall also, that even though the examples I use above locate these conclusions in a particular context, the context, namely the United States, holds an unusually influential place in global affairs and therefore the meaning-making systems prescribed and reinforced by dominant myths in this context have the potential of exporting themselves into other contexts. This is not unlike the ways Freire observed colonizing norms oppressing indigenous cultures by forcing the colonized to communicate using the language of the colonial power. So for good or for ill, given the present international conditions, the degree to which meaning-making in the United States is violent influences the level of violence in meaning-making systems around the world.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CULTURES AS COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

Leadership involves the more or less violent ways of making meaning. Examining the meaning-making process on organizational, institutional, societal, and global levels demonstrates more and less violent ways of relating on all levels of social complexity. Using the language of the Moral Meaning Matrix, leadership on the organizational level appropriates authority to synthesize language and category in tradition. On the institutional level, a leader balances jurisdictions for the sake of synthesizing symbol and nomos in significant rituals. On the societal level, a leader deploys power to synthesize ethos and worldview in coherent myths. Global leaders, then, are challenged with detecting and helping to create a new common global culture which can see the is and the ought simultaneously and with sustainable energy.

This chapter will explicate the mechanism by which the various levels of social complexity in the Moral Meaning Matrix are linked. Once those links are established, I will expose in greater detail how the meaning-making processes, evoked by leaders at various stages of leadership development, actually use energy to synthesize the is and the ought in what might be thought of as a theory of cultural thermodynamics. Detailing minor distinctions among the various cycles of leadership will reveal a major distinction between what, in Victor Turner’s terms, I will call uninitiated and initiated leaders. Finally, I will show that even though some leaders are initiated into meaning-making
mechanisms that release rather than consume energy, most leaders operate as if the social systems they lead are closed to external influence. This presupposition of leaders contributes to an over-reliance on violent types of charisma.

The Social Fractal

To gain perspective on the interlocking relationships among the various levels of social complexity, I turn again to chaos physics and mathematics to order and integrate otherwise disparate levels of analysis within the Moral Meaning Matrix. I wish to use the idea of fractal to explore the possibility that each of the levels outlined in the schema are comprised of infinitely repeating patterns expressed successively by increasingly contextual levels. The universe level is comprised of the patterns of societies; societies, institutions; institutions, organizations; organizations, groups; groups, persons and interpersonal relationships. Fractal geometry suggests that patterns repeat on infinitely refined scales. Therefore adjustments in interpersonal patterns of relating require or cause adjustments in societal patterns and vice versa.

Developmental theories focus primarily on the personal, interpersonal and, increasingly, on the organizational level. But, to my knowledge few have answered the call of The Good Society to examine institutional development in a way that effects changes at the societal level. To that end, I propose to use this framework to develop further a theory of leadership development that can effect growth on all levels including the institutional. In order to do that, I will relate the institutional level of the matrix to its neighboring levels of society and organizations. I will examine the phenomenon of cultures, including the prospect of global culture, using, primarily, Samuel Huntington’s

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377 Gleick, 110
I will look at the simultaneous interconnectedness of multiple levels of social complexity using the emerging ideas of network and complexity theories.

Network and Complexity Theories

The structural nature of the Moral Meaning Matrix combined with the progressivism of Hall’s developmental theory opens the discussion up to a post-structural critique that would expose the inadequacy of any theoretical construct used to describe the dynamic reality of social relationships. Furthermore, such a systematic approach purporting to be systemic in scope runs the risk of moving from the realm of the descriptive to the normative. Even if such models could succeed at adequately describing reality at any given moment in time, the very articulation of such models holds the potential of shaping reality, or at least future interpretations of it, by the model’s influential introduction into the language used to understand social dynamics themselves. Conversely, and perhaps more insidiously, is the prospect that the normative has bled over into the descriptive in the first instance. Pure description is thereby rendered impossible by certain normative assumptions that remain unarticulated but which are given expression in a so-called descriptive framework.

Rather than try to unpack what those hidden assumptions might be or to try to sterilize the models so as to be purely descriptive, it is wholly consistent with the Moral Meaning Matrix that such an ambiguous interplay of the normative and descriptive (ontological) would occur in any attempt to make sense out of reality. The enterprise of

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this investigation and analysis is a meaning-making exercise itself. It is a project of trying
to reconcile reality with theory in a way that can influence reality in the future.

The contribution of deconstructionists is to expose the normative nature of models
which purport to be purely descriptive. The purported descriptions take on normative
attributes either by embedding normative assumptions or by creating them. Theoreticians,
then, are left with two possibilities: abandon any attempts to be descriptive or
acknowledge the interplay between the descriptive and the normative. I have chosen the
latter path because this choice allows me to proceed with a pursuit of a comprehensive
understanding of the relationship between social change and leadership development but
not one that can represent itself as a closed system devoid of influences external to the
system being described. Philosopher Mark C. Taylor makes a helpful distinction in this
regard between the terms “totalizing” and “whole” when responding to deconstructionist
critiques that might otherwise render theoretical discussion futile. He reacts specifically
to the deconstructionist perspective articulated by Jacques Derrida.

What Derrida cannot imagine is a nontotalizing system or structure that
nonetheless acts as a whole. Important work now being done in
complexity studies suggests that such systems and structures are not
merely theoretically conceivable but are actually at work in natural, social
and cultural networks.\textsuperscript{379}

Derrida and others point out that totalizing structures or systems are closed. For instance,
theories, as mine seems to be up to this point, that neatly sum up all possible occurrences
can represent and behave as totalizing structures. Taylor points out that “the violence of
structuralism results from persistent efforts to reduce difference and repress otherness.”\textsuperscript{380}

This provides a stark warning as I proceed. It is possible for me in developing a theory

\textsuperscript{379} Mark C. Taylor, \textit{The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture} (Chicago: The University of
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., 62.
about violence – violence caused by imposing norms on reality – that I develop a
normative system with the capacity to be as violent as the systems which I examine and
hope to transform. But there must be a way to proceed without creating the illusion of a
closed and complete system or structure because, as Taylor points out:

*Deconstruction changes nothing.* While exposing systems and structures
as incomplete and perhaps repressive, deconstruction inevitably leaves
them in place. This is not merely because deconstruction involves
theoretical analyses instead of practical action but also because of the
specific conclusions reached by theoretical critique. Instead of showing
how totalizing structures can actually be changed, deconstruction
demonstrates that the tendency to totalize can never be overcome and,
thus, that repressive structures are inescapable.\(^{381}\)

As an example of a system that is non-totalizing but acts as a whole, Taylor turns
to the emergence of technology in the twentieth century. Its implications on
manufacturing and on communication are profound, even to the point that production has
been crowded out by information as the currency of the modern economy. The influence
of media and technology “cannot help but reach the very limits of the system, as soon as
entire sectors of society topple from *productive* forces to the pure and simple status of
*reproductive* forces.”\(^{382}\) A deconstructionist critique would argue that even an
information-based society is closed and that any presumptions about social arrangements,
for example, based on this paradigm are in fact structural in nature and ignore
fundamental presuppositions. But Taylor observes something more profound here, a
system and a paradigm that does not construct walls to resist difference. He observes:

The technologies of production and reproduction in network culture are
creating strange loops that are transforming rather than destroying
differences and oppositions that long seemed secure. In a world where
screens displace walls, neither map nor territory, code nor substance,
information nor matter, image nor reality, virtuality nor actuality,

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\(^{381}\) Ibid., 65.
\(^{382}\) Ibid., 66.
simulacra nor the real is what it had seemed to be when it was the opposite of its presumed other. Something else, something different, something new is emerging.\textsuperscript{383}

In this chapter and in the chapters that follow, I intend to re-read the Moral Meaning Matrix as a system that acts as a whole but does not attempt to totalize. In the analysis of signification processes that follow, I hope to offer yet another example of a model that avoids structural pitfalls of crowding out difference without simply stopping at a deconstructionist self-critique.

In order to proceed down that path, it is important to rehearse here some of the important elements of complexity studies or complexity theory. It is first of all important to have a grasp of the overwhelming influence of many powerful factors at work in shaping social life in the twentieth and, now, in the twenty-first century. One of the most salient metaphors which social and natural scientists are using to describe these influences is the image of the network. Not only does this metaphor connote the influence of rapidly developing technology in our lives during what has become known as the Information Age, it also provides the possibility for understanding the rapid and seemingly unpredictable connections that people make with people by various means. In sum, it describes the means and results of human connectedness. Social and natural scientists alike describe this nexus of relationships as network culture.

\textsuperscript{383} Ibid., 72.
network culture whose structure and dynamics we are only beginning to fathom.\textsuperscript{384}

Understanding nature and culture in this way allows us to take into account the diversity observed in most systems by social and natural scientists, to respect chance and to begin to describe randomness. Rather than another attempt to create a paradigm that applies itself uniformly to all circumstances, network theory allows for structure and chance to live together in what is known as a self-organizing system. Rather than leaving us adrift in a sea of lack of understanding of deconstructed social and natural phenomena, network theory provides an opportunity to describe the complexity of relationships by demonstrating the existence and arrangements of relationships in the first place.

Network Theory

Physicist Albert-László Barabasi distinguishes what he terms “real networks” from classical theory about the randomness of networks developed thoroughly over the last half-century by mathematicians Paul Erdös and Alfréd Rényi. Random network theory “equated complexity with randomness. If a network was too complex to be captured in simple terms, it urged us to describe it as random. Sure enough, society, the cell, communication networks, and the economy are all complex enough to fit the bill.”\textsuperscript{385} With a nod of respect to the role that randomness and chance play in the construction of real networks, Barabasi describes such systems as “spiderless webs.”

In the absence of a spider, there is no meticulous design behind these networks either. Real networks are self-organized. They offer a vivid example of how the independent actions of millions of nodes and links lead to spectacular emergent behavior. Their spiderless scale-free topology

\textsuperscript{384} Taylor, 4, 5.
is an unavoidable consequence of their evolution. Each time nature is ready to spin a new web, unable to escape its own laws, it creates a network whose fundamental structural features are those of dozens of other webs spun before. The robustness of the laws governing the emergence of complex networks is the explanation for the ubiquity of the scale-free topology, describing such diverse systems as the network behind language, the links between proteins in the cell, sexual relationships between people, the wiring diagram of a computer chip, the metabolism of the cell, the Internet, Hollywood, the World Wide Web, the web of scientists linked by coauthorships and the intricate collaborative web behind the economy, to name only a few.\(^\text{386}\)

So what are the implications of understanding society as a network, or perhaps more accurately, as a network of networks? In order to answer that question, I will analyze the model which provides the metaphor I am appropriating. Part of that analysis must be, however, determining whether the model is a metaphor that aids in describing complex social systems or an actual description of the system itself or both. Barabasi seems to take the approach that networks are not only a metaphor but also an actual description of social phenomena. In fact, he labels it a new science that provides the benefits of a metaphor, namely creating a “new language…allowing us to casually converse about ideas and issues that we were struggling to describe before.”\(^\text{387}\) However, he studies social systems as well as physical, biological, and technological systems using mathematical tools. To the extent that all mathematics is metaphorical, the new science remains in that realm. To the extent that mathematics describes in common terms the

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\(^{386}\) Barabasi, 221. Barabasi uses several technical terms in this excerpt. A node is any entity within a network. A link is a pathway (or relational connection) between two nodes. A scale-free network differs from a classically understood random network whose scale is determined by most nodes sharing an average number of links as described by a normal bell curve distribution. Scale-free networks, by contrast, have many nodes with few links and a few nodes with many links. The likelihood of a node having a specific number of links in complex networks cannot be predicted by a normal bell-curve distribution. Thus, such networks were regarded as unpredictable and, mathematically speaking, indescribable until researchers noticed that the likelihood of occurrence of highly-linked hubs, for instance, can be described and predicted by a power law degree distribution, which, unlike a bell curve, when graphed does not exhibit a peak. Instead a power law degree distribution graph exhibits a curve that decreases continuously (as opposed to the exponential decreases seen in the tails of a bell curve). For a more thorough description of scale-free networks, see Barabasi, 66-72.

\(^{387}\) Barabasi, 222.
properties of diverse phenomena, then he has developed mathematical formulations that aid in the understanding of social as well as physical complexities.

What then are the properties of complex, or in his terms, real networks? While Erdös and Rényi easily described the properties of random networks, these networks did not exhibit any particular order. The arrangement of each new connection with extant nodes was, in fact, random. What Barabasi observed in most complex, real, or naturally occurring networks, however, was that connections formed between nodes in a non-random fashion thus yielding the bell curve useless in describing and predicting the activity of growing networks as they became scale-free and developed hubs – or highly connected nodes – while many, if not most, nodes remained only minimally connected by comparison. It appeared as if these networks were moving from randomness to orderliness. Reinforcing this notion was the fact that in natural systems, power laws - the formulae describing the emergence of hubs – emerge only rarely. In fact they are closely associated with physical phase transitions such as that state between water and ice and the point at which a ferromagnetic metal becomes magnetized. Power laws signal a time of flux, but one that is moving from the disarray of water molecules to the crystalline form of ice or from the randomly arranged magnetic spins of millions of atoms to a unanimously aligned array of spins. Both of these phase transitions, and others, occur at what scientists call critical points. For water turning to ice, for example, the critical point is the freezing temperature of 0° Celsius.  

The mathematics of most naturally occurring networks seem to indicate that such networks are in a state of change and that time or some other factor can evoke orderliness out of randomness at any moment. Instead, Barabasi concludes that the scale-free

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388 Barabasi, 73,74.
networks are not moving from disorder to order in the traditional conception of order. They are, in fact, stable and ordered in a highly complex manner, a manner which by and large defies our ability to understand all of their properties.  

The emergence of the power laws, then, is attributable to at least two factors, according to Barabasi. The first is growth. Erdős and Rényi had categorized networks as random. In order for this assumption to obtain for as long as it did required those interested to treat networks as static entities. Barabasi’s work introduces the dynamics of growth to network theory. Growth alone does not propel a network from random distribution to power law hub-creation. The second element, which Barabasi terms “preferential attachment,” when combined with the dynamics of growth, leads to the creation of hubs. Random growth of a network makes it likely that the original node will end up with the most number of connections. If the network grows large enough, the random nature of establishing links eventually distributes out in a bell curve average number of links per node. However, in real networks, some nodes are clearly favored over others and the key seems to be that nodes prefer to link to the nodes with the most number of other links. This dynamic still favors the earliest nodes in the network, but it favors them to the extent that a bell curve quickly becomes inadequate to describe or predict the number of linkages any one node will have. The prediction and description of hub creation in these cases requires a power law.  

Still, observation confounds theory. Some nodes in a network seem to be favored, but not because of their temporal seniority but because they have qualities that attract a number of linkages. Barabasi describes this inherent quality as “fitness.” The more fit a

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389 Barabasi, 91.
390 Barabasi, 86-9.
node is, that is the more serviceable the node is to others in the network, the more links it will form within the network. Barabasi uses the rapid and late rise of Google on the search engine stage as an example of a fit node that generates more hits than competitors because it is more attractive to internet users. Google was not at all the first search engine.\footnote{Barabasi, 93-5.} When taken together, these three factors: growth, preferential attachment, and fitness create hubs of hierarchical significance, in terms of number of linkages, within networks.\footnote{In order to account for the popularity or fitness of certain nodes and the coalescence of new linkages around those nodes, Barabasi and his students draw on quantum physics to show a correlation between a factor measuring node fitness and the extent to which that node would emerge as a hub. Barabasi, 96-102.}

Networks, then, provide a tool for understanding complex social dynamics and we are growing in our understanding of how those networks behave. Interestingly, these descriptions defy the well-known and well-trodden fields of randomness and structure. While ordered, scale-free networks do not behave in static or structured ways as we have traditionally understood social theory, neither do the observations legitimate a deconstructionist critique that there are no generalizable laws other than the law that there are no generalizable laws. Network theory has the potential to hold both diversity and holism together.

Network theory alone – a largely mathematical construct – is not comprehensive enough, however, to describe the dynamics of relationships within social networks. It does, though, open the door to understanding social networks in terms of another emerging theory. How do people interact with each other in an orderly but evolving network? The key to understanding evolving order is in understanding the concept of
self-organization. How do social networks, or any other networks, for that matter, organize themselves? To use Barabasi’s image, how does a web develop absent a spider?

Complexity Theory

To answer this question, it is important to recall that even though scale-free networks are not, in Barabasi’s estimation, moving through a phase change from disorder to order, they are perpetually evolving through the dynamics generally described by phase change physics and mathematics. In that sense scale–free networks exist in this in-between state which requires theoretical exposition that is different than the exposition required by chaotic or random systems and different than that required by systems that are in a, relatively speaking, static state of orderliness. Scale-free networks behave neither like water nor ice. They are also not in transition from one to the other. They are, however, constantly evolving.

Nobel Prize winning chemist and physicist Ilya Prigogine, along with his colleague Isabelle Stengers in *Order out of Chaos* approach this problem from the standpoint of measuring the way the system handles energy. Crystals, like ice, are “equilibrium structures” in the language of classical thermodynamics. To describe the state that resembles phase transition, but is stable, Prigogine and Stengers introduced the term “dissipative structures.”

[This] notion …emphasize[s] the close association, at first paradoxical in such situations between structure and order on the one side, and dissipation and waste on the other…heat transfer was considered a source of waste in classical thermodynamics. In [dissipative structures] it becomes a source of order.393

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393 Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order out of Chaos* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1984), 143.
Dissipative structures are found in conditions that Prigogine and Stengers describe as “far from equilibrium” and exhibit organization on the supramolecular or macroscopic scale. Whereas crystalline properties are reducible to the properties of the molecules that make up the crystal, dissipative structures essentially exhibit global properties that are a function of the “global situation of nonequilibrium producing them.”

Dissipative structures and their properties offer insight beyond a scientific novelty to a very puzzling contradiction in modern sciences. The Second Law of Thermodynamics establishes that the universe is increasing in entropy or randomness. Yet, Darwinian evolutionary theory lays out a sustained process of increased organization in which increasingly complex beings have emerged from less complex beings by a process of natural selection. How could Darwin’s processes survive the entropic forces of the universe? Prigogine and Stengers dispute neither Darwinian assumptions nor thermodynamic laws. Rather, dissipative structures demonstrate how increasing entropy or randomness does not preclude organization or order. “According to Prigogine, disorder does not merely destroy order, structure, and organization, but is also a condition of their formation and transformation. New dynamic states, which emerge in conditions far from equilibrium, can temporarily check entropic forces.”

These dynamic states are the subject of Taylor’s inquiries and the inspiration for his work to develop new theoretical parameters for understanding systems that seem to behave in ways that we once would have written off as random. These complex systems which resist simple explanations seem to exist somewhere between what we conventionally conceive as order and chaos.

394 Prigogine and Stengers, 143, 144.
395 Taylor, 15-16.
Complexity theory attempts to identify common characteristics of diverse complex systems and to determine the principles and laws by which they operate. Moreover students of complexity share the conviction that the systems they investigate are not limited to natural phenomena but can also be discerned in social, economic, political, and cultural life.³⁹⁶

Complex systems exhibit the following characteristics.

1. Complex systems are comprised of many different parts, which are connected in multiple ways.
2. Diverse components can interact both serially and in parallel to generate sequential as well as simultaneous effects and events.
3. Complex systems display spontaneous self-organization, which complicates interiority and exteriority in such a way that the line that is supposed to separate them becomes undecidable.
4. The structures resulting from spontaneous self-organization emerge from but are not necessarily reducible to the interactivity of the components or elements in the system.
5. Though generated by local interactions, emergent properties tend to be global.
6. Inasmuch as self-organizing structures emerge spontaneously, complex systems are neither fixed nor static but develop or evolve. Such evolution presupposes that complex systems are both open and adaptive.
7. Emergence occurs in a narrow possibility space lying between conditions that are too ordered and too disordered. This boundary or margin is the “edge of chaos,” which is always far from equilibrium.³⁹⁷

Any examination of complex systems is as concerned with the properties of the whole as it is with the functions of the parts. What is fascinating is how the parts and the whole seem to form a partnership in the creation of a self-organizing system. Taylor draws on Mark Millonas’s study of a swarm of bees to illustrate this point. “The swarm as a whole operates according to a logic that cannot be discerned in any of the activities of the individual bees.”³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 141.
³⁹⁷ Ibid., 142, 3. Taylor’s third characteristic refers to the ambiguity of the system’s boundaries. It is open to its environment so it is difficult to determine what factors are inside the system, influencing it and being influenced by it, and what factors are outside the system. It is, in other words, symbiotically related to its environment in way that makes it difficult to draw distinctions of interiority and exteriority.
³⁹⁸ Ibid., 153.
Belgian chemist Jean Louis Deneubourg formulated the principle governing these interactions and named it “allelomimesis.” In an effort to understand the behavior of wasps recorded by E.O. Wilson, Deneubourg extended Prigogine’s theory of nonlinear self-organization to the activities of insects. In allelomimetic behavior, the conduct of each individual is influenced by the activities of its neighbors.\(^ {399}\)

The introduction of the study of swarms as a point of departure for discussion brings us back to examination of networks. Likening swarms to neural networks, Taylor and Millonas suggest that networks learn; they are stable despite fluctuations, but when conditions change the stability and the learning provide the robustness for the networks to adapt.\(^ {400}\) The dynamism of these processes lead Taylor to identify them as complex adaptive systems.

Emerging self-organizing systems are complex adaptive systems. For complex systems to maintain themselves, they must remain open to their environment and change when conditions require it. Complex adaptive systems, therefore, inevitably evolve, or, more accurately, coevolve. As the dynamics of evolving complexity are clarified, it not only becomes apparent that complex adaptive systems evolve, but it also appears that the process of evolution is actually a complex adaptive system.\(^ {401}\)

In inescapably anthropomorphic terms, Taylor details what we are learning about the way complex adaptive systems learn. Even systems not characterized by a high degree of human involvement exhibit properties akin to what we would know as memory of the past, experience of the present, and anticipation of the future.\(^ {402}\) In evolution of species, for instance, a genetic mutation which might occur by chance could endow a particular organism (or more likely over time several organisms) with a superior means of appropriating nourishment, a more efficient way to reproduce, or the ability to outlive other organisms of the same species. Any of these advantages increase the likelihood that

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399 Ibid., 153.
400 Ibid., 156.
401 Ibid., 156.
402 Ibid., 168.
the mutation will be passed along in the genetic code of offspring. In this case chance has appropriated the experience of the present – increased ability to survive and/or reproduce – and encoded it in memory of the past. The mutation may come to be prevalent in the genetic code of subsequent generations of that species because it offered a successful adaptation. In the way that the system favored the successful adaptation at that theoretical initial point of the genetic mutation occurring, it anticipated future needs of the organism and the species as a whole.

These processes, in non-human networks at least, are “telenomic” rather than “teleological,” that is “end-directed but not purposeful…neither linear nor circular.”

Drawing on the work of physicist Murray Gell-Mann, Taylor describes this end-directed process which can appropriate past experiences for future behavior. These systems recognize patterns in the data they encounter. They do more than just store that data, however, they apparently generalize or abstract that information into “schemata” which they appropriate when encountering new data. The systems evolve new behavior in response to the combined effect of the new data and the schemata. Previous data, including previous behavior of the system, are summarized and compressed into a schema that can formulate competing variants of possible future behavior. Encounters with present data lead to new behavior based on the selection of one of these competing variants. The consequences of the action are fed back into the system modifying the schema, eliminating the schema altogether as inadequate or elevating one schema as more viable and effective than other schemata.

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403 Ibid., 169.
404 Taylor, 166-67.
405 Taylor reproduces Gell-Mann’s diagram of how a complex adaptive system works. It is this diagram I am attempting to explain here. Ibid., 167.
Halachic Learning

Theologian Richard Voyles provides a method for understanding this learning capacity in terms of the ontological dimension of the Moral Meaning Matrix. His application of the notion of halacha or Jewish law also illustrates how the ontological can operate separately from the normative and, in some way, establish its own rules that govern behavior independent of attitudes and values. This distinction is particularly important when considering non-human complex adaptive systems, but, as I will show, it is also important when considering human systems.

**Figure 10: Moral Meaning Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like Freire, Voyles emphasizes the importance of context. Different and seemingly contradictory behaviors (or activities) can be legitimated in different contexts and the decision to behave in a certain way can operate independent of a norm held constant, but changes, almost as a dependent variable, with changing context. One of the examples Voyles gives is showing the incongruity between normative claims about Christians not killing other people and the circumstances under which Christians do in fact kill people. In such situations, killing is ruled as legitimate, e.g., war, capital punishment, and importantly for Voyles, the holocaust. Different contexts evoke different precedents for activity, and those precedents are ordered or prioritized by the category selected for comprehending the context.

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Beyond the illustrations given in the Emory University case study, the simplest example I can give for the relationship between precedent and category is one in which two people approach a hole in the ground. One sees it as a latrine and the other as a well. Latrine and well are categories. While there may be an infinite number of things to do when encountering a hole in the ground, selecting the category latrine will give priority to a precedent that is much different from the precedent evoked by selecting the category of well. Of course a third person might know holes in the ground as both latrines and wells and would look for clues like buckets and ropes nearby or walls erected to give privacy. The context of his or her encounter with the hole will cause him or her to select one category or another. It seems that any universalized norm or attitude he or she was taught about holes in the ground may or may not apply as flexibly to various contexts. The context and category selection can legitimate two different and even contradictory behaviors without even engaging normative absolutes.

Simply employing category, precedent, and activity gives the decision-maker all the tools he or she needs to respond to the new data of the hole in the ground. However, the schema of the person with only the category of well available for identifying precedents may be altered, subordinated, or eliminated if indeed he or she encounters a latrine.

This decision-making scenario lives in the ontological dimension, and, to the extent that we have explored it here, leaves the normative alone. No doubt there is an aspect of ruling and legitimating involved, but it is different from drawing on a fund of values and attitudes to decide how to act. It greets life as it is and draws on life experience as it has been in order to determine how to act in the new context. The priority
of context, for Voyles, injects the freedom to access a number of different possible solutions for problems related to behaving in the world.

The activity-precedent-category interplay opens up the opportunity to explore social relationships in decision-making contexts as networks. Translating the various levels of network complexity might lead to an arrangement that understands each person in a network as a node or a “knot in a web of relations [which] function like switches and routers that send, receive and transmit information through the network.” Following this logic leads to the possibility of re-framing the Moral Meaning Matrix as descriptive of a network by considering groups as clusters of nodes; organizations as hubs; institutions as entire networks and societies as systems of networks. Of course, the choice to designate these structures as such is completely arbitrary. Network theory permits application of the same nomenclature to almost any level of social complexity. Indeed, each person in the network is more than an elemental node that cannot be subdivided any further. Each person is, in fact, a very complex system of biological networks. So a society is a set of network systems within network systems within network systems. Similarly nodes can become hubs, and clusters can appear as nodes in a large network. Certainly hubs and clusters are networks all their own as well. However the necessity of the arbitrary deployment of this nomenclature for the purposes of making distinctions among various levels of social complexity does not undermine its usefulness for interpretation. In fact it makes the point that networks have multiple levels of imbedded complexity, and the various components of a network can only be discerned and described by taking snapshots of the network at various levels of scope. The repeating patterns on large and small scales alike “form a fractal set, [which is] a self-similar

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407 Taylor, 154.
mathematical object discovered in 1970 by Benoit Mandlebrot” and which I described earlier.\textsuperscript{408}

The process which follows the sequence of activity-precedent-category moves right to left through the organization level of the Moral Meaning Matrix. But Taylor’s schemata exhibit self-organizing properties that subordinate and include the schemata themselves. Barabasi describes this organizing property as the network’s topology. Real networks exhibit a scale-free topology governed by power laws. Understanding the balanced dynamism and stability of scale-free topologies illuminates the character of the word nomos as used at this level of social complexity in the Moral Meaning Matrix. Worldview in the Moral Meaning Matrix can be thought of, in Taylor’s terms, as the telenomy, that is the telenomic orientation of the topology governing the schemata used to engage and encounter experience.

**Network Consciousness**

Conceiving of the levels of complexity in the Moral Meaning Matrix as components of a network and conceiving of the ontological dimension of the matrix as a complex adaptive system enables examination of the properties of social behavior in this dimension in the terms of network and complexity theories. Integrating these insights with the insights gained by examining the dynamics of halacha also permits the understanding of the ontological dimension of the matrix as its own complex adaptive system which can operate to generalize patterns without calling upon the normative, meaning, or dynamic dimensions of reality in the matrix. The decision about how to act

\textsuperscript{408} Barabasi, 152.
with respect to the hole in the ground, for instance, could be conceived of exclusively as
an ontological decision and not a normative or meaningful one necessarily.

These ontologically-based processes could pertain to any complex adaptive
system, animate or inanimate. In discussing human social systems, however, it is
important to understand the semi-autonomy of the ontological level, which has an order
all its own - as in the well/latrine example. It is also important to understand how the
ontological dimension relates to the other dimensions of the matrix. Human systems
make the process of network learning more complex by adding in the effects of the other
dimensions of reality as exhibited in the Moral Meaning Matrix. Taylor refers to this
difference between human systems and non-human systems as consciousness. Taylor
clarifies the otherwise anthropomorphic language he uses to describe the processes of
inanimate complex adaptive systems:

> Here as elsewhere, the use of the terms like “experience,” “memory,”
> “anticipation,” and “learning,” does not, of course imply either
> consciousness or self-consciousness. Consciousness is no more necessary
> for these operations than it is for the processing of information.⁴⁰⁹

Consideration of human involvement with such systems requires, however, that we do
take into account the effects of consciousness, reasoning and, meaning.

Information, of course, is not knowledge, and knowledge is not
necessarily meaningful. We know many things about the world and
ourselves without grasping the meaning. The articulation of meaning
extends the information processing, which begins in sensation and
perception, and continues in consciousness and self-consciousness, by
screening knowledge to form coherent and relatively comprehensive
patterns. This process takes place through reasoning. Reason seeks to
determine not only what happens but why it happens.⁴¹⁰

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⁴⁰⁹ Taylor, 168.
⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 210.
While non-human systems can learn, that is integrate the general with the particular on the ontological dimension of the Moral Meaning Matrix, human systems seek vertical integration as well, that between the ontological (what) and the normative (why).

The discussion this leads into is about as convoluted as a complex adaptive system itself. As a way to offer clarification in advance, I distinguish the following terms because in other circumstances they might be used as synonyms. There are at least three major processes at work in human complex adaptive systems, and I intend for these clarifications to relate those processes to the Moral Meaning Matrix. The first process, discussed above is learning. Learning is simply the screening of new data in terms of information already gathered. Learning, in this strict sense, engages only the ontological dimension of reality. The second process is reasoning. Reasoning, which I will discuss in greater detail below is the screening or evaluation of the ontological information patterns (the products of learning) in light of normative patterns that have been stored in the system. These normative patterns, I will show, result from the assimilation of meanings that were made in the past by the third process at work. The third process, which has been a major focus of this dissertation, is signification. Signification is the synthesizing of the normative with the ontological into new patterns, which emerge as a result of making sense of the discrepancies detected by the reasoning process’s screening of the information patterns, which, in turn, resulted from learning.

Insofar as signification (moral meaning making) depends on the effective cognitive processes of learning and reasoning, moral development is dependent on cognitive development. However, the normative dimension derives its patterns from past-meanings made, so reasoning is dependent on the signification process. Therefore
cognitive development is reciprocally dependent on moral development. These conclusions foretell the interdependence of the social institutions of education and religion and prescribe the two types of development necessary for complex adaptive systems on all scales and especially for the cognitive and moral processes of leaders. Before I consider cognitive and moral development further, I will consider more fully the three processes such development is meant to improve. For this discussion, I return to Taylor.

Learning and Reasoning

Whereas the process of screening information – on the ontological dimension – is learning, the process of screening the patterns of information into knowledge out of the ontological dimension by the normative dimension is reasoning.\footnote{Ibid., 228, 210.} The normative dimension serves the social system as the memory or storehouse for past meanings-made, which are encoded in a moral language and symbol system. This allows the normative dimension to act as the screen or the pattern against which the new patterns of information are encountered, understood judged, incorporated, or rejected. The new patterns that emerge from the screening (of the ontological by the normative) of new information patterns against old meaning patterns constitute meaning in the present. The latrine/well act would become meaningful, for example, if the person who had known holes in the ground only as wells had actually encountered a latrine and acted according to a normative prescription of, say, drink from wells whenever possible because they are few and far between. He/she would add another precedent – albeit an unpleasant one – to his/her set of experiences and one that questioned his/her set of norms which prescribed
drinking from wells when encountered. His/her tradition of well-drinking might modify a bit to ascertain the contents of the hole. This mediates the difference between the potentially unhealthy (or at least unsavory) normative prescription and the inadequate set of categories. As the ontological adjusts to add the unpleasant precedent, the category set expands to include the category latrine. Holes of different types are named with separate words and the story of how to distinguish latrines from wells enters the narrative which he/she hopefully will share with others as their overarching moral language adjusts to incorporate the now meaningful tradition of sniffing before drinking. The new patterns of meaning, then, assume their place in the normative vocabulary as past meanings made in order to understand the next data set to emerge from the ontological dimension.

Both axes of the Moral Meaning Matrix are engaged in learning and reasoning. Taylor identifies these two vectors in his work as well: “from the concrete to the abstract” and from the “particular to the general” which map onto the Moral Meaning Matrix as the movement from ontological to normative and the movement from interpersonal (contextual) to universe respectively. Both axes are important and should not be, even if they often are, conflated. While generalizations can imbed norms, it is possible to generalize in a way that is not normative. In observational research, for instance, it is possible to identify patterns as generally occurring without saying those patterns ought to occur. Likewise it is possible to abstract norms from reality that are highly contextual in nature. In American English, a slap on the wrist is different than a pat on the back. However if either activity were observed by a person unfamiliar with indigenous acts of discipline and appreciation, much less with colloquial expressions for the behaviors (which can be invoked even if the actions themselves do not take place), the outsider

\footnote{Ibid., 207.}
might not be able to discern much difference between the two forms of physical contact. Not only might the American English context be an important factor, but even knowing the circumstances surrounding the contact would be important. In a very particular way, the activity and the language which speaks about the activity, so thereby the praxis, of physical contact between people can be understood as normatively different depending on the context. There is no way to generalize from these data that physical strikes of this sort to another’s body exhibit any sort of predictable - always good or always bad - pattern.

When the normative and the general are confused, social systems create what Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich identifies as “faulty generalizations” which result from abstracting generalizations from too small of a data set. This causes two subsequent mistakes. The first is assuming that the generalizations from that data set are applicable to those not represented in the data set. The second is the creation of what Minnich terms a “hierarchically invidious monism,” or a “system in which one category is taken to be not literally all there is, but the highest, most significant, most valuable, and, critically, most real category-which sets up all others to be defined and judged solely with reference to that hegemonic category.”

Just as it is important to distinguish the general from the normative, it is also important to keep distinct the meaning and normative dimensions of reality. This distinction is particularly helpful for parsing Taylor’s discussion of meaning making. Doing so keeps in the forefront the difference between extant meanings and past meanings made. The latter, which constitute the screens against which ontological

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information is evaluated, provide stability over time to the entire social system. The former have the potential to be much more vibrant and responsive to the environment. Taylor would agree with this dynamism in the process of meaning making. “Meaning is always relational and thus inevitably contextual. As relations change and context shifts, meaning transforms.” Where Taylor and I differ in this discussion is in his equating, on a functional level, theory and myth. Theory, in terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix, belongs more to the realm of the normative whereas myth belongs to the realm of meaning.

Theory, or in the case of religion, theology, constitutes the schemata against which reality (ontological patterns) are screened. As schemata, they pre-exist experience and can predict or anticipate experience. The domain of myth belongs more in the meaning-making dimension in that it is the outgrowth of theory trying to make sense out of realities for which it is, at least momentarily, inadequate. Myth may not endure in a predictive way in the same way that theory might, but it aids in bringing meaning to life when theory and information seem to be irreconcilable. Eventually theory might be able to evolve into a pattern that can anticipate the variations in reality, which precipitated the myth making. The myth, or parts of it, then, might be absorbed into the theory. The theory also may be rejected in whole or in part by the realities presented through new data. In either case, the need for the content of that particular meaning-making myth is then obviated, but the need for a new myth to make life meaningful is only as far away as the next discrepancy between theory and reality. Both can be understood as complex adaptive systems within complex adaptive systems, but as Taylor himself points out, in

\[\text{Ibid., 210.}\]
contrast to theory, “myths tend to preserve the temporality of experience in ways that theories do not.”

Consider the classic tension in the United States between creationism and Darwin’s theory of evolution. Darwin underwent a process of learning that no doubt resulted in information that differed from the normative patterns he brought to his research. He reconciled the tension between the discovered is and whatever oughts he possessed as he continued his studies. This tension gave rise to meaningful hypotheses (meaningful syntheses) similar to a myth about natural selection and so forth. As he tested his hypotheses in broader and broader contexts and analyzed more and more data, he solidified a theory, enshrining the accumulation of past meanings-made into a symbol system that others could use to formulate normative predictions about what one ought to find, say, in the paleontological record. The theory is refined by further research by others in the ways discussed above and adapts or reinforces itself as new data are assimilated.

Christians with a certain set of normative assumptions about God creating the earth and all life encountered (and still encounter) Darwinian theories in the ontological dimension as discordant with their normative symbol system. One response, when reading the new data against this normative screen, is to reject it outright and make meaning explicitly in contrast to Darwinian theories. Recently, some Christians have posited a way of making sense out of the difference between Darwinian theory and their norms by creating the synthesis known as Intelligent Design. This synthesis is unacceptable to Darwinians who reciprocally encounter it in the ontological dimension, screen it against their normative pattern of the theory of evolution and reject it.

415 Ibid., 211.
Nevertheless, Intelligent Design represents an attempt to make sense of new data in light of the patterns of past meanings made. For those to whom the Intelligent Design myth is meaningful, it will become a normative theory, which is likely to be a slightly different normative framework than one that would reject any Darwinian influence.

What makes theory and myth so similar is that theory, or other normative systems, are symbol systems. But Geertz’s proposition and my argument demonstrate that myth, ritual, and the other elements of the meaning dimension are constituted not by the normative alone but by the interaction between those symbol systems and reality as patterned in the ontological dimension. This difference between the normative and the meaning dimensions is important to keep in mind when considering Taylor’s discussion of myth and meaning produced in this third process of human complex adaptive systems. This third process, joining learning and reasoning, is signification, which grows out of reasoning’s screening of learning.

Signification

Keeping reasoning and signification separate is more than a heuristic device, although it is that as well. Confusing reasoning with signification results in the normative being confused with meaning. When this occurs, social systems set up two more occasions for error: “circular reasoning” and “mystified concepts” in Minnich’s terms. When the normative assumes the role of the meaningful, then the premise seeks a conclusion which reinforces or supports the premise. The normative screens reality in a way that filters out discrepancies and rejects difference. This could be the case indeed for Christians who refuse to entertain Darwinian theories and, arguably, for evolutionary

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416 Ibid., 82, 95.
biologists who reject, without any consideration, notions of divine creation. The normative simply replicates itself as the “new” pattern, rather than allowing a truly new pattern, which incorporates difference, to emerge. An “assertion is not open to contradiction because it is not a descriptive statement, after all. It is prescriptive” or normative.\(^417\)

The meaning dimension holds, temporarily, the new patterns that emerge when the ontological information patterns are screened by the normative schema in the reasoning process. When the normative pattern projects itself into the locus of the meaningful, it displaces any new patterns in favor of a recurrence of past meanings made. Conversely, if the new patterns of the meaning dimension occupy the normative, the neophyte concepts have no supportive language to place them in the context of past meanings made. This renders new patterns with normative weight but little explicability. Minnich, in her examples, does a thorough job of showing that some concepts, when scrutinized, have no grounding in patterns of screened information or learning processes. They do no not conform to any rigorous reasoning process that reconciles them with past meanings made, but simply live in the realm of custom, tradition, and myth - that is in the realm of the meaningful. Yet in the hands of powerful and dominant classes, these traditions can be appropriated as norms, but norms without, as she demonstrates, a coherent moral language.

The words, the concepts, we…consider tend to be mind-numbing either because they are worn smoothly into platitudes (as in pious invocations of “excellence”) or because they are fraught with emotion and/or taboo and confusion (sex/war). I want us to think about them for precisely those reasons; platitudes and taboos are two sides of the same coin.\(^418\)

\(^{417}\) Ibid., 82.  
\(^{418}\) Ibid., 96.
Meaning is a temporary emergent pattern which must be stabilized and incorporated recursively into the normative patterns of past meanings made. Using the dissociated emergent patterns in place of the normative leads to the appropriation of vacuous concepts and inexplicable values. Conversely, allowing the normative to project its old patterns in place of the emergent meaning re-circulates old patterns. In religious terms, the former dysfunctional meaning-making process results in what might be described by the phenomenon of people identifying themselves as being spiritual but not religious whereas the latter results in self-identification with religious fundamentalism.

Minnich’s observations interject into the system, more explicitly at least, the role that human agency plays in interfering with the development of complex adaptive systems. Of course, the complexity of such systems can account for such agency, once we assume that persons are part of the system, even if we have to account for it as chance. Taylor sufficiently accounts for – indeed depends on – chance in developing out the dynamics of the complex adaptive system. But it is worth recognizing at this point that social systems and their cognitive and moral processes, even if they are evolving and changing over time, can be arrested or appropriated by human activity in various ways that interrupt – or at least further complicate – the patterning and the functioning of those patterns over time.

**Thermodynamics of Closed and Open Systems**

Taylor examines the role of chance in some detail in his discussion of the role communication plays in the thermodynamics of complex adaptive social systems. The communicative thermodynamics which propel complex adaptive systems provide a
useful category in examining how humans interact within social systems as if we were outside of them and how such ambiguity can lead to the confusion and misappropriation of dimensions outlined above such as confusing the general with the normative or the normative with the meaningful.

There are three keys to understanding the thermodynamics of complex adaptive systems. These keys distinguish complex adaptive systems, which are dissipative structures in Prigogine’s terms, from more familiar systems. The keys are irreversibility, difference, and openness.

Classical thermodynamics examines systems that are reversible. That is, these systems can work forward and backward. They can be done and undone. In a chemical reaction, for instance, two substances react and produce a product or products. Under the right conditions, the products can decompose or recompose into the original substances.\[419\] When reversibility is optimized the reaction occurs in both directions at equal speeds, and change is not detectable. This type of system stability is known as equilibrium.

Even in classical thermodynamic systems though, equilibrium, which is a state of forces and energy being distributed rather evenly throughout a system, is also a state that keeps the system from doing any perceptible work. In order to effect work, the system has to be put in contact with another system whose conditions are different. The difference produces a gradient across which energy can transfer to create a force that can translate into work. It is easier to conceive of potential difference in physical rather than chemical terms. A steam engine puts water, otherwise in equilibrium with its

environment, in contact with a heat source. The heat increases the kinetic energy of the water molecules which causes them to expand in the form of steam. When the molecules expand far enough to create more pressure inside the system than outside the system, the steam will work across yet another gradient in an attempt to equilibrate the pressure inside with the pressure outside. Placing a turbine in the middle of that second gradient harnesses the steam for work. Recall here the understanding of energy as the ability to do work.

The potential difference across these gradients is essential for the production of forces sufficient to cause work to happen. Unfortunately, real systems such as steam engines are not perfectly efficient. They cannot translate that energy potential into pure work. Some of the energy that moves across those gradients is lost to the environment. In the case of the steam engine, that energy is detectable in the expression of heat from the system. While the heat might be useful, if harnessed, for another work process, some of the energy of the system is lost in the form of entropy. Entropy is evident in the more fluid arrangement of molecules in steam relative to their more ordered arrangement in water. The heat released from the system also increases the entropy, or randomness, of the environment surrounding the system. The second law of thermodynamics predicts this. Entropy, unlike energy, in the universe is increasing. By contrast, energy, according to the first law of thermodynamics, is conserved.

In order to calculate the energy transfers, scientists draw boundaries around these processes. These boundaries, which might be beakers, pistons, measuring instruments, or machines, are systems. In order to measure these energy exchanges, scientists regard these systems as closed to their respective environments. By allowing only measurable
heat to pass across the boundaries, scientists can determine what net change of energy occurs in the processes. It is these closed systems that can come to equilibrium after they have absorbed or expended sufficient heat from or to the environment.

Complex adaptive systems are open systems. They exchange energy and matter freely with the environment. As systems, they are discrete entities within their environment, but the boundaries of those systems are porous compared to the artificially restrictive, but often well insulated, boundaries, of closed systems. By being open to the environment, they are constantly susceptible to the creation of potential differences within the system that allow the system to do work. That work is the work of self-organization of the patterns discussed above. Because these systems do not reach equilibrium with their environment or internally as long as their environment is changing, they consistently have a potential gradient across which to work.

The second law of thermodynamics suggests that the environment of complex adaptive systems is always changing, if for no other reason than because the entropy of the universe is increasing. This environmental change alone could keep such systems from achieving internal equilibrium or equilibrium with their environments. Now it is useful to recall Prigogine’s observation that dissipative structures, and therefore complex adaptive systems, occur only in circumstances far from equilibrium. In these conditions, complex adaptive systems thrive because there is always a potential gradient across which to work. Entropy, then, which is commonly thought of as useless energy, becomes useful in destabilizing complex adaptive systems enough to propel their growth.

Interestingly, while the entropy creates the conditions for the work of the complex adaptive system, the system’s work, as we have seen, is the development of increasing
complexity or self-organization. So increasing randomness is creating the conditions for increased order in these systems. These systems, as Prigogine and Barabasi have shown, are stable systems, but not because they achieve any sort of equilibrated state intrinsically or extrinsically. They are stable but not reversible. The increased organization cannot be undone because, in a very real sense, it is the outgrowth of increased entropy, which is always, and only, increasing.

To manage the difficulty of this concept of entropy having an organizing, and not randomizing, effect on complex adaptive systems, Taylor uses the term “negentropy,” or negative entropy.\textsuperscript{420} Negentropy appears only in open systems. Closed systems, such as the universe is presumed to be, or such as in a bounded chemical reaction, follow the second law of thermodynamics and tend to maximize entropy. Negentropy forces the conceptualization of open systems within closed systems. While the entire closed system, say the universe, still acts according to thermodynamic laws and net entropy increases, within the relatively limited scope of the open complex adaptive system, randomness decreases and order increases. The second law obtains for the larger scope of the closed system but not within the subordinate open system.

So the processes of emergence and evolution of complex adaptive systems are irreversible. They are sustained by a potential gradient generated by increasing entropy in their environments. Finally they are sensitive to that shifting potential gradient because they remain open to that environment. The complexity compounds. Changing systems within changing systems must be “coadaptive,” increasing the likelihood of what we might describe as chance to influence the evolution of those systems. “On the one hand, system and environment are joined in recursive circuits that create both unexpected and

\textsuperscript{420} Taylor, 121.
disproportionate changes, and, on the other hand, the openness of complex adaptive systems leads to aleatory changes in schemata that distinguish the point of departure from the point of arrival."\textsuperscript{421} Social systems are open systems, yet generally our myths prescribe meaning-making processes for leaders and cultures which presume (and recursively reinforce the presumption) that social systems are closed.

\textsuperscript{421} Ibid., 169.
Taylor uses his understanding of the thermodynamics of complex adaptive systems as a backdrop against which to read communication theory when thinking about social systems. Having established the relationship between information and knowledge as shown above, Taylor’s work pushes the concept of communication one step farther. He relates noise or static to entropy, and information to the conversion of that noise into a communicative potential gradient across which work can be done. “If information is understood as a difference that makes a difference, noise can be understood as either the lack of differentiation or the profusion of indifferent differences.”

The evolution of social processes follows the track of noise to information to knowledge. This flow is counter-entropic. Much like the evolution of increasingly complex species despite the tendency of the universe to maximize entropy, the complexity of open social systems increases despite the deterioration of knowledge into information into noise in the surrounding closed system of the universe.

The key to harnessing the creative influence of entropy is maintaining the openness of the social system. Closing the social system, perhaps in attempt to stave off entropic randomness, walls the system off from its font of difference and thereby creates conditions in which the processes become reversible and achieve equilibrium in which all

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422 Ibid., 119.
forces and energy are distributed equally throughout the system. Equilibrium precludes the creation of dissipative structures, which only occur far from equilibrium. Equilibrium also eliminates potential gradients across which work can be done. The system is analogous to the water tank in a steam engine without the fire.

When a social system achieves this sort of homogeneity, it cannot grow or change without some sort of destabilizing influence. René Girard discusses the social threat such an absence of difference creates and the two main ways societies respond to that threat. Interestingly it is a threat that arises only from closing a social system off from what otherwise is a constant flow of difference.

Violence in Girard’s thought is an outgrowth of rivalry. Rivalry grows to the point of needing a scapegoat or sacrificial victim after intensifying through the feedback loop of the mutual imitation of the mimetic desire each of the rivals has for a given object. However, mimesis in a closed system creates another problem. It creates homogeneity or lack of difference. As mimesis intensifies and broadens there are fewer and fewer distinctions between imitator and model. “The similarity of behavior creates confusion and a universal lack of difference.”423 This poses a threat, in Girard’s analysis, and such a threat has created the conditions for, if not triggered, many of the great persecutions in history.

Men feel powerless when confronted with the eclipse of culture; they are disconcerted by the immensity of the disaster but never look into the natural causes; the concept that they might affect those causes by learning more about them remains embryonic. Since cultural eclipse is above all a social crisis, there is a strong tendency to explain it by social, and, especially, moral causes. After all, human relations disintegrate in the process and the subjects of those relations cannot be utterly innocent of the phenomenon. But, rather than blame themselves, people inevitably blame

either society as a whole, which costs them nothing, or other people who seem particularly harmful for easily identifiable reasons.424

This blame escalates to the identification of a scapegoat or a whole group of victims against which society can express the violence that stems from the disorder. However, the function of the violence is not to exacerbate the disorder but to restore order. The selection of victims also entails ascribing to them crimes against society which inevitably can be traced to crimes against difference. The victims of the persecution are accused of transgressing the orderly hierarchies and other lines of distinction that society had created. Whether violent crimes against the strongest or weakest in society, sexual crimes, or religious infractions, they “seem to be fundamental. They attack the very foundations of cultural order, the family and the hierarchical differences without which there would be no social order.”425

It is important to remember that the function of the violence is to re-establish difference when considering Girard’s counter-intuitive point that victims are not selected because of their difference alone, but because they are not different enough.

The various kinds of victims seem predisposed to crimes that eliminate differences. Religious, ethnic, or national minorities are never actually reproached for their difference, but for not being as different as expected, and in the end for not differing at all. Foreigners are incapable of respecting “real” differences; they are lacking in culture or in taste, as the case may be. They have difficulty in perceiving exactly what is different….The barbaros is not the person who speaks a different language but the person who mixes the only truly significant distinctions, those of the Greek language….Aliens imitate all the differences because they have none.426

Interestingly, Girard suggests that societies respond to the prospect of this crisis in two seemingly contradictory ways. First, societies try to avoid the disintegration of

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424 Ibid.
425 Ibid., 15.
426 Ibid., 22.
difference by establishing religious prohibitions and taboos that reinforce hierarchies and other lines of difference. Like Berger’s sacred canopy, the potential of the anomic circumstance created by deteriorating differentiation precipitates a religious response. Since mimesis ultimately renders the prohibitions and taboos ineffectual in preserving distinctions, religion develops a complement to prohibitions and taboos. That complement is ritual. Rites, as Turner and others have demonstrated, however, often require participants to violate taboos and enact behavior otherwise proscribed by the religious prohibitions. Girard reconciles this apparent contradiction by seeing the roots of the rites in the mythic stories which recount disorder and lack of differentiation as the conditions of creation, or at least the foundation of society or civilization.

Mimesis is mimetically attractive, and we can assume that at certain stages, at least in the evolution of human communities, mimetic rivalry can spread to an entire group. This is what is suggested by the acute disorder phase with which many rituals begin. The community turns into a mob under the effect of mimetic rivalry. The phenomena that take place when a human group turns into a mob are identical to those produced by mimetic rivalry, and they can be defined as that loss of differentiation which is described in mythology and reenacted in ritual.427

In other words, the rites that Girard examines formalize and sacralize the same processes inherent to persecutions and mob violence. Along with prohibitions and taboos they create a cultural process for maintaining and routinely re-establishing the differences within the society. The prohibitions and taboos create a feedback loop within a society which attempts to regulate the diminution of difference. When that regulatory effect fails, persecutions and rituals which mimic the dynamics of mob violence provide a feed forward loop. “Instead of trying to roll back mimetic violence it tries to get rid of it by encouraging it and by bringing it to a climax that triggers the happy solution of ritual

427 Girard, Berkshire Review, 12.
sacrifice with the help of a substitute victim.” These loops demonstrate the dynamics of an autopoietic system as described by Taylor. “Such recursivity does not, however, transform causality in a way that makes the operation of the system irreversible.”

Autopoietic systems chart “a course from creation through transformation to destruction.” Despite this progressive track, which ultimately leads to greater complexity within the system, such systems remain closed. As closed systems they “seek to overcome disequilibrium” and seem to leave “no possibility of chance, accident or contingency.” Recall “however, equilibrium appears to be death-dealing rather than life giving.” So, insofar as prohibitions, taboos, and ritualized or real violence disrupt equilibrium, they preserve and advance the life of the closed, albeit, autopoietic social system.

Closed social systems, then, tend toward equilibrium. In order to keep them viable, however, the actors within those systems must stave off equilibrium and periodically disrupt its onset. Taboos as well as ritualized and actual violence sustain the viability of closed social systems.

There are two ways to think about a system as being closed in terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix. They are related. The first way is to conceive of structural barriers of isolation that actually prevent any new stimuli from entering through the ontological dimension. The social system, in this case, experiences very few, if any new realities over time. This type of sequestered existence cuts off the process of learning described above. The second type of closure, for which the first is a sufficient but not necessary condition,

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428 Ibid., 13.
429 Taylor, 93.
430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
432 Ibid.
is the closing of the reasoning or the signification processes by conflation one way or the other of the normative and meaning dimensions. In those cases norms are re-circulated as meanings, or meanings masquerade as norms. The former leads to retrenchment of fundamental values, while the latter leads to an ungrounded mysticism. If the ontological dimension is not closed off, then, in the former system, new information will be judged by the fundamental screen as either meaningful or not. Rather than meaning resulting from a synthesis of the is and the ought, realities that do not make sense in terms of the normative screen are simply rejected as meaningless. While in the fundamentalist system there is a stark contrast between the ontological and the normative, in the mystical system, there is no substantive normative to act as a point of tension with the ontological. Absent a process of reasoning, the new experiences simply feed an increasingly vacuous set of meanings holding the place of norms. Every new thing is meaningful and, in a relativistic way, normative because nothing old is preserved.

Whether the system is closed on the ontological level providing no new experiences for any dynamism within the Moral Meaning Matrix, or whether the normative and the meaningful are somehow conflated, the processes eventually tend toward the identity of all three dimensions involved in signification. The fundamentalist system refuses any incompatible patterns, the mystical accepts and incorporates all patterns, and the completely sequestered system has no information with which to create new patterns. In all cases the potential difference between the ontological and the normative tends toward zero. The dynamics of any of these closed systems, in yet another way – a way related to the meaning-making process itself – settles toward equilibrium or system death.
This necrosis can occur at any level of complexity within the social fractal: interpersonal, group, organization, institution, society, or universe/global. Because it is a fractal, the decay spreads throughout the web, if by no other means, then, mimetically.

Closed Systems Leadership

Mimesis also can be the salvation of these otherwise doomed closed social systems. It is now possible to read the Girardian analysis of Hall’s leadership taxonomy into the context of closed social systems. Understanding what has typically been called leadership style as different methods with which to disrupt equilibrium demonstrates how leaders affect the meaning-making process by keeping the closed social system destabilized and, thereby, viable. It is necessary at this point to recall the discussion above about the endothermic and exothermic syntheses of the is and the ought. Imposing the normative on the ontological in a closed system requires that energy be absorbed from the environment into the system. Giving primacy to the ontological over the normative, as Freire argues, releases energy from the system. Combining this understanding of the more traditional thermodynamics of a closed system (as contrasted with the thermodynamics of an open complex adaptive system) with the need to maintain distinctions or re-establish order in closed systems leads to an analysis of the cycles of leadership in terms of the manner with which energy is deployed for the sake of meaning making and the way in which differences or hierarchies are maintained and/or restored. Leaders facilitate the work of signification for groups. That work requires energy. Leaders in closed systems use that energy in one of a finite number of ways relative to release or absorption of energy on the one hand and relative to the degree of order and
differentiation maintained on the other. Leaders adapt postures relative to entropy and energy and do so in various ways depending on the cycle of leadership from which they are operating.

It might be simplest to think of these two points of analysis as two axes of a grid: energy and order. Each of the first six of Hall’s cycles of leadership, within a closed system, is exothermic or endothermic with respect to energy consumption and each style promotes, diminishes, or maintains differentiated order. This is outlined in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Leadership Posture Grid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Posture</th>
<th>DIFFERENTIATED ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Endothermic</strong></td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exothermic</strong></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the Authoritarian level of leadership occupies the most intuitive position on the leadership posture grid. By adopting a dominant rival approach to imposing norms on reality, the authoritarian maintains a strict hierarchy which sustains stark differentiation. As long as the authoritarian is the dominant rival in the closed system, the order is under no threat of disintegration. In order to stave off the natural tendency toward equilibrium, however, the authoritarian leader rapidly depletes the energy (or power) of others within the system and must appropriate energy from outside of the system and bring it across the boundaries. This model can lead to a high level of sustained productivity, but it is very costly. The leader must continually replenish the energy or risk losing his or her position and therefore the life-sustaining differentiation of the system.

The Paternalist/Maternalist leader, by maintaining a position as the object of desire in the Girardian scheme, maintains order. Rivalries are managed as rivals are kept
at bay and in competition with one another. The leader remains out of the fray, and others do not challenge his or her imposition of personal norms on reality as it would jeopardize their ability to curry favor with the parental figure. Still, the parent-leader, in the context of the closed system, uses the energy of the competing rivals in order to impose those norms on reality. To a lesser extent than the authoritarian, the paternalist/maternalist must still bring energy or resources from outside the system into the system if for no other reason than to maintain his or her desirability. The differentiation among rivals and between rivals and object of desire (or leader) keeps the system away from equilibrium.

When the paternalist/maternalist system breaks down, when the object of desire is no longer the leader, then the rivalries begin to usurp the power of an otherwise strong leader. Enter the manager, a type which occupies perhaps a counter-intuitive place on the leadership posture grid. However, the dynamic that the manager is managing happens to be, essentially, in Girardian terms, that of a mob. Order has broken down to the point that the manager, or executive, continually creates policies to preserve it, and when these fail, the manager must serve as the priest of continual sacrifices to channel the mob violence. The manager, then, rather than maintaining order, constantly disorders and re-orders the system around successive rituals of scapegoating and sacrifice. While efficiency, order, and bureaucracy are the hallmarks of the manager, such order stands out because it is achieved under the most difficult of circumstances. Order, as a goal, is made explicit against the backdrop of what otherwise would be chaos. The mob freely gives up its energy to the leader for the imposition of norms on reality, but the manager too, must use that energy to maintain the successive rituals necessary to affix those norms. To a lesser
extent than the antecedent types, the manager must also bring in resources from outside the system in order to fuel sacrificial dynamics of this closed system.

Once the mob’s energy can no longer be converted for the maintenance of a normative-oriented culture, the energy posture of the system and therefore of the leader changes. The facilitator diminishes himself or herself relative to the group in order to assuage the violent needs of the group. And, like the manager, the facilitator must do this over and over again. While the manager is managing the mob chaos on a disordered brink, the facilitator allows the mob’s sacrifice to complete itself and so rests more comfortably in the re-ordered aftermath of the sacrifice. The facilitator promotes order by empowering the others in the organization. As the facilitator elevates the experiences of others in the system, those realities begin to give shape to the system’s norms in the first of the exothermic meaning-making postures. Rather than requiring energy from outside the system, the facilitator releases the power from within the system. It gives energy back to the universe. The facilitator does not bring any energy or resources into the system. So, if the system remains closed, then its exothermic nature will eventually run it into equilibrium even if differentiation and order are not a problem as multiple perspectives are honored and incorporated into an overall framework of meaning and organizational structure.

On the other side of the facilitator’s sacrifice arises the hero. The hero's role in myth and as a collaborative leader symbolizes and maintains the order that has been created by the sacrifice. A social fabrication, the hero, or collaborator in this case, derives all power from the mob turned society that created him or her. As *primus inter pares*, the collaborator delegates authority and preserves the order the system has created for itself.
The system has taken a step away from the still more hierarchically ordered facilitator-led array by the creation of equals. Homogeneity becomes an increasing threat. The flipside of the paternalist/maternalist, the collaborator preserves order while releasing energy from the system by empowering others to take the lead. Relative to the facilitator, the collaborator as hero is one step closer to terminating the closed system because the model both gives up its energy to the universe and diminishes the distinctions upon which order is founded.

The death blow to closed social systems, however, is dealt by the final closed system leadership style, servant-leadership. The servant intentionally disrupts the order by actually inverting hierarchical relationships. Coupling this disruption of order and difference with the exothermic effect best described as revolutionary by Freire makes the servant model of leadership the end of the line for closed systems. The pace toward equilibrium is hastened by the double threat of loss of differentiation and loss of energy in what may be the social equivalent of combustion.

In a closed system, the most orderly leadership level but the most costly in terms of its insatiable appetite for resources from within and from outside the system is the authoritarian style. The least ordered is the servant. As long as the system remains closed, the autocrat will hunt for power and the servant will be running his or her social system headlong into equilibrium. The endothermic styles only maintain their meaning-making ability as long as they continue to use energy from the surrounding environment. The exothermic styles only are able to continue making meaning as long as they have energy to release to the environment. The exothermic styles, then, remain the luxury of the already empowered. It is only possible to lead as a facilitator, collaborator, or servant as
long as one has sufficient resources to maintain that level of leadership over time or as the systems themselves continue to grow. So with the addition of resources, an endothermic leadership posture can turn exothermic, and vice versa. If posture toward order is held constant, then a system accustomed to authoritarian rule, once it discovers abundance within the system can afford to support more of a facilitative type of leadership. Likewise, a Paternalist/Maternalist can move to Collaborator and Manager to Servant. Conversely, when resources are scarce, Servant-Leadership can collapse into executive mob management, the hero can turn parental and the facilitator can replace the flip chart on the easel with his or her portrait. This potential oscillation exhibits the reversibility of the closed system based on the relative flow of energy.

If resources are not in play, but differentiation is either threatened or strengthened, then systems might be able to sustain adjacent leadership styles on the developmental continuum within the same energy posture. A servant-leader could retreat into collaborator mode in search of greater differentiation; likewise a collaborator to facilitator. Styles with endothermic postures could proceed accordingly: manager to parental and parental to authoritarian. However, if the system experiences a great deal of increased differentiation, either through expansion or personnel turnover, for example, then the system might be able to sustain the next (or higher) level of leadership. In this way the closed system of leadership also exhibits reversibility along a continuum of more and less developed leadership styles.

Just because the system can sustain a leadership level or style that is more highly developed does not mean that it will move the leaders in that direction. The leader must have the cognitive (learning and reasoning) and moral (signification) capacity to adapt to
the changing dynamics of the system or risk losing leadership status. A leader can easily assume a less developed leadership style for a social system operating using, say, authoritarian modes of signification, just as an adult who can ride a ten-speed bicycle probably can somewhat awkwardly manage to ride a child’s tricycle. But if the social system evolves to the point of calling for the leadership equivalent of a unicycle rider, then a *Tour de France* champion may not even be able to succeed without further cognitive and moral development. Like the excommunication of a judgmental evangelist caught with sin-stained hands, the most likely means of removing a leader from a system which he or she helped create and which is outgrowing him or her will be by the violent meaning-making mechanism the leader himself or herself helped encode or reinforce for the sake of the system’s stability. Dominant rivals get dominated; scapegoating managers are sent packing; collaborators get elevated to honorary yet non-functional posts.

However, when the system is threatened with extinction due to a diminishing number of resources and/or lessened differentiation, then the leader’s reversion to a less developed approach may be necessary to maintain the viability of the closed system. The mere perception of such scarcity of resources and loss of differentiation within the system might be sufficient to cause such a retreat. Such a perception may, in fact, be cultivated by the leader in order to maintain power at the less developed style of leadership. Remember that the systems under consideration are closed or are being treated as closed by the leaders and the constituents; so the ability for the systems to adapt and change in a way that makes sense to persons with a closed-systems mindset is not as fluid as that of complex adaptive systems.
Regardless of the capacity of closed systems to support various leadership styles, all such systems tend toward equilibrium and the leader’s role is to stave off that equilibrium. Each of the styles or cycles of leadership moves the system away from equilibrium either by imposing hierarchical orders of differentiation or by creating differentiation by disrupting homogeneity. Each style brings its own gift or \textit{charism} for creating differentiation within the system. The \textit{charism} of the Authoritarian is rivalry, of the Paternalist/Maternalist, desire, of the manager, scapegoating, of the facilitator, sacrifice, of the collaborator, heroism, of the servant, transformation. It is possible for leaders at different stages to exhibit charisma and for that charisma to have the effect of creating differentiation within the system. Now it is possible to understand why contemporary leadership analysts seem to suggest that charisma must be routine and why saying a leader is charismatic does not necessarily say much about the style of leadership or the developmental cycle of the leader. At any level, without routine charisma of one type or another, the system would settle into equilibrium and would die.

\textbf{Charismatic Energy}

Charisma is the gift of being capable of destabilizing the system. Charismatic leadership is the ability to destabilize the system in a way that also facilitates the construction of meaning for the group. Understanding charisma in functional, rather than evaluative, terms reveals that it is available at all cycles of development. Charismatic leadership, then is a means of posturing relative to equilibrium and entropy in a system insofar as those systems are closed or regarded as closed by the leaders. A closed social system requires that a charismatic leader articulate a vision for re-ordering or establishing
new distinctions when the old distinctions fail or begin to slide inevitably toward equilibrium. The charismatic leader gains credibility in this task by having demonstrated a comfort level with entropy and equilibrium, perhaps by being effectively present and supportive at times of major life disruptions - that is at times of entropy on a personal level. Note, however, that the way a leader expresses such effective presence may be directly related to his or her level of moral and cognitive development as a leader.

As differentiation and order break down in a system, the need for charisma increases. In Girard’s analysis, the breakdown looks like and/or precipitates mob violence. In the face of that eventuality, the charismatic leader uses his or her gift to re-establish order. The gift or charism differs based on the leadership style being employed. An authoritarian uses dominance; a paternalist/maternalist, desire; a manager, scapegoating; a facilitator, self-sacrifice; a collaborator, heroism; a servant, transformation. Note in this analysis the particularly important role charisma plays for a servant-leader. The combination of expending energy and disrupting order requires a continuous need for re-establishing what is, ironically, a disordering order. The servant almost constantly has to call his or her community into a re-ordering transformation for the sake of creating the level of energy necessary to sustain the system.

With respect to the leadership posture grid, leaders encounter the threat of thermodynamic equilibrium relative to energy flows in the oscillation between exothermic leadership styles and endothermic leadership styles. If the system balances energy, it ceases to be exothermic or endothermic. The social system and the corresponding leadership style are reversible across this point. Likewise leaders
encounter maximum entropy when moving between the manager and facilitator styles at the point prior to re-establishing order.

Leadership postures relative to equilibrium, then, resist a balancing of the energy flow. Recall now the earlier analysis of Freire’s insights relative to the Moral Meaning Matrix. Endothermic meaning-making corresponds to the imposition of the normative on the ontological. Conversely, exothermic meaning-making corresponds to the privileging of the ontological over the normative. A balance between the normative and the ontological would equate with equilibrium. Thus in a closed system, the leader necessarily privileges either the normative or the ontological in order to stave off equilibrium. Understanding normative patterns as past meanings-made and ontological patterns as potential future meanings unfolds the dimension of time into these conceptions of leadership. Endothermic leadership styles are regressive in nature in that they rely on past-meanings made for the processes of signification they engender. Exothermic styles, however, are progressive in that they give primacy to potential and future. Remember that the systems are closed and are therefore reversible. A progressive leader, when energy runs out, reverts to the corresponding regressive style to bring energy back into the system.

The danger this reversibility causes is that once a leader adopts a regressive mode, the past is recursively privileged pulling the leader toward, developmentally speaking, earlier and earlier, modes of meaning-making. A servant turned manager in the face of depleting resources can regress through paternalist/maternalist to authoritarian. Whereas reclaiming a servant style requires that the system replenish its resources, devolving into
authoritarian requires only the repetition of the cycle of privileging the past over the future.

Conversely, in a system with plentiful resources, the leader’s meaning-making style has the opportunity to shift into exothermic or progressive mode. In this mode, future meanings, in the form of the ontological, are privileged thereby facilitating personal growth and development.

While the abundance of resources may be a necessary condition for enabling a progressive leadership style, it is not a sufficient condition. The leaders must have the cognitive and moral capacity to operate at higher cycles of development. Such growth again has to do with the leader’s posture relative to the onset of equilibrium and entropy in a social system.

In the middle of the developmental continuum for leaders and the systems for which they facilitate meaning-making is the point at which the enterprise of signification shifts from an endothermic process to an exothermic process. This is the point where the meaning-making process of the system is immanently reversible. In the theoretical center between manager and facilitator systems there is no energy exchanged and the ontological and the normative contribute equally to the meaning-making synthesis. The only problem is there is no tension between the two points. The system is incapable of producing meaning because it is in equilibrium – heat death.

Closed systems leaders at all levels of development must deal with this threat of equilibrium or system death. Endothermic leadership styles regress away from the equilibrium and experience the increased entropy that comes naturally from the ontological dimension as pulling the system closer to heat death. No closed system
leaders can escape increasing entropy, because entropy is always increasing. At one extreme, authoritarian leaders react to entropy by increasing hierarchical ordering and, given the charism of the authoritarian, interpret entropy as a foe - yet another rival to be dominated. Charismatic authoritarian leadership, therefore, involves the dominant rival leader articulating a vision for followers that demonstrates his or her ability to fend off the entropic forces of experience with power appropriated from outside the system to establish the articulated future vision. Given the regressive nature of endothermic leadership, this norm-dominated future vision will involve a retrenchment of past meanings. Thus the struggle between entropy and order for the authoritarian regresses the leader and the system as a whole. It is meaningful, but meaningful in increasingly historic, or fundamentalist, terms. Again here we encounter the conflation of the normative with the meaning dimensions in its extreme which reveals the closure of the system through increasing fundamentalism. Differences in the system are recursively screened out as ontological data are judged against the more and more rigid normative screen. Taken to the extreme, this closure of the system, in response to entropy, results in a homogenization as distinctions regressively disappear thus requiring the leaders to appropriate more and more power from within and from outside the system to maintain any kind of hierarchical ordering at all. This very power hungry system, in reaction to the entropy of the future, powers itself into the homogeneity of the past which intensifies and eventually overcomes the system. As Taylor observes, the “processes of globalization have unleashed resurgent nationalisms and fundamentalisms throughout the world. Though these reactions often issue in devastating violence, they are ultimately fated to fail.”

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433 Taylor, 214.
Whereas the authoritarian is hungry for power for the sake of constantly re-establishing order, the servant, on the other end of the spectrum, is hungry for difference, needing to add it to the system to sustain the exothermic meaning-making process. Since the servant system depletes energy rather than absorbing it like the authoritarian, it must move away from equilibrium by increasing difference. It does so by privileging the ontological over the normative to the extreme, enveloping the variety of new experiences in order to resist the equilibration of energy exchange. Unlike the authoritarian, entropy in the servant system increases difference and propels the progressive system away from equilibrium. Whenever the system nears equilibrium, the charism of the servant transforms the power structures and demythologizes the status quo. This leaves the system radically subject to the ontological without regard to any governing norms. It is intensively progressive to the point of making past meanings made irrelevant. The ontological realities feed the process of signification without any substantive screening by the normative. The meaning dimension serves as a substitute for the normative and simply must accept the ontological as meaningful and therefore normative. The way it is becomes understood as the way it ought to be. The relativistic ungrounded mysticism tightens the seal on the closed system by shutting it off from the past. The Moral Meaning Matrix dimensions collapse into homogeneity.

So authoritarians react against increasing entropy and in so doing regress into homogenization. Servants allow entropy to increase to avoid equilibrium and in so doing progress toward homogenization. Both equilibrium and homogenization in closed social systems establish the mythic conditions for creation or re-creation. A Girardian analysis suggests that societies will differentiate and re-order by re-enacting the myth with a firm
grip on the meaning-making process. Times of homogeneity and equilibrium require sacrifice, or the mimetic violence will destroy the social unit altogether.

Thinking about the leadership styles as a continuum of openness to the ontological dimension, with authoritarian being the most closed to it of the six, and thinking of the ontological dimension as the dimension that introduces entropy in the form of new experiences which increase difference in the system, makes it easy to understand how authoritarians fighting entropy move farther and farther away from difference and into increasing homogeneity. It is equally easy to imagine how servant leaders stand on the precipice of total entropic consumption, yet servants retain a closed system by ultimately disallowing any dialectical conversation with the past. The degrees of openness between authoritarian and servant are also degrees of balance between the ontological and the normative positions in the matrix. Authoritarians privilege the normative to the exclusion of the ontological and servants privilege the ontological to the exclusion of the normative. This scale of shifting balance corresponds to a continuum of energy deployment moving from highly endothermic to highly exothermic. In the theoretical middle of this continuum is the immanently reversible system in which the ontological and normative are balanced. Between the manager and facilitator leadership styles is that middle ground. This equilibrium state in the evolution of leaders and their closed systems serves as an attractor as the systems will move naturally toward equilibrium. As a result, the charisms of the manager and facilitator are probably among the most often engaged to stave off the entropic pull toward equilibrium by ordering and re-ordering the system, in the case of the manager, or allowing in just enough entropy to thwart the slide into equilibrium in the case of the facilitator. The charisms involve
making meaning by using power using the mythical processes of execution and self-sacrifice. The equilibrium-attractor of closed social systems invokes the apex of the violent myth. So the ritualized activities described above of scapegoating and sacrifice are actively and intentionally replayed over and over again in order to revive closed social systems that would otherwise plunge irresistibly into the equilibrium of mob violence.

Scapegoating a Manager

Consider, for example, a case study of a budget-cutting process at the University of Missouri. The normatively-driven decision-making processes attempted to close the system. The openness of the system persisted however and at least one leader who had participated in prescribing managerial meaning-making modes experienced his own scapegoating once others in the system re-ordered it as his expense. The other two scapegoating manager-leaders temporarily re-established order in the system, which was headed toward undifferentiated equilibrium, by scapegoating the third manager. They simultaneously regressed the system and kept it from opening up even more.

In the early 1980s, Provost Ron Bunn at the University of Missouri faced several questions as he attempted to chart a long-range path for responding to the financial pressures the university had been experiencing. His thought processes and actions are the subject of a case study developed for the Harvard Institute for Education Management by Jacqueline Stefkovich, Chris Harris, and Lee Bolman.434

The case study leads me to characterize Bunn’s decision-making process as one which attempts to discern which budget cuts make sense in light of the fiscal crises he faced. In his case, I generally detect a desire to inscribe the normative onto the ontological. In other words, Bunn’s rational approach (along with that of Chancellor Barbara Uehling and President James Olson) to the difficult situation he was facing was to impose his normative sense of orderliness on the complex realities of the situation. He was attempting to keep an open system closed by emphasizing and acting from the normative and general at the expense of the ontological and contextual. While he was not at all naïve to the complexities involved, his rational approach did not find a happy reception within the organizational framework.

Organizational theorists Michael Cohen and James March, from the framework they articulated in *Leadership and Ambiguity*, would argue the rational approach is not at home in an academic setting because the environment does not conform to common assumptions about what is reasonable. In their words, such an environment is an anarchy, and Bunn was not sensitive enough to the chaotic environment to employ tactics that would enable him to make decisions or execute successful strategies.\(^{435}\)

Beyond the order-disorder dyad outlined by Cohen and March is a third option. That is the possibility that what Cohen and March might construe as anarchy has an order in and of itself that is discernible but not necessarily resonant with a western rational sense of order. Cohen and March point to this possibility somewhat, but I read their suggestions and tactics more as helping the normatively-driven provost succeed in applying norms to a chaotic environment. Rather than calling for a complete surrender to

the ontological order in which a leader finds himself or herself, the authors give a
normative handbook for navigating the wild jungle of the university.\textsuperscript{436} They still
presume that normativity precedes ontology but admit that acting normatively in such an
environment requires special skills derived from attention to the fact that the environment is norm-resistant.\textsuperscript{437}

I would like to push Cohen and March to go a step farther and abandon the order-
disorder duality and look into the chaos of the university to find the sense that is, in fact,
made there. What is it that rules the chaos? That is, how does the chaos itself make
sense? Rather than trying to force norms upon a system that is resistant to them or slip
them by while the system blinks, it may be the mark of a more powerful leader to attend
to, understand and act in accordance with the laws of an order that may be judged as
chaos on the surface.

In the case of the latter, I argue that the ontological gives rise to the normative and
that the ontology itself has an order all its own. I will attempt to show evidence of this
ruled chaos with what data are available from the University of Missouri (UMO) study as
we examine how that community makes sense of the cuts.

My analysis proceeds as follows: Cuts That Make Sense, Cutting Sensitively, and
Making Sense of the Cuts. In each of these sections, I discuss the thought processes,
actions, and justifications around two dimensions of the study: The tension between
uniform cuts across the board and making strategic cuts, and the development of criteria
to guide Bunn’s and others’ decisions.

\textsuperscript{436} Cohen and March, 227.
\textsuperscript{437} Ibid., 197.
The president, chancellor, provost, Board of Curators, and faculty council all agreed “in principle” that executing uniform budget reductions across the board was an undesirable solution to the financial problems facing the university system. A poll conducted by the campus newspaper confirmed, to the extent it could, that the campus generally favored strategic cuts over reductions that were spread evenly across campus. The “principle” to which so many assented seems to have been summed up nicely by the following:

Both Bunn and Barbara Uehling believed that it was essential for the Columbia campus to concentrate its resources on its strongest and most significant programs. Uehling had frequently and publicly expressed concern over the University’s tendency to skim all programs across the board at the expense of the institution’s mission.⁴³⁸

The mission of the university provides a normative standard against which programs can be judged. In fact, the way the case study is written implies that some programs already had been assessed against that standard at least in the minds of Bunn and Uehling. What is unclear from the case study is whether even Uehling and Bunn shared a common understanding of what made a program “strong” and “significant.” The mission held symbolic value for both Uehling and Bunn as it likely did for the entire campus. Further, the principle of measuring programs against that mission seems to have obtained near universal agreement.

Rationally, it would seem that the decision-making process was off to a great start. The community could commonly affirm the mission and agree in principle that it ought to guide the university’s actions as the community navigated this difficult budget crisis. This consensus, however, begs the question that, theoretically, nothing ought to

⁴³⁸ Stefkovich et al., 4.
exist in the university if it is inconsistent with or detrimental to the mission of the university.

The consensus is not illusory. It is real, but it is consensus around a symbol which by nature throws together disparate meanings and holds them as unified. The power of a symbol is that it can express a multitude of values, some of which may be in conflict with one another. In this case, the engineering dean and the education dean, for example, could affirm the mission with equal conviction while holding contradictory interpretations of what that affirmation means.

So the consensus is off to a rocky start at the beginning, and the difficulty is amplified by the principle of judging programs against that symbol. Knowing that there may be as many interpretations of the mission as there are people interpreting it makes it even more difficult to conceive of how many myriad ways programs can be judged relative to that standard – a standard which turns out to be a multitude of standards after all.

The mission as symbol is useful in that it helps to unify an otherwise disparate operation, but its strength is its weakness if it is deployed in a deductive manner and applied to a situation such as the one confronting UMO. The principle of judging programs by the mission is problematic from inception because of the symbolic nature of the mission.

When confronted with a difficult reality, Bunn and Uehling attempted to organize the complex by reaching for available norms, gaining or confirming consensus around those norms, and applying them to the situation. Bunn and Uehling attempted to apply the normative mission to resolve the ontological budget crisis.
Bunn, Uehling, and Olson were aware of the difficulty in applying this principle to the situation and its susceptibility to many different interpretations. Therefore they all proposed and followed criteria in their decision-making processes. President Olson articulated criteria for the consideration of the Board of Curators. His criteria included: quality, need, redundancy, and financial considerations. The Curators agreed to these criteria. In a more extensive process of consensus-building, Uehling had led her staff to the formulation of campus-specific criteria which Bunn later used in his evaluation of programs. These criteria were quality, centrality to the mission, cost-effectiveness, and demand. Both Olson’s and Bunn’s criteria are discussed in more detail in the case study.

At issue here is not the validity of the criteria but the fact that criteria were developed in the first place.

Again, Uehling’s norm-development process was year-long and involved many constituencies. Olson’s criteria were well-developed and published in a speech before the Board of Curators. Contrast, however, the process of developing criteria publicly with the chaplains’ process at Emory of trying to determine what to do. UMO focused on consensus around the why before getting to the what, whereas Emory ultimately focused on the what and built the why around it. Nevertheless UMO was able to gain consensus around the normative as well as around the principle that one can use the normative to evaluate and shape the ontological. By using the normative to guide his actions, Bunn proposed cuts that made sense.
Cutting Sensitively

The analysis of Cohen and March begins to expose the problems of the way the leaders were approaching this problem. While nodding to the importance of the ontological and qualifying the role of the normative, even Cohen and March’s approach does not quite go as far as embracing the full openness of this system. Nevertheless, their conclusions move this analysis in that direction.

Cohen and March suggest that statements of purpose are “meaningless or dubious.” In order to be broadly accepted, the goals statements must remain ambiguous and, therefore, in Cohen and March’s estimation, meaningless. This ambiguity makes “ordinary theories of decision making and intelligence…problematic.” Cohen and March offer strategies for “how a leader with purpose can operate within an organization that is without one.”

It is perfectly understandable how Bunn, Uehling, and Olson could come to understand the normative dimension of the crisis as key to resolving it. Yet by concentrating on the normative, Bunn et al. construct an artificial clarity of purpose that is, in actuality, unrelated to the organizational circumstances surrounding the crisis.

Cohen and March illuminate the dissonance between the presumptions of leadership and the realities of the context in which they lead. It is possible that Cohen and March would argue that Bunn did not pay attention to this dissonance and headed off in a process that mistakenly presumed an environment hospitable to a normative approach.

The same might be said of the establishment of criteria to guide the budget cuts. Cohen and March critique what they call an “ethic of rationality” which presumes...

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439 Cohen and March, 195.
440 Ibid.
441 Ibid., 205.
purpose and which requires consistency between action and belief and relates consequences to objectives.\textsuperscript{442} Certainly the way in which Bunn deployed the criteria in the midst of this crisis was to achieve some, if not all, of these elements of a rational approach to the crisis. What Cohen and March might suggest to Bunn, among other things, is to reconsider the whole notion of evaluation.

As nearly as we can determine, there is nothing in a formal theory of evaluation that requires that criteria be specified in advance. In particular, the evaluation of social experiments need not be in terms of the degree to which they have fulfilled our prior expectations. Rather they can examine what they did in terms of what we now believe to be important.\textsuperscript{443}

In sum, by referencing the mission at the beginning, employing the principle of evaluating programs in terms of the mission, and by elaborating that principle in the establishment of measurement criteria, Bunn and the other UMO leaders imposed an artificial order on an environment which might have yielded new terms of self-evaluation if attended to in what Cohen and March call a “playful” manner.\textsuperscript{444} By relaxing, rather than clarifying rules and standards, Bunn may have been able to discover new norms more native to the organization than the ones prescribed by the mission and measured with the evaluation criteria. Cohen and March might suggest that cutting the budget sensitively relative to the organizational context would have been a key to effective leadership in this time of crisis.

\textit{Making Sense of the Cuts}

Despite the fact that a number within the UMO community seemed to assent to the idea of strategic or mission-guided cutting as opposed to across-the-board cuts, the

\textsuperscript{442} Ibid., 216-8.
\textsuperscript{443} Ibid., 228.
\textsuperscript{444} Ibid., 229.
reactions to the budget cuts show that the common affirmation did not lead to an outcome that was as universally accepted. Across-the-board cuts were a more common precedent than strategic cuts, so the call for a more mission-based approach was a call for departure from historical practice.

While Bunn and the leadership seem to have achieved consensus on the departure from precedent, some of the reactions to Bunn’s proposals indicate that the departure was still being judged against the precedent which was, essentially, equal budget cuts for all. George Nicklaus, dean of the College of Public Health and Community Service, viewed his school as having been “attacked” for the gain of faculty salaries in other areas, and he criticized what he perceived to be a lack of clarity as to where the redirected resources would go. His arguments do not subscribe to norms based on mission or strategy but rather appeal to the order of fairness inherent in the across-the-board cuts of previous years. Mission-based cuts could justify the elimination or reduction of programs without accounting for the savings. In fact, the mission does not seem to enter into Nicklaus’s protests at all. His arguments were based more in what appears to have been the tradition of how budget cuts were done in the past.

As far as the use of the criteria is concerned, there is little or no evidence in the protests recorded in the case study that anyone indicted the decision-making criteria per se. What happened, rather, is that protestors imputed criteria upon the decision-making process. “Engineers said that [Bunn] was ‘anti-engineering.’” Other faculty “rejected the assumption that there was a fiscal crisis, and argued that the university was in excellent

\[\text{Stefkovich et al., 12, 13.}\]
condition….’This was an administration-induced crisis that was mismanaged.’” Many ridiculed the process claiming that it was not universally representative.\(^{446}\)

Still no one seemed to reject the articulated criteria on their face. In fact the reactions seem to ignore the a priori normative criteria altogether. They did not see the cuts as stemming from an application of criteria. Instead they saw a need to postulate criteria based on the ontological reality of the cuts.

Both instances described above indicate that the ontological has more sway over the normative in this case than does the normative over the ontological. In making meaning of a given set of actions and decisions, the community members most affected by Bunn’s proposals drew on precedent (the way things have been done in the past) to judge the actions of the present. In other words present actions were judged against past action, both elements of the ontological realm. The standard applied to the present actions was whether or not it was consistent with the precedent that budget cuts are conducted out of necessity in a zero-sum world having an equal impact on all programs or, alternatively, unfairly benefiting one at the expense of the other. The precedents themselves actually provided a sense of order that guided or could have guided decision-making. When the order of the precedents was violated, it was more noticeable and more hotly protested than a normative violation would have been.

In Cohen and March’s framework, this shows up as chaos or anarchy, but closer examination reveals that there is an order; it is just not an order which derives from normative assumptions. The ontological conditions here give rise to new meaning around the notions of fairness. However, an ethic of fairness was not one that was ever articulated in the debate about across-the-board cuts versus mission-based cuts. It is a

\(^{446}\) Ibid., 13, 14
tacit order which proceeds from the history of actions of those within the organization an organizational category of precedents in terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix. This category lives within a broader nomos or order at the institutional level of education.

In the same way, the force of the post-facto imputation of criteria upon the decision-making process not only overshadows the a priori work conducted by the leaders of the organization, it essentially negates it and disregards it altogether. Even after lodging protests, the same dissenters might be able to agree to the criteria Bunn, Uehling, and Olson had articulated, yet their protests give evidence that such consensus and conversation is, in fact, irrelevant to the actions of reducing budgets and eliminating programs at UMO.

Again those who would be affected by Bunn’s proposals make meaning out of the action. Note, however, that again the what preceded the why. There is no evidence in the case study that those who disagreed with Bunn showed any contempt for his application of principles. Rather they looked at the actions themselves and began to think about reasons and motives. They made sense of the actions, the ontological, by assigning norms to them. It was the ex post facto assigned norms which were criticized for being part of a personal agenda, not the norms that Bunn originally applied. The a priori norms became irrelevant. Again, the ontological preceded the normative.

In Cohen and March’s evaluation, this might seem chaotic and offer evidence of a context that resists or denies norms. Looking at it from the perspective of whether or not the organization accepted the prescribed norms would lead to that evaluation. But the university was not norm resistant. In fact it was searching for norms, but the norm development came after the action, not before it.
Cohen and March hint at both the value of precedent and the ontological preceding the normative. In their discussion of experience as theory, they suggest a need to develop a “normative theory about acting before thinking.”\(^{447}\) However, their framework still regards the ontological as un-ordered chaos. Their discussion, for instance, of “foolishness” entertains the idea of norm-breaking as rule-breaking to see if new criteria for what is important might surface.\(^{448}\) They acknowledge that preconceived notions may not be able to impose order on a situation. They call for leaders to depart occasionally from preconceived notions and “play” in the disorderly world to see what new directions emerge.\(^{449}\) Still they hold order and chaos or ruled behavior and play in opposition with one another in their recommendation that leaders sustain a “creative interaction between foolishness and rationality.”\(^{450}\) This indicates that their framework still is mythically inscribed – seeing openness to the ontological as a disordering threat that needs to be engaged but ultimately only for the sake of managing it.

What I have tried to show, however, given the limitations of the case study, is that there is evidence of an order in what Cohen and March call chaos. It is not an order in the rational sense of the word, but in the sense that organizations can be ruled by it. Rather than advocating a dance between poles, I suggest that leaders work to understand the order inherent in the system and act in accord with that order. Just as the order could permit and understand uniform budget cuts as well as cuts that benefit one program at the expense of the other, the order is not necessarily rigid and limiting. It might have its own limitless possibilities. So rather than fighting the ontological order with a normative one,

\(^{447}\) Cohen and March, 227.  
\(^{448}\) Ibid., 224-5.  
\(^{449}\) Ibid., 225-6.  
\(^{450}\) Ibid., 229.
a leader might be better advised to attend to the ontological halachically and learn how people make normative sense out of what is actually occurring.

Cohen and March plant their feet squarely in the camp of the normative shaping the ontological when they characterize the world as “absurd [so that] the president’s primary responsibility is to virtue.” The point of their recommendations seems to be to find ways to introduce virtue into the absurd when the world embraces and lives by the absurdity. Perhaps a better course of action might be to learn to find the virtue in the world, absurd as it may seem.

Others in the UMO community sought to make meaning on the edges in their own experience of communitas while administrators tried to impose normative explanations on a highly disruptive reality. The managerial style of leadership involved in executing these budget cuts left many feeling rightfully victimized and excluded from (read scapegoated by) the community. Given the breadth of the impact of these cuts, the meaning-making style was adopted mimetically by the larger community, which sought out its own scapegoat, Ron Bunn.

At a hearing before a standing committee of the state Senate, Uehling and Olson testified first, seated side-by-side. When Bunn’s turn came, the committee chairman asked, “Are you alone?” Bunn replied, “Yes, but I am getting accustomed to the idea.”

Scapegoating processes whether they hurt persons or isolate or elevate ideas and ideals mimetically translate throughout the fractal web to all levels of social complexity. By looking at a specific organizational example we are able to see how the system was indeed open and made meaning as an open system. However, the leaders’ treatment of the system as closed called for a scapegoat-based budget-cutting process. The meaning-

\[451\] Cohen and March, 205.
\[452\] Stefkovich et al., 15.
making myth inscribed by that approach obtained even at the expense of one of the leaders, as others in the system tried to stave off equilibrium.

Reviving such systems however, requires a leader with developed enough charisma to lead the meaning-making project through these rituals. Hall’s taxonomy is a developmental one. Leaders whose meaning-making skills have only developed as far as authoritarian or parental will be unable to execute the ritual sacrifices necessary to keep the system out of equilibrium. Their only hope is to continue to privilege the normative over the ontological which eventually leads to homogenization and subsequent system death – a death from which authoritarians and parents will be unable to recover. Managers know how to keep the system from succumbing to the entropic pull toward equilibrium, but as norm-privilegers themselves, they also regress the system.

Authoritarian, Parental and Managerial leaders regress systems by privileging norms. Norm-focused efforts to evoke change can be met mimetically with norm-focused resistance, especially when the leader is invoking a non-native moral language. Conversely, facilitators, collaborators, and servants employ a charism that focuses on the ontological and has the effect of progressing the system, at least to a point, allowing the ontological to bring new data into the system. Contrast the endothermic and the exothermic charisms in the following case study involving Harvard Law School.

Dominating a Rival and Elevating a Hero

In Confronting Authority: Reflections of an Ardent Protester, Derrick Bell cites his mother, Ada Childress Bell, as one of a number of his models for challenging
authority. In one vignette, Bell describes the occasion upon which his mother refused to pay her rent until the landlord repaired the doorsteps of her family’s house. Through her own protest, she was successful in obtaining the response she sought from her landlord. In one of the stories he tells about his own personal protests, Bell was not successful in convincing the Harvard Law School faculty to retain among its ranks Professor Regina Austin, an African American woman with a visiting appointment. In fact, Bell seemed to evoke a normative retrenchment on the part of his colleagues. Contrasting these two instances illustrates Ada Bell’s ability to change the reality of her family’s living conditions and Derrick Bell’s inability to reshape norms related to Harvard Law School’s hiring practices. The difference in the two approaches is one of awareness of the openness of the respective systems.

“Eventually,” says Bell, “the Harvard Law School will hire and tenure its first woman of color…even that event will not herald the adoption of polices to ensure either diversity or merit in the hiring process.” While Harvard may eventually behave in the way Bell hopes, the behavior will not be, according to Bell, a result of a normative shift for the faculty. Bell’s failed Harvard protest, as I will show, was a normative one, which did not understand or exploit the power of the contextual and the ontological. By trying to appropriate norms from one institution to another without passing through the gateway of ontological context, Bell exhibits the same moral confusion demonstrated by the president and the bishop in the Emory case. His mother, by contrast, effectively changed

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454 Ibid., 49-65.
455 Ibid., 163.
her circumstances by leveraging the contextual and ontological within the appropriate institutional framework.

**Ontological Change**

By withholding the family’s rent money from her landlord, Bell’s mother was able to pressure him to bring the residence out of its state of dangerous disrepair. She waved the rent money in front of the landlord’s teller and refused to hand it over until the landlord repaired the back steps of the Bell residence.\(^{456}\)

Analyzing his mother’s actions, to the extent we have the data to do so, in terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix shows that her protest was really focused more on the ontological dimension (or on changing reality) and less on the normative. Her actions actually did not necessarily call into question any norms that the landlord may have held. Her refusal to pay rent was legitimate and salient within the same normative framework that also would have caused the landlord to expect payment. As an aid, I reproduce the Moral Meaning Matrix in Figure 12 below. In this version, however, I identify the levels of social complexity as components of a network as discussed in chapter seven.

**Figure 12: Moral Meaning Matrix as Network**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society (System)</th>
<th>Institution (Network)</th>
<th>Organization (Hub)</th>
<th>Group (Cluster)</th>
<th>Interpersonal (Node)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Figure 13, the institutional framework for the transaction between landlord and tenant is (and was at the time) the market economy. Paying rent and

\(^{456}\) Ibid.
withholding rent both make sense in the framework of the market. Bell describes the
teller cage in symbolic terms. Paying rent was the ritual interaction between the
normative and the ontological that established the authoritative relationship between
landlord and tenant which was formalized in a lease which served as an instrument of
power with the force of jurisdiction in the relationship. 457

The operative tradition, in this situation, within the market economy is one of
exchange. The Bells paid rent; they had a place to live. Other exchanges are legitimate as
well. Bell’s mother probably most often categorized the rent-for-housing exchange as
money due to the landlord. The only power in the relationship within that categorization
is that of the landlord who would have had authority over the use of the property. The
precedent this category evoked for Ada Bell up until the point of her protest was,
presumably, one of dutiful response to that obligation.

At the moment of protest Mrs. Bell effectively re-categorized the transaction as a
trade. Not only was the landlord getting money for the use of his property, the tenant,
turned customer, was expecting some consideration for the payment. Under this
categorization, the landlord had to operate more as a merchant in the relationship than a
collector - a merchant who had an interest (limited as it may have been) in his or her
customer’s satisfaction. Figure 13 displays the analysis above in tabular form.

457 Geertz, 127.
Mrs. Bell did not confront authority as much as claim the authority she already had in the relationship. She did not alter the institutional framework but worked within it taking full advantage of the multiple options available to her at the group and interpersonal levels of social complexity. She had authority over the money used to pay the rent and used that authority to re-categorize the transaction. This put her in a position of bargaining as she, perhaps, had done in other contexts in which she withheld her money until she saw a product she was willing to purchase at a price she was willing to pay. Not only might the precedent have been familiar to her, it could have been familiar to the landlord as well. It fell squarely within a narrative the two likely shared even when they may have shared little else. Her praxis in this case, then, was to act as a consumer instead of acting as a debtor. She behaved meaningfully and in a way that was intelligible to both tenant and landlord, but she behaved differently than expected nonetheless.

Mrs. Bell’s behavioral change did not require a normative shift for her or for the landlord. Derrick Bell never reports his mother trying to convince the landlord to reconceive of the repairs as something he or she *ought* to feel obliged to do. She never tries to persuade him in terms of fairness or safety, for example. Ada Bell withheld
something she knew the landlord wanted and would likely prefer over the prospect of locating a new tenant. In a way that was meaningful for him, the landlord responded by repairing the steps. The response, initially at least, was as limited as the circumscribed protest.

Normative Failure

While his mother effected change on the ontological level, Bell’s own protests seemed to have been oriented toward trying to alter the ethics and norms held by the law school faculty. In fact, a similar analysis of his protest regarding the retention of Regina Austin illustrates that Bell was fighting for his cause on a normative front while simultaneously acting in a way that was inconsistent with the faculty’s operative normative framework.

As Bell relates the facts of the Austin case, he notes that she was a visiting professor for the 1989-90 school year.\textsuperscript{458} His request to the faculty, by way of the appointments committee, was that Harvard find some way to “retain” her.\textsuperscript{459} Bell does not indicate that there was a search underway or hint at any open position on the faculty.

Bell uses the faculty’s refusal to consider the possibility of creating a position for Austin as the focus for his protest regarding the addition of a black woman to the faculty. He then articulates the case for such an addition, be it Austin or not, in the context of an appeal to diversity within the faculty ranks. He points out many of the educational and symbolic advantages to having a diverse faculty. He persuasively argues that, despite the appearance of diversity, the faculty needed to be even more diverse and was indeed

\textsuperscript{458} Bell, 50.
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid., 54.
lacking the important component of a black woman.\textsuperscript{460} His argument departs from the specific question of whether or not to retain Austin and focuses more on his assertion that the faculty ought to include a black woman for the sake of diversity.\textsuperscript{461}

Within the meritocratic order of the faculty, the potential for a visiting professor to seek a permanent position was governed, generally speaking, by prohibiting such consideration until after he or she had completed his or her visiting term.\textsuperscript{462} The practice of a one-year delay coheres with past practices and the extant meritocracy without explicit appeal to the normative. When pushed, however, other faculty members began making meaning of that policy by discussing the merits of a visiting professor being able to teach freely without being inhibited by oversight and evaluation. This rationalization is consistent with a general devotion to academic freedom.\textsuperscript{463} That devotion, in turn, resided comfortably within a broader and more symbolic educational commitment to tenure for members of the permanent faculty.\textsuperscript{464}

Bell’s protest, however, does not draw on precedents described by the faculty’s normative framework of tenure and academic freedom. His action is based on the precedent of boycotts within the civil rights movement. By ceasing to teach, he is hoping to interrupt operations and leverage his power to effect change. Unfortunately, for Bell’s cause, he is withholding very little from the law school unlike his civil rights role models who had both buying-power and the cumulative effect of collective action to leverage changes in corporate hiring practices.\textsuperscript{465}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{460} Ibid., 56.
\bibitem{461} Ibid., 65.
\bibitem{462} Ibid., 54.
\bibitem{463} Ibid., 55.
\bibitem{464} Ibid., 104, 105.
\bibitem{465} Ibid., 59, 60.
\end{thebibliography}
Contrast Figure 13 with Figure 14. While Bell’s mother’s protest began with an activity at the intersection of the ontological dimension on the interpersonal level of the Moral Meaning Matrix, Bell’s own protest begins with the organization’s norms, challenging straight away the moral language which was deeply imbedded in the institution of education.

**Figure 14: Harvard Hiring Practices vs. Bell’s Protest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>(Higher) Education vs. Market Economy</th>
<th>Faculty Self-Governance vs. Civil Rights Movement</th>
<th>Harvard Law School vs. Corporations</th>
<th>Regina Austin Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative</strong></td>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Tenure vs. Best Economic Interest(^\text{466})</td>
<td>Academic Freedom vs. Just Business Practices</td>
<td>Scholarly Independence vs. Seeking Change</td>
<td>Temporary to Permanent Status vs. Protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Search vs. Integration(^\text{467})</td>
<td>Transient and Provisional Participation vs. Collective Action</td>
<td>Evaluation Free(^\text{468}) vs. Withholding Participation</td>
<td>Deferred Consideration vs. Leave of Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontological</strong></td>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Meritocracy vs. Leveraging “Buying Power”(^\text{469})</td>
<td>Visiting Professor vs. Boycott</td>
<td>Hiatus Policy vs. Stopping “Business As Usual”(^\text{470})</td>
<td>Wait One Year vs. Stop Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamic</strong></td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Faculty vs. Hiring/Sales</td>
<td>Policy vs. Owner/Consumer</td>
<td>Votes vs. Jobs/Purchases</td>
<td>Membership vs. Professor/Faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The moral language Bell invoked was from a foreign institutional context. His mother’s protest was an inductive one which started with activity and only precipitated change as general (left on the matrix) as challenging whether within the tradition the landlord was going to behave as a merchant or collector. Her protest never appealed for change on the

\(^{466}\) Ibid.

\(^{467}\) Ibid.

\(^{468}\) Ibid., 55.

\(^{469}\) Ibid., 59.

\(^{470}\) Ibid.
normative level. Rather it used the extant and shared norms to synthesize new meaning on the organization, group and interpersonal levels.

Bell’s protest, conversely, was a deductive one which worked from moral language through to his activity decision to stop teaching versus waiting a year. Because he appealed to the moral language of a different institution altogether, even the dynamic dimension of the matrix gets altered to reflect the tensions between two different power structures legitimated by two different institutions. Jurisdiction, authority, resources, and relationship are defined and assigned differently in education than they are in the economy. Figure 14 details this analysis in tabular form.

Significantly, the precedents upon which he draws pertain to situations and contexts related to white-owned businesses which, like Mrs. Bell’s rent protest, primarily relate to the institution of the market economy and not to higher education. Importantly the operative relationship in the civil rights protests he cited as models were between a customer and a proprietor which is a much different set of relationships than those between one professor and the balance of his colleagues on the faculty. While the praxis of a leave of absence registers as a protest in the latter context and while it seeks normative change and just business practices in the same way as the civil rights protests did, ontologically there is a difference between refraining from teaching and refraining from buying. By adopting the category of boycott to interrupt business, Bell presumes he has leveraging power that would be akin to buying-power in the marketplace. But he is not in the marketplace; he is in higher education. The law school seemed to cope with Bell’s absence in ways that boycotted companies could not and, therefore the faculty changed neither reality nor norms as a result of Bell’s activities.

471 Ibid.
Bell’s protest differed from his mother’s in two important ways. First, she desired an ontological change and not a normative one. The landlord could do what Mrs. Bell wanted him to do without changing the principles which framed the landlord’s actions and relationships with tenants. Derrick Bell, conversely, seems to have been less concerned with the ontological question of retaining Austin and more focused on replacing or supplementing Harvard’s normative and symbolic commitments with a dedication to diversity. In order for Bell to have succeeded, the faculty as a whole would have had to undergo a significant shift in the way they conceived of what they ought to be about. Second, Bell subscribed to a practice that was not native to higher education. A boycott was an effective practice within an entirely different institutional framework. In many ways, it did not make sense in the university setting, especially when undertaken by a lone faculty member.

Had Bell exploited the exceptions previously made to the one-year deferral policy, including the one which he described as being granted to another colleague, Robert Clark, he might have found a precedent that he could have deployed in the service of retaining Austin.472 Like his mother, he would have had the opportunity to re-categorize the situation by describing it in the same way Clark’s circumstances had been described – in whatever terms they were described at the time of the exception having been made for him. If he had been successful in convincing the faculty that the Austin situation in 1990 was just like the Clark situation in 1978, he may have been able to effect change without having to challenge the operative normative framework.

472 Ibid., 55.
Ontological Change and Normative Shifts

If diversity, writ large, and not Austin’s retention was truly Bell’s goal, then my suggestion above would still be only a partial victory. Considering his mother’s results more fully, however, offers hope for the possibility of a normative shift as well. Mrs. Bell’s landlord apparently went on to repair all of the steps in the complex without being asked or provoked to do so. He embarked upon a new practice, one which may have stimulated a new process of meaning-making. The unexpected universal repairs could have indicated a category shift in which the landlord began to view all tenants as customers who might otherwise withhold rent, or it could offer a glimpse of a nascent ethic for the landlord - one that had to do with equal treatment and fairness of his or her tenants. Without knowing the landlord, it is impossible for me to say.

Mrs. Bell may have affected a normative shift for the landlord, but her actions and aims resided decidedly in the realm of the ontological. What is clear is that on the level of organization in the Moral Meaning Matrix, or hub in network theory terminology, the landlord was able to make meaning of his relationships with tenants in a new way even if it remained within the original normative framework. Mrs. Bell affected a new patterning by opening up the system to a particular ontological context and offering a different, but legitimated precedent with which to order the relationship and share power. If Derrick Bell had aimed at ontological change, perhaps he eventually would have succeeded in shifting meaning-making patterns and subsequently norms as well. Contrasting the protests of mother and son reveals a tenant who by reframing a conflict, claimed and legitimated her authority to act meaningfully within a particular institutional framework and a son who acted outside the institutional framework altogether forcing him to
confront the authority of a policy in a way that did not make institutional sense to his faculty colleagues. While Derrick Bell confronted authority, Ada Bell authorized her own confrontation.

Bell’s story and this analysis illustrate the interconnectedness of the social fractal in four ways. First, Bell relied on precedents to inform his action at Harvard Law School. The two operative action precedents came from very different levels of complexity within the fractal. He imitated his mother from his home life and he imitated civil rights leaders, very much in the public eye on a national and international stage. Second, his adoption of these precedents illustrates the difference between the institutions of market economy and education. Legitimate market economy action may or may not be salient in an educational setting. Third, his adoption of civil rights protests as a precedent also illustrates the ways actors move fluidly in and out of various institutional contexts, importing precedents and metaphors that may or may not be salient in the new context. The civil rights protests he was imitating were aimed at leveraging economic power for political change. It is similarly interesting to consider the likely overlap between Government/Law/Politics and Education in the context of a school of law. However, Bell appealed to neither of these two institutional frameworks or their rich sets of precedents in his protest.

Fourth, and importantly for the present discussion, Bell’s attempts to make meaning in this situation were increasingly endothermic. Bell paid attention only to the normative dimension of reality. His protests began by trying to manage policy, identifying the lack of full diversity as a condition he wished to exile from the faculty community. Scapegoating lack of full diversity caused him to scapegoat others who
identified with that position. They responded with normative positions of their own which regressed the system recursively. He then adopted a Paternalist posture by elevating himself (or his continued teaching) as (a withheld) object of desire, his leadership style eventually regressed into an authoritarian cycle of a rivalrous stand off with a rival he could not ultimately dominate. He evoked mimetically a regressive response from his increasingly norm-entrenched colleagues until he was dominated right out of the faculty. His mother’s protest did not devolve to that level. Using a style that is probably most closely described as collaborator/hero, she asserted a partnership of equals with the landlord to resolve her problem. She remains a hero to her son and likely co-elevated her landlord who perhaps was also regarded as a hero in the eyes of others whose steps he fixed without provocation.

Facilitators, collaborators, and servants privilege the ontological in their meaning-making processes. More than that, however, they know how to navigate the middle ground of balanced energy states, between norm-privileging and reality-privileging. That is, they know how to make meaning through the transition of equilibrium. Even if they choose to lead, or the system causes them to lead, at a less developed level of leadership, they have developed far enough along to be able to weather the transition of equilibrium. Likewise if, as servants, they drive a closed system to a homogenized end, they will have the skills and experience necessary to guide the group members through the liminal transitions that re-creation requires. This also holds true if a highly developed leader for some reason exercises endothermic meaning-making skills and regresses the system into a homogenized end on the other end of the spectrum.
Initiated Leaders

This developmental difference in meaning-making ability among the various charisms causes me to propose a new distinction which hearkens back to Victor Turner’s observations. That is the distinction between initiated and uninitiated leaders. Initiated leaders have endured liminal phases and are subsequently able to make sense in those times of (albeit often ritualized) death of a social system.

Drawing on the work of the great student of great myths Joseph Campbell, Warren Bennis and colleagues describe well the role that myth plays in guiding leaders, “It has always been a central function of mythology to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to these other images that constantly hold us back.” Quoting Campbell, they interject a developmental element, “‘We remain fixated to the unexercised images of our infancy, and hence disinclined to the necessary passages of adulthood.’ This disinclination can apply just as much to organizations as to individuals.”

Remaining grounded in Campbell’s model of the hero’s journey, Bennis et al. continue, offering an itinerary for the journey that initiates leaders, describing in some detail the liminal transition which is the current object of focus.

“Risking the loss of your old self” is the inward equivalent of the outward risk-taking that accompanies business and personal enterprise. Whatever ideas you pick up intellectually you have to develop the emotional commitment to put both them and yourself to the test. In the process you may become a different person, disassembled and reassembled, as a result of the emotional wrangles you have undergone.

On the other side of this liminal trial emerges the initiated leader. As a result the charisma of exothermic progressive leaders can be described as initiated charisma. The difference between initiated and uninitiated charisma is that the uninitiated leader, while able to

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473 Joseph Campbell as cited in Bennis et al., 87.
474 Bennis et al., 94.
articulate a vision and make meaning in the face of liminal threats, is not one that has developed the personal capacity to endure the liminal himself or herself. Reflect back on Frankl’s plight. He experienced what Turner might describe as communitas around the edges of camp life. The hyper-structure of the camp regime crowded out any anti-structure within its closed system of permissible life. Communitas or anti-structure was only available around the edges of the hyper-structure. The camp regime synthesized the normative and the ontological by imposing the normative on the ontological to the extent that the ontological was eventually excluded in the closed system of the camp. The system died in terms of its meaning-making ability with the homogenization of the two dimensions. Therefore the ontological, anti-structure, and communitas were only found outside of the camp regime in darkened bunkhouses, the quietness of the soup line, and in what was left of one’s memories and imagination. The authoritarian leaders of camp life were synthesizing the is and the ought, literally and figuratively to death, but they were unable to endure the liminal with those whose lives they plunged headlong into anti-structure.

Contrast this with St. Francis of Assisi and his orientation toward communitas. He prescribed a life to which he himself was committed that maximized the experience of anti-structure and communitas. The charism of the authoritarian camp leaders rested solely in their ability to deploy power to coerce and force others into their closed system. By contrast the initiated charisma of the Franciscan Rule was embodied more authentically by a leader who, himself, was willing to endure the liminality his charisma evoked.
Whether discussing initiated or uninitiated leaders or charisma, one fact remains in all of the cases examined thus far. The leadership styles examined to this point presume that the systems they lead are closed systems and work hard to keep them closed. This leads to very specific understanding of the life and death of the systems relative to the energy available to synthesize meaning. Further, given the dominant human myth, which according to Girard is reinforced by a misreading of the Gospel, the leadership styles which presumed closed social systems deploy power with unconscious attention to the mimetic violence and sacrifice encoded by this myth.

As discussed above, the necrosis of the social system translates through the levels of social complexity by means of mimesis through the fractal-like relationships which link persons to entire societies and vice versa. In the same way, these leadership postures which presume closed social systems translate the violent meaning-making methods throughout the system. Managerial techniques trading on scapegoating and execution are imitated, changed, and perhaps intensified in a way that the dynamics of a corporate board room, for instance, can influence global politics. The reverse is also true. However, in order to acknowledge the connection between the board room and the White House’s situation room where military conflicts around the globe are managed, I must make one more epistemological shift. Despite assumptions to the contrary, the board room and the situation room, as social systems are in fact, open systems. Deconstructionists contributed this insight earlier. Taylor draws on Derrida’s reading of Kurt Gödel to make the point. “Every system or structure includes as a condition of its own possibility something it cannot assimilate. This ‘outside’ which is ‘inside,’ exposes the openness of every system
that seems to be closed.” Imagine the scientist who discounts the degree to which his or her body temperature alters the ambient temperature of the room in which an experiment is being conducted. The watchword “negligible” reveals external influences on an artificially closed system in the physical sciences. Scientists who regularly conduct experiments in “closed systems” are careful to take such influences into account, bounding the system as necessary to achieve the desired results or measurements, but eventually the closing of the system relies simply upon a definition of a boundary, a definition that describes the artificial assumptions created for the sake of the experiment and one that by its very existence acknowledges that the boundaries are artificial and, to some degree, porous. Most often we are oblivious to how interconnected all of these influences are. But cultural systems are open systems despite attempts to close societies, organizations, or groups to outside influence. It is particularly crucial for education to understand social systems as open, because education is the portal to ontological context, the access any society has to difference. But education needs to rehabilitate its own moral language to avoid co-option by other social institutions. It must draw on religion as a resource for understanding anew how to synthesize meaning and re-create its own moral language. In this way, education and religion can have a mutually transformative effect for one another and, together provide the institutional patterning necessary to keep the institutions of the government and economy from colluding to close societies and their processes of culture-creation which results in increasing and translating violence throughout the social fractal.

475 Taylor, 97.
The chapter four call upon education to rethink its moral purpose is a call to understand education as the keeper of the gate of ontological context and to de-fuse its moral language from that of other social institutions. A moral language which adopts a transformative approach to opening systems is the key to re-writing society’s myths which describe cultural systems as closed and inscribe violent methods to sustain the viability of those mythically closed systems. The dissociation of religion and education left religion without education functioning to open society’s meaning-making processes to ontological context so that it could re-write the religion-governed myths of meaning-making. Education’s prospects for functioning in this way for religion and thereby society is limited because its own signification processes are regressing into utilitarianism as a result of religion, the institution which prescribes modes of meaning-making, being relegated to the realm of the private. Religion has very little, if any, standing in the academy. Even in places where it does have standing, religion has been regressing itself, so the meaning-making processes it encodes trend away from, not toward, openness.

Simultaneously, education needs to rehabilitate its self-understanding in order to establish moral meaning on its own and thereby rehabilitate religion. Reciprocally and simultaneously, religion needs to help education think through how to synthesize meaning in a way that is native to and authentic to education and not pointed toward
religious, governmental, or economic ends. Examining the relationship between education and religion in the context of the following two examples provides insights into the way education and religion can relate to one another without being subsumed by the other. Further, it shows that a vibrant relationship between the two provides persons a way of understanding public participation in society in terms that do not rely on the moral language of government. This re-categorization of the understanding of public begins to give religion and education stronger footing in a social milieu dominated by government and economy.

**Education and Religion**

Robert Jackson examines the Warwick Religious and Education Research Unit’s attempts to respond to the failure of programs designed to provide multicultural religious education in their efforts to address adequately the problems of racism in England and Wales. He frames the problem in this way. In “Religious Education’s Representation of ‘Religions’ and ‘Cultures,’” multicultural religious education came under attack by anti-racists for, among other things, its notions of culture and religion as being closed systems and for its lack of attention to the structures of power.\(^4\) While Jackson notes that religious education has a history of helping to alleviate racial misunderstanding, he agrees that the current conceptions of religion and culture are potentially inimical to the goal of eliminating racism.\(^5\) Jackson traces notions of culture and religion through a history of anthropological thought and lands at the ones employed by the Warwick project which regard “concepts of religion and religions” as modern post-Enlightenment

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\(^5\) Ibid., 273.
constructions and acknowledges the role of colonial power in defining the ‘other’ in terms of discrete religions and cultures.\textsuperscript{478} He continues by commenting on how important it is that a concept of religion be broad enough to accommodate several levels of internal diversity even within identifiable membership groups.\textsuperscript{479}

He essentially shows that the project does the same with the notion of ethnicity, pointing out that “A sense of shared descent is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of common ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{480} He draws on Geertz and others to explicate the implications of this understanding on views of what culture is and is not, relying on a notion of culture as patterns of meaning or symbol systems subject to being contested and renegotiated.\textsuperscript{481}

Jackson argues against avoiding issues of religion and culture in the classroom, but advocates careful reconsideration of notions of culture and religion that were being used to frame conversations.\textsuperscript{482} Jackson’s insistence on teaching about cultures and religions, in the classroom in the specific way he advocates doing so deploys education’s greatest strength. It can expose the myths that religions and cultures are closed systems and show how complex and diverse religions and cultures are or can be. In so doing, education acts as an entry way to difference – different ideas and, ultimately, participation in the system by persons once conceived of as different.

Reciprocally, religion can deepen the way education thinks about itself as shown in Nancy Lesko’s study, \textit{Symbolizing Society}, which examines life for girls at a Midwestern US Catholic high school. Like Bellah et al., Lesko wishes to revive the notion of “Public” and sees schooling, particularly private schooling, as having public

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid., 284.
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid., 285.
\textsuperscript{480} Ibid., 285.
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 286.
\textsuperscript{482} Ibid.
significance. It acquires this relevance as a symbol characterized most poignantly by the internal cultural structure.

Attention should be placed on the school as a site of meaning-making and identity creation, rather than merely as a training or contest site....In the interpretive structure of thought that underlay some of St. Anne’s school practices was an orientation toward “something higher” or deeper, an imperative to go beyond the surface actions to distill meaning and understanding.... Across differing interpreting principles, students and teachers understood their lives, religion and literature in light of deeper or higher principles.\textsuperscript{483}

Lesko adopts notions of education and religion akin to Bellah et al.’s institutions and identifies a common language for the school, which speaks to the tensions between community and individual.

St. Anne’s High School can be understood as a myth, told in words and actions. The subject of the myth is the conflict between two codes of conduct, caring and contest, each of which embodies a distinct way of thinking about, seeing and acting in the school.\textsuperscript{484}

Ultimately, Lesko sees the myth of the school resolving in favor of “caring” as illustrated in the school rituals she characterized as “love and fun.”\textsuperscript{485} Perhaps more to the heart of this inquiry, one of the most significant defining moments in this myth-ritual complex was a Catholic Mass during which the preference for “caring” relative to “contest” was made explicit. The theme of the mass was “Give good gifts” and, ultimately, the “good gift” to give was “Christian love.”\textsuperscript{486}

Just as St. Anne’s opted for a culture of caring, \textit{The Good Society} calls for a spirit of “cultivation” versus one of “exploitation,” that is a “willingness to cultivate the purposes of individual and common lives rather than be swept along in the fervor of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid., 139.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 111-2
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exploitation.” 487 William Tierney, in an examination of several educational settings, identifies as a recurring theme for his research the Greek notion of Agape or “selfless love” made explicit in the New Testament. “An organization that operates from the ideal of agape operates in a fundamentally different manner from other organizations. The underlying tenet here is that all life is interrelated.” 488 Girard advocates the imitation of Christ which is mimesis but not mimetic rivalry. It is, as Williams puts it, a “mimesis that is good, a mimesis of love.” 489

This seems contradictory with this analysis. I have gone to great lengths to demonstrate that Christian mimesis, generally is not loving. It is violent. But here, Girard and Williams offer a glimpse into something transformative about Christianity, a myth-ritual-tradition-custom-praxis set that could yield something other than violence. Are there alternative ways to mine Christianity specifically and religion generally to overcome the violent effects of people adopting what Huntington terms a meaningful identity? Further, is religion’s symbol system robust enough in its myth-making potential to inscribe a pattern of meaning-making for open systems? Can it provide a signification mechanism for society’s other institutions that keeps them open and freely pattering their own moral frameworks? Reading two explicitly religious paradigms alongside educational research outlines proposed elements for patterns with the potential to make meaning for open systems. While the elements can be explained and enacted in explicitly religious terms in religious contexts, the elements of such a pattern need not be, in the end, explicitly religious. Yet the relationship is more than one among analogues. Religion

487 Bellah et al., Good Society, 275.
489 Girard as paraphrased in Williams, 268.
functions to inscribe modes of signification. Enacting and writing myth in explicitly religious terms encodes for societies ways of making meaning in other settings as well.

In the following examples, I turn again to a crossroads of religion and education and the way that religious affiliation of a college can thwart openness to difference or as it is experienced in these situations, human diversity. Contrasting a model in which religion closes the system with a hypothetical paradigm which proposes mythical elements available to any school regardless of religious affiliation can aid in opening a system requires religiously-affiliated colleges, at least, do as Martin Marty suggests and “excavate their own traditions for resources to address [a] diversity of publics – and thus exemplify and contribute to public attitudes in other plural contexts far from campus.”

What this exploration unearths is not a prescriptive myth or set of myths for open systems but the elements with which such myths could make meaning for open systems.

Elements of Open Systems Myths

Religion can be understood as a factor which negatively influences students’ willingness to accept and embrace other students with different backgrounds or with racial, ethnic, or sexual identities other than their own. Parochialism both connotes and denotes the degree to which religious affiliation might be a negative indicator for openness to difference or diversity. In some cases it might be understood as the main factor resisting diversification of a student body, creating a climate inhospitable to those who fall outside of whatever categories may be considered normal at an institution and by failing to provide an environment that promotes campus-wide understanding of diversity issues by reinforcing system closure and violent modes of meaning making.

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The apparent incompatibility, or at least incongruity, of diversity and religious affiliation is acute around the issue of sexual orientation. In a 1998 article in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Patrick Love discusses what he identifies as institutional barriers facing Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual (GLB) students at religiously affiliated colleges. While his study did not show the actual barriers created by the college's church affiliation, it did show that GLB students and their allies perceived that the religious identity of the college was a barrier.

Homophobia, heterosexism, the discomfort with issues related to sexuality, the invisibility of sexual minorities, and the stigma associated with homosexuality were all elements of the culture of the greater societal context in which St. James existed. These elements interacted to reinforce one another; they were intensified by the religiously affiliated elements of the culture (i.e., perceptions of Catholicism, fear of typically peripheral and external constituencies, lack of appropriate ways to discuss sexual issues); and marginalized what was being done to address sexual orientation.

Ernest Pacarella and his colleagues documented the importance of diverse learning environments. “Indeed our analysis suggests that exposure to a range of diversity experiences in the first year of college may be particularly important for the development of students’ critical thinking.” Any purposeful or even unintentional negative impact on the diversity of a college’s student body, such as what Love describes, may have an adverse affect on the learning experiences of the students.

The educational opportunities at religiously affiliated colleges and universities - and indeed the development of cognitive skills among students - may be severely limited if the college’s religious identity creates an environment inhospitable to diversity. In

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“Influences on Student’s Openness to Diversity and Challenge in the Second and Third Years of College,” a study published in 2001, Whitt et al. show the importance of the institutional environment in promoting student openness to diversity.

The combined impact of institutional commitments and expectations also could encourage students to feel comfortable taking risks needed to interact with persons different from themselves and to seek opportunities to challenge previously held beliefs. And such experiences contribute to increases in students' openness to diversity and challenge.\footnote{Elizabeth J. Whitt, Marcia I. Edison, Ernest T. Pascarella, Patrick T. Terenzini, and Amaury Nora, eds., “Influences on Students’ Openness to Diversity and Challenge in the Second and Third Year of College,” \textit{The Journal of Higher Education} 72 (2001), 191.}

How can religiously affiliated colleges create environments that foster openness to and understanding of difference or diversity without compromising the integrity of their religious identities? Must schools achieve a hospitable environment despite religious affiliation? Or is there a way to understand religious commitments as particularly supportive of openness to difference?

In what follows, I attempt to forward two explicitly religious paradigms to legitimate systems as being open to difference. The purpose of this exercise is to show a counter-example to what Girard describes as a misreading of the Gospel which leads to violence. By showing a Christian and a Jewish paradigm, I move back to a functional notion of religion. I will draw in great detail on the content of the particular traditions, but by illustrating the point in two traditions at once, I intend to show that religion can function to legitimate openness for multiple cultures. Even though one particular theological interpretation or practice leads to violent modes of signification, others, from within the same tradition, have the potential for opening systems up, helping others within the systems value in a meaningful way encounters with difference which derive from the inherent openness of their social structures.
From a Catholic standpoint, one explicitly religious paradigm for diverse individuals coming together for a common purpose is that of Holy Communion. Girard would point out that there is a compelling and pervasive sacrificial theology of Holy Communion which perpetuates the very violent patterns I am trying to avoid. In this proposal, I offer a re-reading of Holy Communion in the non-sacrificial terms Girard advocates. Holy Communion in the Catholic Church is the highpoint of the mass for which there is much personal and corporate preparation. The preparation immediately preceding the actual sharing of bread and wine, taken with Holy Communion itself, is known as the Eucharist, literally “good gifts” in Greek. Although the ordering of the activity of the Eucharist has varied from time to time and place to place, there are a few discernable common movements, which have persisted since the earliest records of Christian worship. Along with other actions and prayers, the Eucharist contains at least the following: Offering of Gifts, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, Doxology, Fraction, Exchanging Signs of Peace, Agnus Dei, and Communion. While a case can be made that each of these movements is fundamental to the establishment of a community of diversity, I will focus on Offering of Gifts, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, Signs of Peace, and Communion.

Similarly, an explicitly Jewish paradigm for exploring issues related to encountering difference can be uncovered, as I have alluded to before, in a closer examination of Jewish law or halalcha. Halacha may better be understood as practice rather than law because it is more inductive in nature than what we, in the West, typically think of as law. Halacha is also less rigid than it might appear to be on the surface. In fact, fluidity inheres allowing it to adapt to new contexts, changing technology and shifting historical realities.
As previously discussed, halachic decisions about practice take into account three main factors, category, precedent, and context. In order to know which precedent to use to guide practice in a given situation, the decision-maker must determine which category to invoke for the context. Different categories call on different precedents and different contexts call for different categories of precedents. Another example of this decision-making method being applied to a situation which has very little to do with Jewish law might be something like the following: An automobile driver approaches a red light on a narrow, one-lane, one-way street at 2 a.m. As the driver pulls up to the light the category “traffic signal” is evoked. The precedents upon which the driver draws instinctively are driving through a green light, stopping at a red light and exercising caution when the light turns yellow. The driver is followed to the intersection by an ambulance with its lights and siren on. The light at the intersection is still red. Does the driver stop or pass into the intersection slowly and with caution in order to make room for the ambulance to pass? If the driver remains rigidly wed to the category, “traffic signal,” then he or she will only call upon the precedent which would lead to the driver stopping. If however, the driver chooses to understand the situation by using the category “emergency” then a different set of precedents is invoked which might allow the driver to maneuver in a way that breaks the law of “traffic signals” but makes way for the ambulance.

Now consider what would happen if another driver traveling on the cross street saw the green light and heard the siren of the ambulance. If he or she employed the categories of “traffic signal” and “emergency” together and drew upon relevant precedents, he or she might chose to speed through the green light to clear the way or might shift from “traffic signal” to the “emergency” category half-way through the
intersection and stop dead center. In either case, the two cars might collide. The same circumstance (context) might legitimately be read two or more different ways by two different drivers. If both chose the category “emergency” in a timely manner, then they would avoid collision and the ambulance would pass safely through the intersection.

Simplistic as it is, this example shows the fluidity and adaptability for the halachic decision-making process and the collision course individuals may be on when they read and respond to the same or similar contexts using a different set of rules. Note, however, that even in the case of the first driver, two apparently conflicting activities, driving through the light and stopping at the light could both be ruled legitimate responses to the same situation. They would each be “legal” or “ruled” activity. Hardly rigid and hardly linear or deterministic, such a decision-making process can dissect complex situations and legitimate many actions. There are many different “ruled” ways to respond to the intersection problem. Making sure each person understands how others with different experiences interpret contexts, employ categories, and appropriate precedent can help avoid collisions. It also can help us avoid missing the complexity of interactive decision making and simply ruling that one practice is absolutely right and others are absolutely wrong.

Coming Together

When individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences come together on a college campus, they must work to understand one another in order to form a community. If successful, there ultimately will be one body formed out of many without losing the richness of the diversity. The Eucharist offers an excellent model for understanding how
diverse persons can come together and transform their relationships with one another from previous relationships marked by hatred, suspicion, and ignorance to ones of deep appreciation and love for one another. While what I am outlining will seem like a sequential progression along a line to a destination, it is important to keep in mind that even the movements of the Eucharist are juxtaposed in different ways in different churches and have changed over time. This is not a prescription for progress but a description of the various components that comprise community creation.

The first movement I will discuss is the Offering of Gifts by the individuals who are coming together from diverse backgrounds. When any group of persons comes together, their similarities and differences become apparent, either starkly so and immediately or gradually over time. While initially this can cause feelings of superiority or of being judged, students must be urged simply to note the similarities and differences and use this as an occasion to understand and know who they are and what they bring to the table. In other words what are the gifts with which they each have been endowed? What stories and characteristics make up their personalities up to and including the current moment? What are their strengths and vulnerabilities?

Once this sort of personal inventory has been done, a student must determine that he or she is eager and willing to offer the gift of himself or herself to others. This requires an acknowledgement of his or her inherent value as a person and courage to become vulnerable with others, sharing what he or she has to offer. In the mass, the substance of the offertory prayers for the bread and wine (offered along with money) are found in the *Didache*, but are originally rooted in Jewish Blessings. The new formula, [which begins with] “Blessed are you, Lord” has a threefold idea: the bread and the wine are products of creation and provide nourishment, and thereby symbolize our worlds and our life.
They also signify the work of our hands and our daily labor, and thereby, are an offering of ourselves.\footnote{William Saunders, “The Order of the Mass (Part 3 of 4)” website; available from \url{http://www.catholicherald.com/saunders/01ws/ws010222.htm}; Internet, accessed January 12, 2007.}

What the student brings to the table (or to college) is important. Most significant is a student’s pre-college values regarding diversity. Whitt et al. were not surprised to learn that “the most significant positive influence on a student’s openness to diversity and challenge during the first three years of college was the student’s openness... before college.”\footnote{Whitt et al., 188.}

There are ways to effect this sort of self-assessment of pre-college values and facilitate mutual sharing once students are on campus, including service learning. Students engaged in service learning in a study conducted by Susan Jones and Kathleen Hill “began to make a connection between understanding others and understanding oneself. This process involved an awareness of their advantages and privileges.”\footnote{Susan R. Jones, Kathleen Hill, “Crossing High Street: Understanding Diversity through Community Service-learning,” \textit{Journal of College Student Development} 42 (2001), 207.}

This is the moment in which a halachic crisis can occur. Individuals who have grown up in different communities have learned to navigate the world in different ways. As the students come together, it is important to know if they see a hole in the ground as a well or as a latrine. Students must begin to assess the category sets they have, most likely unknowingly, created over a lifetime. Their practices and interactions with others and the world will depend on what categories they employ to understand different circumstances. Those categories will call upon different precedents and lead to different decisions for action.
Recalling and Sharing

Following the offering of gifts in the Catholic paradigm is the Eucharistic Prayer which includes one or more elements known by the Greek term “Anamnesis” literally meaning “unforgetting.” During this part of the prayer the priest recalls the history of God’s saving and liberating relationship with humankind. While the English “re-member” packs its own poetic punch if analyzed carefully, its common usage disarms it somewhat. In addition, I think for the issue at hand, the process of unforgetting may be more important. As people of difference come together, the group will surely be comprised of those who are advantaged and those who are disadvantaged both in resources and power. The power gradients present in our world today keep and have kept some stories from being told or heard as Freire demonstrates. Once students have taken stock of what they have to offer and have decided to share it with others and once students have made a commitment to receive the gifts others bring, the stories must be told and heard. Stories of oppression and discrimination have a particular urgency and priority for the group determined to be a community. Those stories, as painful as they are, must be unforgotten by those who have experienced them directly or indirectly and incorporated into the anthology of community consciousness.

Developing a common anthology of stories extends experience from one member of the community to others and begins to help each person reframe their notions of reality. As one student working in an AIDS service organization and participating in the Jones and Hill study commented, “It all occurred in such a non-threatening way that it was, that’s great, that’s really cool…I guess just listening to some of the people talk about their partners it struck me as sounding weird, abnormal, unusual to me just because
I hadn’t heard it before, but now it’s like an everyday thing for me.”

Jones and Hill conclude that this type of interaction “led to an appreciation of diverse perspectives and an understanding of life circumstances with which each was unfamiliar.”

From within the halachic paradigm, once a student begins to become self-aware of the category sets he or she uses to understand and navigate life, it is important that he or she begin to share the implications of working from that category set has had in his or her life or even to share what has occurred or recurred to reinforce his or her categorical understandings and appropriation of precedent. Likewise, it is key to understand literally where others are coming from. Learning how they use the stories of their lives as precedents will foster common understanding and appreciation of why two persons have such a hard time conversing with one another in the first place. In the story above about partners, for instance, some students might have parents who are lawyers or business owners and assume that the word “partner,” when used by a client of the service organization, referred to a legal or businesses partner. The student may never have had the (need to develop the) same vocabulary of the client he or she is now serving.

Transformation

The next Eucharistic movement I wish to describe is the Epiclesis. Calling upon the Holy Spirit the celebrant asks that the gifts be transformed for the sacrament. Likewise, the telling of the stories described above as a praxis in and of itself will either cause a transformation to occur or make the need for transformation more evident. The type of transformation that must occur in a diverse community - as it comes together - is

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497 Ibid., 207.
498 Ibid.
one that takes the gifts brought to the table by members of a group and reorients them for
the work of community building. It is simultaneously a call for transformation of the
world around the community members and of the community members themselves.

Jones and Hill reported that study participants involved in community service
“learned to pay attention, to notice different things around them, and to appreciate diverse
life circumstances and perspectives. One student commented: ‘Now I know what it is
like…I view everything differently now.’”499 Not only are the individuals changed, but so
are the stories each brings to and receives from others. Ellen Broido discusses what she
calls “Meaning-making strategies” undertaken by those developing skills as social justice
allies. Using these strategies, students mingle what they bring to the table with the stories
they learn in their encounters with others. “The participants transformed information into
knowledge. They used their pre-college values and the information they had acquired as
the content for these meaning-making processes.”500

Halachically, once the stories of others have shown that there are other ways to
understand similar experiences and different ways to act sensibly in what otherwise might
seem to be the same situation, the students engaging one another can begin to “try on”
new categories and try to approach situations in ways they had never approached them
before. The world is new to a person who is seeing it through the eyes of another for the
first time. Halachically, this is evidence of shifting categories. Students encountering
difference realize that there are multiple categories available for use when understanding
appropriate practice and when they begin to understand why someone who sees a hole as
a latrine approaches it and uses it in a different way. More than that, the student may even

499 Ibid.
begin to be able to move fluidly between his or her own category set and that of someone else with whom he or she has shared stories.

Inter-subjectivity

Once the Eucharistic gifts have been transformed, worshipers must prepare themselves for the encounter with, appropriation of, and use of the sacrament. In order to do this, they offer each other Signs of Peace as an act of reconciliation. In the midst of having become self-aware and being transformed by the telling and hearing of stories, the differences, the growing relationships, the past (passive or active) enmities between persons and the emerging shared worldview are all becoming more evident. These realizations beg for intentional inter-subjectivity. Previously, understanding of other came in the third person, learning about those who are different (that is if any such learning had occurred at all). In a Eucharistic community, learning occurs face to face with, from and for each other. The next step in overcoming divisiveness and charting a new course is making peace.

In the same way, Jones and Hill noted: “Through their work at the community service sites, students began to view community members and clients whom they served as unique individuals, rather than categories of difference or only as members of particular groups.”501 They continue, pointing out the importance of reciprocity in relationships, “[In] reciprocal relationships…defined as those in which all partners are

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501 Jones and Hill, 208.
involved in the design of the activity, all learn from the relationship, and all benefit as a result.”

Halachic peace is speaking the same moral language, using the same categories and employing the same precedents. Or, when not doing so, knowing the language of others with whom you are in relationship. Halachic interaction must be inter-subjective. There will be conflicts in the interactions, and when these occur the actors must actively translate categories and precedents to one another or else they will be acting upon or in spite of the other. This would make the other an object of the action, an object that fits into a category and calls upon certain precedents to guide practice. Such objectification may be harmful because it does not acknowledge mutual agency and does not lead to interpersonal relationships or common community building.

Community

The culminating movement of the Eucharist is Communion itself. At this point in the mass, worshipers share a meal together as one family. Divided and brought together around one table, one loaf, and one cup, the church too is one. So too, divided student communities, in a profound way can work through the differences and divisions and build community.

Not only do such encounters form community, they deepen and transform ideas of community for engagement of difference even beyond the community just formed. Jones and Hill see the power of activities that engage students with persons they would not otherwise have encountered. “The possibility of truly realizing the principle of reciprocity

\[502\] Ibid., 214.
and appreciation of diversity depends upon the ability to sustain relationships and
develop ongoing partnerships.”

Halachically, community cannot be conceived of as a state. It is not a place to stay. Rather it is a time for work. If students do indeed come together with other students or with community members, for that matter, they are not only versed at moving among each other’s category sets and understanding how others are going to react differently to similar situations, they have begun the work of common category maintenance and the creation of new categories. Categories are formed through lived experience. As the students experience life in community, they are developing their own library of precedents together which ultimately will be categorized in similar ways. Holes in the ground may become more often understood in the new community as places for planting trees. Students may even lose touch with the fact that others in their home communities still see a hole as a latrine or a well. Once students reach this stage, they must continually touch base with other elements described above remaining self aware and aware of the standpoint of others with whom they relate. They are indeed building a new community which will require maintenance, but one which will also differ from the next community they enter. After some work, they will have a precedent for encountering difference in a new context – a precedent which will guide and which will be the gift he or she has to offer to the new others he or she encounters.

An explicitly religious paradigm for establishing and maintaining an environment are not without its difficulties. Many priests and rabbis hold beliefs and teach doctrine that is clearly understood as hostile to some. It is here that the halachic approach is particularly instructive. If explicitly religious models for creating environments that

503 Ibid., 215.
intentionally incorporate difference are implemented and work, they will become precedents within ecclesial or rabbinical categories that might serve as legitimating factors in transforming teachings or environments that might otherwise be hostile. This provides for the possibility of a self critique of a re-opened institution of religion. Such a model may bring to light substantive theological and moral critiques on stances taken by religious authorities. The critiques, importantly, will be from within the institutional framework of religion, because its potential for openness has allowed such difference into the legitimated and legitimating system.

In religious or educational terms, the preceding exercise lifts up potential elements of cultural myths on a societal level that could, indeed, help shape open systems’ meaning-making processes. Whether approaching meaning-making process from the standpoint of the Eucharist, halacha, or educational research, those elements are: Coming Together, Recalling and Sharing, Transformation, Inter-subjectivity, and Community.

**Opening Systems**

Both in institutional form and mythical content, religion and higher education have something to contribute to one another. Rethinking and rehabilitating education and religion require not only exposing the myth which conceals mimetic rivalry, but also the myth which conceals the openness of the system. Servant leadership stands on the threshold, the *limen*, of closed and open systems. As agents of transformation, then, servant leaders must demythologize the closed system and ultimately demythologize system closure altogether. However, the charism of servant leadership is also mythically
inscribed. So servant leaders are capable only of demythologizing a system by privileging the ontological at the expense of the normative. Opening systems requires that leaders weave and advance new myth not by ignoring past meanings made, but by, using Marty’s image, excavating them for normative patterns capable of making sense of new realities in non-violent ways. These excavated patterns provide the starting point for opening cultural systems which will then continue to re-weave myths like the one which prescribe Coming Together, Recalling and Sharing, Transformation, Inter-subjectivity, and Community. As an example, myths which embody these elements have the potential of continually opening the cultural systems to difference and to model for other institutions non-violent ways to make meaning. This avails the system to the energy of negentropy freely available and always increasing for the sake of culture creation.

Leaders and cultures are mutually constitutive. Leaders depend on cultural patterns to legitimate their meaning-making charisms, and culture depends on leaders to shape and re-shape meaning-making patterns. A co-condition of the development of leaders who can establish and sustain open systems cultures is the rehabilitation of the institutions of education and religion. These institutions create patterns for cognitive and moral development upon which the growth of open systems leaders depend.

Education inscribes the patterns necessary for cognitive development. A model for growing leaders capable of opening systems and sustaining them meaningfully, then, requires a more explicit understanding of the ways education creates more and less open and therefore more and less violent patterns for learning and reasoning.

Education is about learning, and learning is about reconciling the general with the particular. However, more than a tension between the general and the particular inheres
in the process of knowing, according to Taylor. He suggests that the process of knowing starts with the contextual, the particular, the perceptual.\textsuperscript{504} As Minnnich points out, however, many notions of cognition begin with generalizations and proceed to the particular. It is exactly this process that Freire seeks to reverse, again giving priority to context. Halacha gives us a model of how that can actually work.

Voyles illustrates the necessity of not mistaking analytical isolation (of normative, ontological, general, and particular, for instance) for the way life really works. Life is a set of messier processes that relate is, ought, and meaning as well as general, particular, and knowledge. These processes are going on at various levels at the same time in different and differently understood contexts.\textsuperscript{505} I respect and agree with his understanding of the complexity of these processes and how he balances that with his faithfulness to Geertz’s enterprise of isolating cultural processes into analytical categories in order to see how processes do relate dialectically rather than as “mere reflexes of one another.”\textsuperscript{506}

The priority of context, for Voyles, injects the freedom to access a number of different possible solutions for problems related to behaving in the world. For Freire, the priority of context puts the power to create reality in the hands of the people. When priority is given to the universal, oppressed and oppressor alike behave by applying the worldview to a given situation. Action, which starts in context and behaves in a way different from the propounded worldview, is revolutionary in that it breaks from the worldview and begins the process of shaping a new one.\textsuperscript{507}

\textsuperscript{504} Taylor, 207.
\textsuperscript{505} Voyles, 126.
\textsuperscript{506} Geertz 1973, 169
\textsuperscript{507} Freire, 65-66.
It is this priority on context that gives the ontological dimension its openness to new experiences, which, in turn, fuels the complex adaptive behavior of the worldview-creation process for networks of persons. Persons and networks of persons know something when they are able to reconcile the general with the particular. Growth in the system depends on access to new data. In that sense, future knowledge is present in contextualized experience. Past knowledge is stored in the patterns (nomoi) that govern the schemata (precedents and categories) with which the system encounters new data. This relationship between past and future as mediated through the present propels the self-reflexive growth processes of the complex adaptive system.\textsuperscript{508} The problems of application (applying the general to the contextual), then can be understood in cognitive terms of privileging the past over the future. Patterns, then, will repeat but not just stabilize around the last pattern created. Because the system is reflexive and has stored all previous patterns, it will reflexively regress, recursively revisiting past patterns in place of adapting and incorporating new data that impels system progress, i.e. cognitive development. Openness to new data by means of privileging context, therefore, is essential to cognitive development of persons and networks of persons.

Cognitive development is only part of leading open systems cultures, and the ontological is only one dimension of the Moral Meaning Matrix. But what happens when one system of cognitive and moral development is trying to make sense of another such system, such as in the case when people of profound difference come in contact with one another? What emerges as information, knowledge, and meaning in one system may be read as noise by the other. Again network and chaos theories are helpful here:

\textsuperscript{508} Taylor, 93-94.
Constituting a structure bordering on the fractal, myths are networks of networks made up of nodes within nodes. Never fixed, these networks of symbols and myths must constantly adapt to each other. Though neither programmed nor planned, such changes tend in the direction of ever greater complexity. Like other complex adaptive systems, myths change in response to what appears to be noise.\textsuperscript{509}

How does one feed the complex adaptive process of signification of one system into the complex adaptive process of cognition of another system in a way that respects and preserves the openness of both systems? This requires not only highly developed cognitive skills but also highly developed signification skills. These skills aid the enterprise of re-mything an existing myth with respect to a newly encountered - and equally plausible (as far as the new acquaintances are concerned) - myth. How do Huntington’s civilizations with meaningful identities informed by religion encounter one another in a way that results in mutual transformation and not conflict? This requires even more than the demythologizing charism of the servant as transformer. It requires the leadership charism of visionary as strange attractor.

\textsuperscript{509} Taylor, 213.
CHAPTER TEN
CULTIVATING CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Uninitiated leaders have charisms that enable them to move cultures to the brink of liminality and re-order them with regressive and violent meaning-making codes and rituals. Initiated leaders have charisms that enable them to move a closed system through the liminality of equilibrium and reconstitute it with violent, yet progressive codes and rituals. Servant-leaders, the most highly developed of initiated leaders, make meaning in ways that diminish and eventually eliminate the meaningful distinctions and hierarchies of the closed system. They respond to the threat of this undifferentiated edge of liminality by privileging the ontological at the expense of the normative, keeping the system closed to the stabilizing effects of past meanings made. Re-engaging the past as a key component of creating future patterns in the present requires a different charism, one that understands the inherent openness of the system and provides for an alternative attractor to the ever-beckoning equilibrium state of a closed system. The new charism is not one which empowers the leader to endure and move through liminality or guide the group similarly, but one that is able to remain in a liminal state exposing the group to the constant interplay of structure and anti-structure in communitas and the organizing fuel of negentropy. Rather than understanding social arrangements as constituting a closed system that is managed by staving off entropy and equilibrium, this type of leader understands social arrangements, and indeed cultivates them, in ways more analogous to
Prigogine’s dissipative structures, which exist far from equilibrium, are yet stable, and thrive on a constant flow of negentropy. Such a leader, a visionary leader in Hall’s terms, functions as a strange attractor, supplanting the equilibrium of the closed system with initial conditions that set a complex adaptive system’s cognitive and moral patterns in motion. In this way, a visionary leader adopts a posture relative to energy and entropy that understands social systems as changing in irreversible ways, seeks out difference rather than trying to wall it out, and cultivates the openness of the system in order to incorporate difference and to stabilize the system with the ever-increasing flow of negentropy available to it.

Writing Her Ass Off for Peace

Consider the visionary leader encountered by Brenda Sage, a graduate student at Longstreet University, a large private research university in an urban setting. She is in the graduate division of religion and is working in the area of history. She is working with church historians as well as with faculty from the history department at the university. At the time of my interview with her she had completed her coursework and was ready to challenge her comprehensive examinations. She attended an evangelical Christian college which she describes as offering a strong education. Although she never had plans to be ordained, she attended seminary at Longstreet. Upon graduation, she worked in the university’s ethics center for two years and then entered the Ph.D. program.

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510 Brenda Sage (psued.), interview by author, undisclosed location, written notes and tape recording, Summer 2002.
Middle East College

She first learned of Middle East College – an interfaith college in Israel/Palestine – from a young man who leads tours to the Holy Land and is very interested in and involved in the college himself. This piqued her curiosity. A contributing writer for a Christian magazine, she wondered about the possibility of turning this curiosity into a story. While exploring this possibility, she learned that one of her faculty advisors is on a US advisory board for Middle East College. This gave her an additional contact with Middle East College and the school’s founder, a Palestinian Christian Priest, in the Melkite tradition, whom I will call Abuna (which is a transliteration of the Arabic word for Father). Her contacts facilitated a meeting with Abuna during a visit in May 2002. In fact she accepted an invitation to join Abuna, her faculty advisor, and other members of the US board for breakfast. Her editors never commissioned her to write a story about Abuna or Middle East College. She attended the breakfast anyway out of personal interest and in hopes that there might be other publications whom she could interest in a story about her encounter.

Clearly Brenda has a personal interest in Abuna and Middle East College, but she framed her discussion of her interest in terms of writing about Middle East College. In some ways her writing served to mediate her (at least initial) encounters with Middle East College. She apparently relied to some extent on her role as a writer and the enterprise (or activity) of writing a column or article to provide a public motive for wishing to meet with Abuna and learn more about the college. Her pursuing the relationship despite the fact that she did not receive any prior affirmation from her magazine editors betrays an interest beyond simply getting the story or researching a column. Her desire to find other
places to write about her relationship, however, may indicate that writing itself does more than give her permission to build such relationships and is not the sole source of her identity in these relationships. Her framing the encounter in these terms may indicate that the activity of writing is important for her and potentially holds significance beyond the economic benefit it provides.

Profile of a Prophet

Brenda described the most striking feature about her encounter with Abuna as “his presence.” She felt like she was in the presence of a truly “great man” and a truly “loving man.” She sensed that he had “lived and suffered” and, unlike many people, seemed to “walk the talk” of loving the other. Being with Abuna did not make her feel uncomfortable in any way. He seemed to take a genuine interest in her and she indicated that she could have easily felt like a graduate student who had no reason to be there or a writer who had no prospect of publishing an article. Despite the potential for feeling (or being made to feel) out of place, she felt very much at home and very comfortable in the group.

Feeling at home in the group was apparently important to Brenda. She related not having a purpose or reason for being there to the idea of feeling welcome. Abuna and the others apparently did not relate the two and welcomed her without her having an apparent purpose or reason for being there. Was this an expression of Abuna’s ability to “walk the talk” of loving the other? Did she contrast this character trait with herself or did she find it resonant with her own character?
Her walk is talk, so to speak. One of the things she does is write words (in a sense talk), perhaps about loving the other. Does she view writing as “walk” or “talk?”

The coherence of walk and talk are, for Brenda, an important dimension of creating a presence of greatness. Brenda went on to describe other dimensions of Abuna’s presence. The first thing she told me was that he seemed to her to be very intelligent but had the gentleness of humor. He took the issue of the Palestinian problem seriously but he did not take himself too seriously. She contrasted this with other activists that she had known who seemed to take themselves as seriously as they took their causes, and she thought that Abuna acted in a different way that to her made him more welcoming and more approachable.

He also seemed to regard each person as distinct and worth knowing in his or her own right, and he invited her to become more involved in the cause of the college in a number of different ways, including by encouraging her to attend a conference in Galilee. His personal care and interest in her made her feel connected, and motivated her to consider the possibility of becoming more involved.

Brenda moved from words about Abuna’s gentleness to describing him as exhibiting a “righteous anger” when he talked about the Palestinian situation. During the breakfast with the board, the conversation turned to finding funding for the school. One member inquired about the number of Jewish students currently attending Middle East College which prides itself on its interfaith commitments and student body. Abuna indicated that the parents had taken all of the Jewish students out of the schools because of the current crisis and conflict. The board then pressed Abuna to reclaim some of those
Jewish students in order for the college to be understood and interpreted as a truly inter-
religious effort.

Abuna agreed in principle but he also asked who is working to try to get
Palestinians into the Jewish schools. Brenda characterized this response as reflecting an
attitude about “what is fair.” He did not express his anger in an anti-Semitic way but he
seemed always to want to side with fairness. This was important to Brenda.

She described Abuna as being able to see the tragedy and losses on both sides
clearly and that he was not polarized to one side of the conflict or another. He, in her
words, integrates the difficulties on both sides in his understanding of the situation. She
said that it is clear to her that his heart was more for the Palestinians because they still
have a land issue that has still not been resolved.

Inter-faith Violence and Education

Beyond getting to know Abuna, Brenda expressed a desire to see the college. Not
having experienced the college firsthand, the thing that strikes her as most compelling
about its mission is that it is truly inter-faith. This is unusual in its own right but even
more ambitious in a violent area such as Israel/Palestine where the religious differences
have so much to do with the conflict and breakdown of society.

The current violence in Israel/Palestine prevents her from taking what she judges
would be an irrational risk to visit the college. She still is working to maintain a
relationship with the college from a distance by having written an article about Middle
East College and its related elementary and high schools for a major regional newspaper.
Writing that article occasioned her doing additional research about the schools. Many of
Brenda’s Jewish neighbors have mentioned her article to her and have engaged her in conversations about it. She specifically described an encounter with one woman who had heard Abuna speak at a synagogue in town. This woman fully supported the stance that Brenda took in the paper, namely that education can help bridge differences and abate violence.

Brenda is continuing to try to educate herself about Middle East College by reading some of Abuna’s books. She remains open to being involved directly although she does not know exactly what form that might take. She says right now there is a financial barrier because she is just working part-time jobs while in graduate school, and she can barely support herself much less support any kind of in-depth involvement with the college. She is giving some thought to organizing students in support of Middle East College or trying to find ways to write more about the college.

Brenda’s Path

Brenda desires to be connected with justice work in her life and wishes to be active in doing something rather than simply researching and writing about matters of justice. She indicated that she had done other things along this vein, such as work in homeless shelters. She cares about people who have been “stepped on” and wants to do something “hands on” to really help those people. One of the specific things that she thinks that she can do is to write for a public audience in order to raise awareness.

By “stepped on,” Brenda is describing those who have experienced loss or death in their lives or have some severe economic disadvantage. She speculates that everyone at one point or another in their lives has been stepped on. In the instance of Israel/Palestine,
it seems to her the Palestinians are the ones who have been stepped on and who are suffering injustices. For Brenda, involving herself in matters of justice is all about fairness. It is important to her that people be treated in a fair way and that such treatment is reciprocated.

By writing, Brenda is able to watch how she changes. When she researches and writes, it changes her. She can get outside of herself and understand that there is a bigger world beyond. She hopes to turn minds toward issues that she thinks are important. Interestingly, she related the idea of turning minds to her own evangelical background and likened it to converting people or saving people from their own lack of knowledge. This metaphor was a negative one for her and she prefers to make sense of what she does by understanding her writing as a way to “provide space to learn about things [her readers] wouldn’t have known.”

Brenda paraphrased Abuna when characterizing the most important thing for others to know about what she has learned about Middle East College: Peace is built on the desktops of school children. In her understanding, attitudes about difference start at a very young age. Moreover, we could employ Abuna’s methods to affect the same kinds of changes in attitudes about differences in the United States. She said even her evangelical family could have learned about Catholics, for instance, here in the United States and perhaps not have felt so negatively about a different religious group. She quickly added that it is more than just adopting a philosophy of education for peace. Abuna really models the way to live that out. In her words, he “works his ass off for peace.”
What would it mean for Brenda to work her ass off for peace? What if Abuna were to become a strange attractor or visionary leader in her life whose actions and motivations she mimetically imitated? I will try to approach this question in light of the questions I raise above and in terms of the Moral Meaning Matrix as Network repeated below in Figure 15.

Abuna as a Visionary Strange Attractor

Figure 15: Moral Meaning Matrix as Network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Universe</th>
<th>Society (System)</th>
<th>Institution (Network)</th>
<th>Organization (Hub)</th>
<th>Group (Cluster)</th>
<th>Interpersonal (Node)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Ought</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td>Is</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Nomos</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Precedent</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brenda initially approached the context of meeting with Abuna around the idea of writing about him and his mission. She may have referred to the activity of meeting Abuna using the word interview and synthesized the word with the activity around the praxis of conducting research for a column. This would have been a meaningful way to engage Abuna as a columnist or journalist. As it was, her editors did not ask for the article. The activity of meeting Abuna therefore was thrown momentarily into a state of meaninglessness. Brenda indicated some discomfort with meeting him without a prescribed reason or purpose. It was in discussing the context of the encounter that she began to show a new way of making sense of the encounter. Abuna helped her know that she was worth meeting without such a prescribed purpose or reason. She was reason alone, and he indicated a deep interest in her. She described the activity in new terms of comfort and acceptance yielding the meaningful praxis of becoming a part of the group.
As a journalist, becoming part of the group may never have been available to her. Her praxis or meaningful activity would have been understood in different terms and for a different end. Because of the disruption of the circumstances surrounding the context of the meeting, the relationship was built on much different terms than it might have been.

The encounter with Abuna itself either gave insight to Brenda about Abuna and his mission or provided a metaphor for her to use to describe what he does and how he does it. More importantly, as she understood herself through Abuna, her encounter provided her insights about herself and how she uses her time and talents.

She linked his interest in her as a person to her desire to become more involved in the college. She describes a desire to do something hands-on for those who have been stepped on. In her estimation, everyone has been stepped on. While she cannot personally relate to the plight of the Palestinians per se, as one of the stepped on ones she knows her motivation for helping and the sense that it makes to her. The activity of Brenda meeting Abuna sent her searching for a proper response. She searched for a precedent of “hands-on” involvement which she deems as much needed against the backdrop of the narrative of everyone having been stepped on. She reconciles her narrative and her hands-on approach by remembering, I suspect, her own story of being stepped on which provides her a meaningful resource for helping others feel included, just as Abuna made her feel included.

Brenda’s search for a hands-on activity leads her to mine precedents, that is activity that she has undertaken in the past (such as volunteering for homeless shelters), to help those who have been stepped on. The broader category of “stepped on” evokes a number of precedents as potential responses. The category stands in relief against her
own moral language which is one that seeks to describe the necessity for a normative fairness. This language frames the narrative of everyone being stepped on. Insofar as the experience of being stepped on is universal, it is fair in a distributive way. Insofar as the notion of being stepped on requires a stepper and a "steppee," the norm of fairness is illuminated by its contrast.

Because her memory knows what it is to treat and be treated fairly and what it is to treat and be treated unfairly, Brenda actively recalls what it means to treat others fairly which synthesizes her selection of the category of stepped on when thinking about the Palestinians in terms of her moral language of fairness. She is keenly aware that it is incumbent upon those in authority to treat others fairly. This insight is reflected in her characterization of Abuna’s “righteous anger” about the school’s attempts to be inclusive while Jews apparently fail to include Palestinians in their schools in Israel. Fostering a tradition of fair treatment requires a customary awareness of the universal memory of having been treated fairly and unfairly in order to create a context of inclusion and acceptance.

Understanding the Israel/Palestine situation by selecting the category of “stepped on” requires one to care deeply about others and their circumstances. Ordering life in such a way that gauges the level to which others have been treated unfairly is indicative of behavior being deemed legitimate only when it indicates a genuine personal interest in the other. Living by the rule (or nomos) of personal interest in the other permits and perhaps prefers the way Brenda chooses to characterize the Middle East conflict and mission of Middle East College. It is also one of the compelling attributes she describes about Abuna and his presence.
Attractor as Symbol and Model

Even though Brenda’s – and consequently my – description of Abuna is idealized, no doubt he was a flawed human figure. Nevertheless Abuna’s presence became a symbol for Brenda. It was a general sense she had about him, but pointed to what she termed his greatness, his love, his “righteous anger,” his fairness, gentleness and sense of humor. It embodied his taking issues of justice seriously without taking himself too seriously. In his presence, Brenda detected living and suffering, a quest for justice and the juxtaposition of struggle and a longing for peace. In his presence was captured the particularity of a Palestinian man and the Christian priest who embraced others of different faiths.

In and through the ritual of breakfast, Brenda constructed a meaningful interaction between following Abuna’s example of living life by taking a genuine interest in others and the symbol of Abuna’s presence. Breakfast, then, models a tradition of fair treatment which, in turn, calls upon the common memory of unfair treatment to engender praxis of acceptance and inclusion.

The patterned practice of meal-sharing, perhaps most meaningfully aligned with the institution of religion, offered Brenda more than physical nourishment. It enacted and perhaps helped shape or refine her worldview which, I presume, acknowledges injustice in the world. This ontological reality differs from her normative belief that the world ought to be just.

What can possibly reconcile a “life isn’t fair” worldview with an ethos that holds it ought to be fair? Knowledge. Brenda subscribes to a myth (not in the pejorative sense of the word) that illuminating the contrasts between the is and the ought will compel
people to move the is closer to the ought. Falling just shy of restating that the “truth shall make you free,” Brenda wishes to help people connect with knowledge about injustice and the resources to address it.

Writing as Transformative Praxis

While contrasting “hands-on” efforts with her own writing at various points during our conversation, she returns to writing as a way for her to do something about the Israel/Palestine situation. Writing changes her she says. It helps her get outside herself and understand a bigger world. It can also turn people’s minds to what she thinks is important and “provide a space to learn about things they wouldn’t have known.” Writing, then becomes neither the walk nor the talk, but the synthesis of the two. As praxis in the context of the Israel/Palestine violence, it is meaningful activity that will help others feel included by drawing on and activating the common memory of being stepped on. She can recall from that memory what it means to treat others fairly. Her writing becomes the breakfast which nourishes others in the presence of her words which take issues more seriously than the author takes herself and which exposes her sincere interest in the reader.

Brenda’s theme demands that philosophical attitudes oriented toward peace and justice be joined with practice. This synthesis, I contend, is the locus of meaning-making for any individual. She sees the meaningfulness of Abuna’s words and life as he “works his ass off for peace.” In the course of our conversation, Brenda re-scripted what writing means for her. At first a failed entrée into a meeting, it is a way to synthesize the ought
and the is, the philosophy and the practice. She could take this new understanding to
heart and hand and use it to write her ass off for peace.

Abuna’s mimetic model as strange attractor begins with working his ass off for peace. Brenda encounters this and strives to imitate it. She makes sense of it in terms of
her encounters with Abuna in terms of her own Moral Meaning Matrix described in detail
above. The cognition and signification processes she employed had to be read beyond the
interpersonal level of social complexity. They eventually encountered the moral
languages inscribed by her experience of religion and education. As she re-writes the
Moral Meaning Matrix of her life she provides new data for transforming organizations
and social institutions by mimetically transferring what she learns and means throughout
the social fractal network of relationship of which she is a part. Abuna’s model privileges
context and activity, an openness to ontological context and, therefore entropy. In
privileging the ontological, he provides a model for signification for her that thrives on
entropy and not on re-establishing the order of a mythically closed system. Further, he
models a cognitive process for her that provides her the precedent for acting in context
first and making sense of it later.

In the symbol-model complex of the strange attractor, the normative and
ontological as well as the general and contextual collapse across the span of the Moral
Meaning Matrix. They collapse into a single point not in a way that obliterates the
difference among the dimensions and the levels but in a way that keeps the tensions
between each of the axes vibrant. The strange attractor functions as the initial condition
which puts the meaning-making pattern in motion for a complex adaptive social system.
The influence of a visionary strange attractor is translated throughout the system in a way that makes drawing distinctions among the levels of social complexity irrelevant. In other words, Cultural Leadership is focused on the creation of meaningful patterns that will translate throughout the networked social fractal regardless of the scope of initial influence. Cultural Leaders, then, understand their project to be that of creating, sustaining, and transmitting meaning rather than creating, sustaining, and transmitting societies, institutions, or organizations. While it is important to attend to those levels analytically to demonstrate the similarity of the meaning-making processes at each point, to identify the particular signification processes on any of those levels, and to show how institutions and other social artifacts interact and relate to one another, it is also important to realize that Cultural Leaders, as the stewards of culture, engage the levels of social complexity as artificial boundaries drawn around social systems, which are, in fact, open.

Even Weber’s “imperative co-ordination” was end-directed toward the creation of bounded groups of persons working together for common purposes. Such boundary drawing is not without its merits, but it meets its limits when it tries to describe the system as closed with respect to the influences that can create and evolve patterns of meaning. Focusing on the cultural patterns rather than the organizational parameters, Cultural Leaders keep social systems open and keep meaningful patterns evolving in ways that influence and are influenced by all levels of the social fractal.

A visionary strange attractor’s response to liminal situations like the one Brenda encountered in Israel/Palestine is rare. As this dissertation has shown, there are many more precedents of very well-rehearsed cognitive and moral processes that prescribe behavior to resist the entropy of the liminal by attempting to close off systems and sustain
order in exothermic or endothermic – but ultimately violent ways. A visionary leader stabilizes the system without resorting to violent endothermic or exothermic meaning-making mechanisms. A visionary leader constantly opens the system to difference and acknowledges the system’s inherent irreversibility. The visionary leader is never trying to restore order, then, in the mythic ways prescribed by closed systems approaches to energy, entropy and leadership. Rather, the visionary leader seeks stability in the negentropic flow – the very flow that closed systems leaders deploy power to resist.

**Oikos**

It will take a commitment to cognitive and moral development of leaders to reverse the regressive pull of mythically closed systems. Helping leaders progress is key to revitalizing social institutions and society. To answer the call of *The Good Society* and foster a spirit of cultivation, I propose a model that explicitly reflects the openness of cultures as complex adaptive social systems and that intentionally cultivates the cognitive and moral sensibilities of Cultural Leaders to sustain them.

The Oikos project, named for the Greek root word for economy, ecumenism, and ecology will privilege the ontological dimension of context in order to remain open, and in that sense must be educational in nature. It must also attend to the ever-changing learning, reasoning, and signification patterning of the ontological, normative, and meaning dimensions of the social system while sustaining the meaning-making dynamics of the system from freely available negentropy. For these reasons, it must be more than educational in nature.

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511 I co-founded Oikos, Inc. with Mark Y.A. Davies in 2005. It is a non-profit corporation chartered in the State of Georgia.
In order to remain an open system, Oikos must be:

1. scale free allowing growth over time to shape the networked connections which constitute it.

2. socially balanced, not privileging the moral language of any one social institution over the others in a way that precludes the free-patterning of each institution.

3. able to facilitate the personal growth of leaders whose vision will offer a strange attractor alternative to closed-system equilibrium.

4. fractal-like in order to translate meaningful patterns to and draw meaning from multiple levels of social complexity.

Therefore Oikos will be a scale-free network of persons and organizations whose institutional commitments give them access to the moral languages of the normative influences of Government/Law/Politics, the ontological openness of Education through learning and research, the meaning-making skills of Religion and the resource development power of the Market Economy. Oikos will pay attention to the balance of institutional influences by giving each an equivalent seat at the table to help resist the collapse of one institutional paradigm, and therefore one dimension of meaning-making, into the other. Recall the association in chapter four of each of the dimensions of reality with the particular institutions which inscribe patterns relevant to that dimension for entire societies. This association is rehearsed in Figure 16.
Oikos forms a networked community. Since it is a community that must be intentionally open to the portal of behavior in ontological context, it must be a community of actors. Following Taylor’s model, this network must harness the ability to learn, know, and mean. Patterns of meaning will dynamically emerge and evolve as knowledge recursively makes patterned sense out of the information learned. So the network must intentionally increase its cognitive and moral capacities. Cognitive growth will come from the consumption of more and more noise screened into information, thereby increasing cognitive content. Evolving and maintaining a highly developed ability to make meaning out of that content in non-violent ways requires an intentionally increasing moral capacity.

The Moral Meaning Matrix shows that even an open complex dynamic system will create myth to make sense of the discrepancies between the ontological and the normative. With this in mind, recall the destructive power of the myth, even if a misread myth, that currently dominates, at least, Western thinking. Hall’s work on strange attractors and visionary leadership and Taylor’s work with complex adaptive systems demonstrate that the emergent patterns, including the patterns of signification, will be highly sensitive to the initial conditions of the vision set forth for the network. With an assumption that mimesis inheres in any human relationship, it is important that Oikos
intentionally de-mythologize violent corollaries to mimesis. While mimesis can be constructive for learning, it does not have to entail rivalry. One way to thwart rivalry is for Oikos to focus on the objects of desire and their just distribution, at least distribution to the point where they meet minimum needs. A necessary component of just distribution is depleting as few resources as possible. Finally, if successful, Oikos must intentionally search for ways to defuse the energy of rivalries, should they occur, in non-violent ways. Even though it may not be possible in a complex adaptive system to predict what meaning-making patterns will emerge, it may be possible to set initial conditions on a path to demythologize the current violent faith which grips the signification processes. By doing so, the initial conditions will put the system on a path of re-mythologizing a pattern which will be attentive to the three important areas outlined above: human need, sustainability, and non-violence. Orienting the complex adaptive system to consume information (or content) around these three areas sets the cognitive patterning off in a necessarily re-mythologizing direction.

So a network that forms a community of actors around re-mythologizing content needs to develop its moral capacity as well. Moral meaning-making occurs in relationships and involves the deployment of resources. I have mapped out a vector for more and less violent ways to be in relationship with others relative to the deployment of resources. Developing capacity suggests a growth vector for the meaning and dynamic dimensions of the Moral Meaning Matrix, a vector I have been discussing as leadership development. The way leaders respond to and interact with others around the need for resources and use of power is at the heart of leadership. Just as signification involves a
synthesis of distinct ontological and normative elements, growing the capacity to make that meaning requires a vibrant tension between distinct meaning and dynamic elements.

This new model of culture, therefore, creates community, seeks out new content, and develops capacity. If the model, however, is to have a re-mythologizing effect on a community, then the moral capacity must develop beyond an understanding of social systems as closed. I propose there are two ways to effect this type of growth, and they most likely will have to occur simultaneously. The first way understands development as progressive and evolutionary. Within the framework of a closed system and among leaders who understand social systems as closed, this model is particularly salient.

Incremental steps from authoritarian through servant evolve leaders to more and more developed ways of understanding the system as increasingly open. This pattern of growth also decreases the explicit role of rivalry, and, beyond facilitator, even the frequency of sacrifice-based rituals for the meaning-making enterprise. As leaders near the servant style of meaning-making, they begin to develop the ability to understand and appreciate the value of ontological openness and are prepared to take the next step through the entropic liminal into open systems, visionary leadership.

Adopting an evolutionary framework for growth, progressive and linear as it is, might have salience for most who understand social systems as closed. Of course, my analysis reveals that social systems, even if regarded as closed, are, in fact, open. Growth does not happen in a linear and progressive fashion but in non-linear shifts and patterning. Capacity, like meaning emerges over time. Here Hall’s image of visionary leaders and the future as strange attractors combined with an understanding of the contagious nature of mimesis describes a mechanism by which a visionary facilitates
quantum shifts among others including other leaders with the potential of emerging as visionary themselves. Witness the relationship between Brenda and Abuna.

The two attractors discussed above are equilibrium and strange. If leaders work hard to close social systems, then they engage in endothermic or exothermic meaning-making processes which are constantly moving to and through equilibrium. The leader’s work involves staving off that equilibrium and disrupting it once it sets in. The strange attractor of a vision or visionary is better described not as an endpoint but as a pattern that emerges in non-linear form after recursive iterations of the initial conditions, which set the patterning in motion in the first instance.

As discussed earlier, leaders can move in and out of higher cycles of leadership. The systems in which they lead might require their operation at an earlier stage of development. Or, the system itself might prohibit the leader from operating at that level altogether and may pull the leader back into a less developed leadership style. This shifting can be understood in linear terms as sliding along a continuum, but it is probably best understood in non-linear terms as quantum shifts between attractor states. This calls for a mechanism that can effect such shifts. For that mechanism, I propose Oikos turn to a leadership development model known as Generative Commitment forwarded by Len Leritz. There are discrepancies between Hall’s taxonomy and Leritz’s. Most importantly, Leritz’s model is likely to collapse Hall’s collaborator, servant, and visionary into the category of generative, Lertiz’s most advanced level of leadership. I will deal with that discrepancy in my analysis because the point of reading Hall and Leritz together in this way is, ultimately, to help leaders develop to the point of being able to open up systems
and facilitate meaning-making processes that thrive on negentropy rather than on re-inscribing violent signification myths.

**Generative Commitment**

Len Leritz asserts “Any organization is successful to the degree that its members are committed and skilled at solving problems and reaching organizational goals together.”\(^{512}\) Conversely, the major impediments or problems facing any organization “can be traced directly to the lack of commitment and skill in facing and resolving issues.”\(^{513}\) Leritz, of the Generative Leadership Institute, characterizes levels of commitment along a continuum that is at once developmental in a linear progressive sense and descriptive of shifting levels of commitment within individuals at different times and within different relational contexts. The five levels of commitment are characterized as follows: “Enforcer, Scorekeeper, Peacemaker, Rebel Producer, and Generative.”\(^{514}\) The first four he describes as “conditional commitments” that lead to undesirable and unhelpful interpersonal interaction and behavior such as “keeping score to make sure we get our fair share, and giving pep talks and little lectures, rather than listening to people’s needs and facing unpleasant problems.”\(^{515}\) “People operating from a Generative commitment are primarily oriented toward facing the truth about themselves….Second, and just as importantly, people operating from their fullest capacities listen to and accept others - their needs, strengths and limitations.”\(^{516}\)

\(^{512}\)Len Leritz, *Real Time Commitment: A Developmental Workshop for Building Generative Relationships in the Workplace and Beyond* (Location of Publication Unknown: The Generative Leadership Institute, 2000), 1, emphasis his.

\(^{513}\) Ibid.

\(^{514}\) Ibid., 2-5.

\(^{515}\) Ibid., 5.

\(^{516}\) Ibid., 6.
Commitments on the generator level among individuals finding themselves in the management of extreme crisis, for instance, would be, in Leritz’s estimation, precisely the ones equipped to handle such a situation. “Ultimately this commitment derives from the trust that, individually and collectively, we are more than enough, that is, though we will not act perfectly, we have everything we need to handle whatever comes up.”

The problem with any problem-solving group addressing crisis is that even those who have acceded to the generator stage at one time or another may not be operating at that level of commitment when the crisis occurs. In fact the crisis itself could create impediments that inhibit decision-makers from acting from that level of commitment. Leritz contends that individuals do not leave stages behind. Rather, we have the capacity to shift in and out of the various modes of commitment through which we have already grown.

The goal, once aware of one’s generative capacities, is to be cognizant of the “certain triggers [that] cause us to think and act from different levels” and to “raise the level of our thinking, either developmentally over time or in the moment.” Each moment of relationship, crisis, and decision-making is also a moment of internal effort to gauge levels of commitment, fight off that which seduces us into the conditional levels of commitment and frees us to operate as generators. If successful, we have clearer lenses through which to peer into the commitment of the other(s) to whom we are relating.

A limitation of the Leritz model is it sets up a developmental dichotomy, between what might be described as adult and child-like behaviors. Four of his relational modes: Enforcer, Scorekeeper, Peacemaker, and Rebel-Producer, reflect stages of development

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517 Ibid.
518 Ibid., 14.
in childhood that persons carry with them into adulthood. Life stories or “scripts” for Leritz create attractor states in one or more of these stages. Leritz’s contention, however, is that grown persons have, in addition to the capacities described above, the capacity to operate at the generative level, exhibiting adult commitments to problem-solving and relationships. On a moment to moment basis, persons can move between (one or more) truncated and fully developed sets of behaviors and commitments. What Leritz’s model lacks is any subtle distinctions within the adult generative mode itself. He does not address whether there are more or less ways of being generative when one is acting with adult capacities. Leritz’s generativity has the potential to correspond, in my terms, to both closed and open systems leadership styles. Leritz’s model is likely to identify Hall’s collaborator and visionary as generative in a way that does not offer a distinction between the two.

Nevertheless, what Leritz does offer is this image of oscillation between (or among) two (or more attractor) states. While this sort of non-linear movement is implicit in Hall’s arrangement as well, Leritz’s model trades on the fluidity of movement more fully. Combining the fluidity of the Leritz model with the explicit distinctions of the Hall model and the differences between open and closed systems yields the possibility of understanding leaders and systems that move rapidly among multiple levels of development within a closed-system paradigm or between a closed-system understanding and an open-system understanding. This latter shift imperils open systems with the threat of equilibrium states as well as provides opportunities for growth around visionary attractors to closed systems. This might occur in spurts, and an open system might devolve again into closed system equilibrium dynamics.
Activities

The question, then, becomes how to sustain generative levels of commitment personally and socially, especially generative commitments that understand and respond to social systems as open? In order to sustain generative commitments to open systems and thereby cultivate cultural leaders, Oikos will facilitate engagement around the development of content, capacity and community as described above.

Content

In order to actively re-mythologize social systems, Oikos participants must learn about and research the areas of peace and non-violence, human need and ecological sustainability. Broadly speaking these areas address the myths that reinforce the conditions for and mythically inscribed the necessity of violence. Learning and reasoning about these areas in a way similar to that advocated by Jackson in the Warwick project opens these areas up for constantly evolving new understandings. Opening up these areas, in particular, is important. Learning and reasoning about peace holds the potential for demythologizing the mechanisms, occasions, and assumptions that inhere in violent conflict. Learning and reasoning about human need holds the potential for demythologizing economic competition over the resources which provide the meaning-making power and the desire for which fuels rivalry or the acquisition of resources at the expense of others. Learning and reasoning about ecological sustainability hold the potential for demythologizing the pre-condition of rivalry, which is the objectification of natural and other resources viewed as consumable objects of desire.
In order to develop the content knowledge around these three areas of future leaders in various fields, Oikos established the Oikos Scholars program at one university with the prospect of expanding it to another in the near future and with plans to extend the reach by establishing similar programs at multiple colleges and universities around the globe.\textsuperscript{519} The Oikos Scholars program intentionally involves students in service-learning to privilege ontological context, living and studying abroad to expose students to new sources of difference, and in coursework on peace, human need/social justice, and ecological sustainability to achieve the learning and reasoning objectives described above.

\textit{Capacity}

In order to develop the cognitive and moral capacities of persons in positions of leadership, Oikos will help its constituents grow through multiple insight-oriented seminars and workshops on leadership development based on the work and insights of Brian Hall. Hall’s work orients participants along a common vector for long-term personal growth. Supplementing Hall’s work with Lertitz’s insight will provide a tool for enabling any leader, uninitiated, initiated, or visionary to strive intentionally to lead at his or her best as much as possible. Working to cultivate one’s own generative capacity at whichever of Hall’s cycles helps the leader prepare for growth into further developed cycles of leadership. Ultimately, leaders engaged in this intentional growth process will come to understand cultural systems as open systems and how to live in the liminal in a

\textsuperscript{519} The model for the Oikos Scholars program was developed initially by Mark Y.A. Davies, co-founder of Oikos. Oklahoma City University plans to matriculate its first Oikos Scholars in the Fall of 2007. LaGrange College is currently considering the establishment of a similar program. Once these models are established, Oikos will have two precedents to offer as models to other colleges and universities.
way that can deploy the available negentropy for creating non-violent, yet meaningful
cultural patterns.

These leadership development activities will invite participants into an intentional
and discernable process of personal growth. The growth will trade on an increasing
awareness of personal values or norms and the extent to which those norms are or are not
shared. This invites deeper reflection into the way norms are created and shared and links
that process to the development of personal moral and cognitive capacities to the
complex adaptive systems described by the Moral Meaning Matrix. Finally, enabling
leaders to understand how they know what they know and mean what they mean and how
they participate in knowing and meaning on scalable levels within the social fractal, they
will have the tools to participate intentionally in the project of social construction and
influence the reformation of organizations and institutions to create patterns that inscribe
just, peaceful, and ecologically responsible relationships and behavior.

Engaged participants who commit to a lifelong process of personal growth and
development as described above, along with graduates of the Oikos Scholars programs
who make similar lifelong commitments will form the Oikos Leadership Network (OLN)
aimed at catalyzing cross-institutional collaboration, mentoring and co-counseling among
its members.\footnote{Learn more about the Oikos Leadership Network at \url{www.oikosleadership.net}.} By deploying internet-based social networking software, such a network
could provide members with instantaneous global access to a community of persons with
diverse experience, shared values, and a common commitment to personal growth and the
revival of the planet and its inhabitants. Social network technology is evolving rapidly
and could enable community participants to affiliate and communicate asynchronously
and simultaneously with other participants who share interests, skills, institutional sectors, or global regions.

Community

Few, if any, organizations or social institutions exist to support persons engaged in highly sophisticated reflection and action relative to the complex realities which challenge the world today. Simply replicating previous organizational structures created to accommodate less developed interaction and to address the challenges of a world which were, perhaps, less complex, will fail to satisfy the intellectual and emotional needs of the persons engaged in this type of collaborative work. Particularly, locating Oikos within the sphere of influence of any one organization or within the normative framework of any particular social institution, such as education, government, religion, or economy, will fail to provide the robust diversity necessary to deal with the challenges posed by the interaction of those institutions and will fail to engage authentically multiple organizations at once.

Further, in the twenty-first century, such a project must conceive of itself in global terms in order to continually challenge the hegemony of any particular set of cultural norms and assumptions, which will inevitably shape the work of the community in provincial ways. Oikos, then, will include participants from multiple institutional sectors. The organization has adapted Bellah et al.’s categories into: government, service, education, religion, and economy. Service serves as a broad category to encompass some of the areas *The Good Society* did not address such as the media, healthcare, non-governmental organizations, etc. The participants must also come from diverse cultural
settings and be capable of and interested in addressing issues of peace and non-violence, human need, and ecological sustainability.

Growing Oikos, therefore, requires the intentional establishment of a series of interpersonal relationships which form a self-organizing and self-propagating scale-free network over time. Ensuring that the earliest relationships are global and trans-institutional in scope will provide the best prospects for achieving the envisioned community.

Systemic, Sustainable, and Scalable

For Oikos to cultivate Cultural Leaders as set forth in this dissertation it needs to be systemic, sustainable, and scalable. It derives an integrative systemic approach from intentionally involving persons in the community from each of the four major social institutions outlined by Bellah et al. as well as from a newly-described sector, service. Sustainability depends on increasing the content knowledge around issues of ecology, human need, and peace and non-violence. Finally, scalability requires careful attention to each of the levels of social complexity: interpersonal, group, organizational, institutional, societal, universe/global. Scalable in this sense indicates an effort to work at various levels of social complexity but still within, confusingly, a scale-free network which enables Oikos to behave as a complex adaptive system or real world network and not as static or random network. In fact it is the scale-free properties which give the network the opportunity to exploit its fractal-like topology to affect multiple levels of social complexity at once. On each level, Oikos maps a vector of growth in order for the person or groups of persons involved to develop the moral capacity to make meaning in
increasingly sustainable and systemic ways and in ways that eventually are capable of disregarding the artificially closed distinctions of the levels of social complexity.

Cultural Leadership and Peace

“I dream,” says Mark Taylor, “of educational institutions that do as much for the imagination as Frank Gehry’s buildings do for the eye….It seems undeniable that the currency of education has never been more valuable than in emerging network culture.” The Cultural Leadership model attempts to respond seriously to the epistemological revolution which provides an exceptionally more nuanced view of the realities of the way we relate to one another. Any network informed by the Cultural Leadership model would provide a forum to allow for the enterprise called for by the observers who penned *The Good Society*.

Yet if we are fortunate enough to have the gift of faith through which we see ourselves as members of the universal community of all being, then we bear a special responsibility to bring whatever insights we have to the common discussion of new problems, not because we have any superior wisdom, but because we can be, as Vaclav Havel defines his role, ambassadors of trust in a fearful world.

Heeding Taylor’s dream and *The Good Society’s* call requires rehabilitation of the institution of education, dislodging it from the grips of the economic and political influences which have distracted its purpose from an intrinsically meaningful mission. The rehabilitation of education, however, requires the re-emergence of the role of religion in public life, re-establishing a mechanism for making meaning for other social institutions. Religion, regressive and privatized as it has become, will be clumsy in this role. But part of religion’s rehabilitation is a steadier flow of reality from the portal of

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521 Taylor, 269.
522 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 286.
education, encouraging religion and enabling it to adapt and progress into an open systems mode of signification. “The culture of people,” according to Clifford Geertz, “is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles.” Assembling those texts and, indeed writing them, rather than simply reading them, is the role of religion. But it must first have new information granted it by education to inscribe on those pages.

The systems, however, have no hands, minds, and voices, complex and adaptive as they are without the persons who enliven and conscientize the processes of learning, reasoning, and signification on all levels of human interaction. As Samuel Huntington frames it, “The futures of both peace and civilization depend upon understanding and cooperation among political, spiritual, and intellectual leaders of the world’s major civilizations.” Peace depends on it, because our ways of making sense of difference and noise are grounded in violent myths about how power is used to make meaning. These myths have increasingly destructive weapons at their disposal. Re-writing the myths of closed systems and dislodging the violent mechanisms inherently deployed to keep such systems alive is essential on the interpersonal and the global levels. “In the emerging era, clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguards against world war.”

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523 Geertz, 453.
524 Huntington, Clash, 321.
525 Huntington, Clash, 321. Critics accuse Huntington of trying to conjure up new post-Cold War enemies for the West intentionally as a mechanism for reinforcing western power and stabilizing global relations around stalemate conflicts. These critics paint Huntington as xenophobic on issues as broad-reaching as immigration policy and international violence. The critics suggest that Huntington is unjustifiably critical of Islam, depicting it as excessively violent relative to other world religions. While the arguments are supported by evidence, they attempt to prove his motives and intent which is not empirically verifiable. Even if the critics arguments are granted or if the critics are right and Huntington is (or has the effect of) ordering the world instead of describing a new world order, the plausibility of that argument only further illustrates my argument and Girard's principle that the creation of a common enemy is a powerful unifying force, and religion provides a meaningful and salient way for creating lines of distinction and common identity while simultaneously legitimating the conflict and the unity in its own terms. Trumpbour, 89. The New Crusades, 89 and Said, on-line.
On September 11, 2001, terrorists used global communication and transportation networks to carry out their attacks. In so doing they demonstrated the dangers of a world in which people, who decades before would have been isolated from one another by geography, now live in increased contact. *The Good Society* observed ten years prior to the attacks the perilous dimensions of an increasingly interconnected globe of people who are ill-prepared to cope with this evolving social proximity.  

For several centuries now the great society, particularly in the form of division of labor and the exchange economy, but even, ironically, through the increase of international violence, has been pushing more and more of human society toward an interconnected whole. The process has been anything but smooth, causing repeated crises of moral meaning and solidarity, as well as breakdowns into extraordinary violence and anger, as the units and conditions of life develop unevenly.  

The September 11 attacks challenged the notion that human society is singular, is on a path toward an “interconnected whole,” or has any common referent with which to define or discern “crises of moral meaning.” However, the attacks alone are not sufficient evidence that there is any fissure in a global cultural fabric, if in fact such a fabric exists. Indeed outlaws and law-abiders operate within common cultural frameworks. The ability to enforce social and legal sanctions defines both outlaw and law-abider as two agents within the same culture on some minimal level at least. What is evident in the 2001 attacks, however, is that there are circles – very large ones – in the world in which the terrorist actions are understood by sympathizers, not as crimes, but as legitimate activities.

The attacks were visible manifestations of conflicts occurring around the globe on a daily basis. As individuals live in ever closer and increasingly diverse communities,

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526 Rowe, on-line.
interpersonal conflicts escalate to a global scale just as the effects of the globally visible and violent attacks of September 11, 2001 ripple into interpersonal relationships. Such interpersonal and global violence stems from dysfunctional relationships among social institutions, including education and religion, which broadly influence behavioral patterns and the processes of meaning-making on personal, interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels. Reciprocally, personal patterns of behavior, organizational structures, interpersonal relationships, and inter-organizational dynamics influence the broader behavioral patterns and processes of meaning-making which shape social institutions, society and global relationships. Influencing the positive development of healthy social institutions, therefore, may lead to more pacific ways of relating to one another on an interpersonal and global level.

An understanding of leadership as drawing on educative and religious processes for the deployment of power in order to make meaning with or on behalf of groups of people at any level of social complexity suggests that leadership is informed by and can inform institutional patterns of behavior and signification just as it informs cultures on any level. Understanding leadership style on a developmental continuum between more and less violent modes of deploying power simultaneously offers insight into the origin of violent social relationships and into a process for creating more pacific ways of making meaning. Therefore, providing a path of personal cognitive and moral development along this continuum for organizational, institutional, societal and global leaders offers one approach to influencing the development of social institutions which, in turn, influence the development of leaders, along a mutually formative path toward interpersonal and global peace.
CONCLUSION

How would cultural leaders make the world more peaceful today? Faced with deteriorating conditions in Iraq in which two sects within a single Huntingtonian civilization fight for political power and control over precious oil reserves, the United States continues its attempts to rescue its foisting of Western-crafted norms of freedom and democracy on a reality from which those norms did not emanate and a reality which those norms cannot understand. The endothermic means by which the so-called lone remnant superpower of the twentieth century imposes its will on Iraq rapidly depletes what is left of its global political capital while it runs up record budget deficits by the minute. Since before the war, the frontier of US diplomacy has been silent on almost all fronts – not just on Iraq. The US has led with military force and wallows in a military mindset from which it cannot seem to free itself.

Responding to the unprecedented liminality of the 2001 attack, the US responded with leadership styles that modulated between parental and autocratic. Just a day before the attacks New York’s mayor was best known for his heavy-handed tactics in eradicating crime as well as a sketchy – at best – record for dealing constructively with issues of diversity. One morning changed all that. America needed to be rushed out of a burning building – autocracy was the charism of the day. The reviled mayor became the revered leader because he had the gifts needed to command and control.
But with the taking of a few breaths and the passing of a few days, all involved had the opportunity to bring perspective to an evolving and extremely complex situation. Cultural Leaders would have had the wherewithal to invoke autocratic charisms in times of need and crisis but would intentionally move into an open style leadership model that would have attempted not to control or contain the situation over and over again, but to understand that what was unfolding was complex and dynamic. Further Cultural Leaders would have set a course for resolution that did not look to scapegoating terrorists and dictators as if a few people were the sole source of a complex set of problems that have swirled into violent patterns for decades if not millennia. Al Qaeda’s nimble network proved to be the pattern that needed to be understood and the world got a glimpse of the dynamics of open systems alongside of and interrelated to emerging internet and mass media technologies. Now acquainted with terms like cells and network, the United States could not respond in kind. Avoiding the complexity of the system, the US institutionalized and codified various modes of now legitimated scapegoating through the USA PATRIOT Act, palpably closing down US society even more.\textsuperscript{528}

As 2007 opens, the United States, having regressed about as far as it can in terms of Hall’s leadership cycles and faced with what is being broadly described as chaos, the certainty that liminality is emerging evokes the only response a fully regressed leader can employ – more dominance. More troops may indeed restore order, asserting the dominance of the United States in the multi-lateral rivalry that is the violent landscape of Iraq. In that sense the troop increases may well be effective, but they encode even more closed-system thinking on one of the most visibly open systems problems. “Yet,” Bellah

\textsuperscript{528} B. David Rowe, “Ex-Patriots: The Effects of Anti-Terrorism Legislation,” \textit{Thought and Action} 18 (Fall 2002).
et al. observe, “it is easier to repeat old formulas, to comfort oneself with the community’s familiar practices, than to risk trusting a new response to new conditions.”

Cultural Leaders resist the pull into closed-systems thinking. Avoiding the zero-sum mentality enables Cultural Leaders to search for intersubjective ways to build partnerships and community. Cultural Leaders dismiss the myth of border security and focus energy and attention not on keeping international students out of domestic classrooms but look for ways to promote exchange and understanding. Like Abuna they build schools for the children of their enemies rather than refuse to talk with them or their allies. This type of leadership requires risk, deep risk on the part of the persons involved and requires the surrendering of amassed power to the energy that comes from engaging others in authentic and genuine ways.

Cultural Leadership requires the development of cognitive and moral capacities. Certainly Osama bin Laden has demonstrated a cognitive facility for understanding open systems, but he has exploited that understanding by acting out in myriad ways a dynamic of rivalry and sacrifice. The same charge might be accurately levied against multi-national corporations or world financial markets. Many who influence these systems understand their openness and are, daily, faced with ethical choices about how those corporations and markets affect the livelihoods of millions round the globe relative to their own personal financial position.

The twenty-first century is serving up a sufficient number of open systems problems that are outstripping any society’s ability to deal with them in a progressive and

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529 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 286.
530 Rowe, *Thought and Action*, 139.
non-violent manner. The patterns which have encoded our behavior for so long are in much need of reform. As Bellah et al. argue even from the standpoint of the twentieth century:

It is tempting to think the problems we face today, from the homeless in our streets and poverty in the Third World to ozone depletion and the greenhouse effect, can be solved by technology or technical expertise alone. But even to begin to solve these daunting problems, let alone problems of emptiness and meaninglessness in our personal lives, requires that we greatly improve our capacity to think about our institutions. We need to understand how much of our lives is lived in and through institutions, and how better institutions are essential if we are to lead better lives. In surveying our present situations we need to discern what is healthy in them and what needs to be altered, particularly where we have begun to destroy the nonrenewable natural and nearly nonrenewable human resources upon which our institutions depend.  

As an institution, religion is key to the moral development of Cultural Leaders’ abilities to not only understand the open systems but to craft meaningful responses to the problems they pose.

We can indeed try to attend to the world around us and to the meanings we discover as we interact with that world, and hope to realize in our own experience that we are part of a universal community, making sense of our lives as deeply connected to each other. As we enlarge our attention to include the natural universe and the ultimate ground that it expresses and from which it comes, we are sometimes swept with a feeling of thankfulness, of grace, to be able to participate in a world that is both terrifying and exquisitely beautiful. At such moments we feel like celebrating the joy and mystery we participate in. Religions at their best help focus that urge to celebrate so that it will include all the meanings we can encompass.

Cultural Leadership must draw on religion and education in order to foster the cognitive and moral development necessary to grasp and respond to increasingly complex challenges. Oikos provides one model of understanding the inter-relatedness of social institutions and a method for cultivating personal cognitive and moral development in

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531 Bellah et al., *Good Society*, 5.
532 Ibid., 285.
order to engage those institutions more fully and in a systemic manner. Such an
experiment – or many – must be launched. To simply analyze and theorize would only
regress the system of engagement and cultivation into past meanings made. New and
meaningful responses require real engagement with context.

It is in the ontological dimension of reality and in context as Freire and Voyles
point out that we encounter the differences we need to fuel the patterning work of the
interlocking complex adaptive cultural systems, which Taylor’s work so vividly
describes. Open systems thinking provides a radical and necessary departure from the
classically-informed notions of social systems as being closed. The systems do not need
opening but leaders must refrain from attempting to close them with mythic institutional
patterns that legitimate social, political, economic, and military sanctions employing
various overtly and subtly violent means. Insidiously, even some of our best management
practices encode scapegoating on a routine basis so that our sensibilities are dulled by the
practices of our working lives when scapegoating occurs on broader and more destructive
scales. Hall’s taxonomy read in light of Girard’s theory of mimetic violence shows us
how common notions of leadership inscribe such violent patterns to the point that the
patterns, the myths, become hidden from our conscious understanding of the way we
interact in the world.

Barabasi and others demonstrate how a real world network can translate such
violent patterns of meaning making throughout a web of relationships that form a social
fractal, which connects seemingly disconnected parts of our social universe. This makes
it profoundly important to pay attention to the charismatic gifts leaders use to evoke
change and respond to the threat of entropy brought on by the loss of differentiation in
the system or the equilibration of endothermic and exothermic energy transfers. More
than just a Weberian ideal type of authority, charisma mixes into the leadership style of
any leader that is able to demonstrate credibly his or her ability to respond to crises.
These crises, by and large are only perceived crises. My theory of thermodynamics of
culture and leadership shows how mythically closing a system sets up entropy and
disorder as threats rather than the fuel of negentropy in myths that understand cultural
networks as open systems. It is the increasingly developed charisms of initiated leaders
who can endure the liminal and demonstrate the greatest chance of effectiveness in
weaving and interpreting myths that legitimate life in the liminal states of Prigogine’s
dissipative structures. It is there, Turner tells us, that communitas allows for anti-structure
and structure to give new meaning to life. And meaning, as Geertz emphasizes, is what it
is all about. As The Good Society concludes, “Meaning is the living fabric that holds us
together with all things. To participate in it is to know something of what human
happiness really is.”

Leadership is meaning-making and those meanings are preserved and transmitted
through cultures. The violent ways we have made meaning in the United States have
translated into violent patterns of meaning across the world, not only in World War I as
Gruber demonstrates, but through most of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.
The United States exports good things too, but we do not account for violent modes of
signification in our trade deficits. In an unusually prominent place in the world and with
access to military, media, and economic might that outstrips by far what any other society
can draw upon, our institutional patterns are translated and enforced globally.

US hegemony is by and large a normative hegemony – one that crushes the other

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533 Ibid., 286.
dimensions of reality as shown in the Moral Meaning Matrix into a collusion of governmental policies and economic power. The dynamic fuels the onset of the normative, and the two social institutions in the United States responsible for encoding meaning making and ontological engagement are subsumed. Religion, relegated to an untouchable private sphere and education devolving into utilitarian ends that can, on its best days, be described in the terms of its institutional subordination as a means to produce citizens (in the narrowest sense of the term of taxpayer) or workers for the government and economy respectively.

The Emory crisis taught us the process for an institution which fails to develop its own moral language. In the vacuum other intuitions are quick to reach in and replace the normative framework with foreign norms and thus exert the coercive isomorphism the neo-institutionalists so aptly named.

Education, alas, is left with few resources to help it inscribe new meanings, because our “socially organized ways of paying attention can become socially organized ways of distraction. [And] nowhere is the dilemma of institutionalization more acute than in the realm of religion.” Berger’s sacred canopy is no longer aiding the process of society creation. In fact, it seems to be inimical to the process altogether. Not only does its absence in public discourse keep it from informing progressive ways of making meaning for education and the other institutions, its privatization, as described by Bellah et al., keeps it from being reformed itself. In the United States, at least, this means that the misread myths that Girard demonstrated as being so powerfully violent seem beyond the reach of, even the ailing influence of, education to transform.

534 Ibid., 285-86.
Berger’s sacred canopy increasingly takes on the character of Frankl's deceptive dream and the numbness with which the veiled myth anesthetizes us legitimates, if not even makes holy, the cannibalistic frenzy that is religious violence. It is best, it seems, to stay lost in the deception of our mythic dream because the reality is too stark and harsh. Like Frankl, we are left culturally and existentially naked staring at the showerheads protruding through the ceiling of our sacred canopy wondering what they might effuse next. What becomes important for Cultural Leaders is not what happens next. It is what we do in that moment - before next. In that moment of terror and opportunity, Cultural Leaders release their gaze from the showerhead and scan the room. Cultural Leadership begins with the profound realization that we are not alone.


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