UNITY AND DIVERSITY AMONG HUMANS: A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETATION

by W. Widick Schroeder

Both biological and sociocultural factors contribute to human unity and diversity. Differences in sex, racial characteristics, physical vigor, and some aspects of intellectual prowess are rooted primarily in the biological dimension of human experience. Differences in basic values and forms of social organization are rooted primarily in the sociocultural dimension.[1] The two dimensions together contribute to the emergence of creatures who, relative to other creatures on this planet, possess very substantial capacities for self-initiation and for novelty of response to circumstances.[2]

Three aspects of the unity-diversity problem are addressed here. The first section sketches a broad framework to interpret our common human experience of the complex unification of diversity in the unity of an emerging creature. The second section delineates the hierarchy of creatures and the order of nature discernible on this planet. The third section, the longest of the three due to its primacy for this topic, focuses on the characteristics of human beings and their social institutions.

Human freedom greatly complicates strategies designed to foster a fitting synthesis of human unity and diversity, for it prevents the success of any simple strategy. Human actions and decisions in the political sphere are especially significant for the formulation of strategies for human survival, for politics is central for coordinating and harmonizing activities in human societies. In the foreseeable future politicians in nation-states will bear primary responsibility for initiating and implementing appropriate strategies for human survival. Wise political leaders should seek counsel and data from experts in the various fields of human endeavor, but politicians must bear pri-

W. Widick Schroeder, professor of religion and society, Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 University Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637, presented this paper at the Twenty-third Summer Conference ("Diversity or Uniformity—Strategies for Human Survival?") of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science, Star Island, New Hampshire, July 31–August 7, 1976.

[*Zygon*, vol. 13, no. 1 (March 1978).]
 0044-5614/78/1301-0005$01.51

mary responsibility for the major decisions shaping our lives together on this planet.[3]

Interpretative Perspective on the Human Experience of Unity and Diversity

Foundational human experience involves the synthesis of contrasting and commonly shared data into a complex unity. As humans become, they aim at aesthetic satisfaction and intensity of feeling. In order to attain rich and complex experiences humans require a proper blending of breadth of experience with depth of experience.[4]

A commonly shared background provides the foundation upon which a superstructure of contrasts and of contrasts of contrasts giving rise to rich aesthetic experiences is built. For humans these uniform components range from geometric forms shared by all the creatures in our cosmic epoch to cultural values shared by most of the human beings in a particular society in a particular historical epoch.

The contrasts eliciting depth of feeling are grounded in the selective appropriation of forms embodied in creatures in the causal past of an emerging creature and of forms embodied in God's primordial nature, that facet of the Divine Nature which is the locus of potentiality. Without such a locus, emergent novelty would not be possible, for unactualized forms must be located somewhere.

Sometimes there is too much diversity in a sustaining environment, for different creatures may be trying to attain mutually incompatible objectives. Disharmonies result, and creatures with lesser capacities for encompassing a rich diversity in a complex unity of experience are apt to emerge in the future. Consequently there is likely to be a decline in qualitative excellence in an environment in which there is too much diversity.

Sometimes there is too little diversity in a sustaining environment, for most creatures may be reproducing their pasts in their presents with minimal novelty. Relatively simple creatures predominate in such an environment, and the intensity of experience is truncated.

The terms "too much diversity" and "too little diversity" are not very precise, for "too much" and "too little" refer to specific creatures in specific environments. The bewildering complexities of creatures and societies of creatures observed in nature highlight its fecundity. They also limit the formulation of an optimum range of unity and diversity in a given environment, for the emerging future may suffer by human efforts to suppress inordinately excessive diversity in the present.

Nonetheless, too much uniformity in a sustaining environment may evoke simple creatures lacking in zest, vigor, and intensity of feeling.

Conversely too much diversity in a sustaining environment may evoke simpler creatures lacking the capacities for integrating complex diversities into rich unities.

Nature confronts the task of evoking societies of creatures with substantial survival ability. One way to enhance survival capacity is to develop societies of creatures able to endure through many environmental changes. Such societies must reproduce their pasts in their presents with minimal change. To do so creatures in these societies massively simplify the data they receive from their pasts; so many count as one. Such creatures can continue to reproduce themselves with minimal innovation in spite of major changes in the surrounding environment. Inorganic societies, such as rocks, are societies possessing great endurance capacities, but they have minimal capacities for novel responses to their changing environment.

The other way to enhance survival capacity is to develop societies of creatures able to respond novelly to changing circumstances. Creatures in these societies must have enhanced conceptual capacities. These creatures are alive, and in their becoming they appropriate novel forms and feelings.

Life is a claim for freedom from the bonds of the causal past. So far as we can observe clearly, creatures possessing "life" are intimately associated with societies of inorganic creatures, with which they often have reciprocal relations. The inorganic societies serve as a life support system, permitting the emergence of living occasions within the organism. In this manner survival capacity is combined with capacities for novelty and intensity of feeling.[5]

The evolution of societies and hierarchies of societies is aimed at the evocation of creatures with enhanced capacities for novelty and intensity of feeling. This aesthetic aim at the harmonic intensification of feeling is at the base of things. A harmony/lack of harmony contrast inheres in the nature of things and provides the basic category for interpreting human experience.

The increased complexity of creatures, based on the enhancement of the conceptual side of experience and on a hierarchy of societies coordinated to sustain the proper balance of unity and diversity in an environment, permits a delineation of the order of nature and of the hierarchy of creatures discernible on this planet. The following section elaborates this hierarchy.

Order of Nature and Hierarchy of Societies of Creatures

The lure for aesthetic satisfaction and intensity of feeling inherent in the nature of things has brought forth entities and societies of entities

differing substantially in complexity. The evolution of some conscious, relatively high-grade organisms on this planet is the outcome of this process of evocation spanning many millennia.

Our own self-conscious organizing centers, which are the ultimate percipient occasions receiving and integrating data transmitted from our bodies, from past ultimate percipient occasions, and from forms of definiteness embodied in the Divine Life, constitute the apex of this evolutionary process on this planet. The human organism consists of many inorganic and organic societies. There are literally millions of living occasions in the human organism but—except in pathological cases—only one organizing or regnant center, a serial sequence of ultimate percipient occasions. This center is partly dependent on the body, partly determinative of the activities of the body, and partly independent of the body. All interpretations of experience are grounded in this organizing center's perceptions.

By imaginatively sorting out the components embodied in our conscious experience and by using a method of analogy, which presupposes some elements of commonality among all occasions, it is possible to elaborate certain propositions applying to all—or at least a very great number of creatures—and to delineate a hierarchy of nature exhibited in our particular cosmic epoch.

Our own self-conscious drops of experience are the result of a synthesis of diverse forms and feelings into a complex unity. In the initial phase of its experience the emerging ultimate percipient occasion appropriates forms of definiteness embodied in creatures lying in its causal past. A mental or conceptual phase supplements this physical phase of its experience. This phase may be minimal. If it is, the past is reproduced in the present with a modicum of change.

In such instances so-called physical laws hold sway, and the predictive capacities of theories utilizing mathematical forms may be very substantial. In so-called inorganic entities the supplemental or conceptual pole is relatively shallow. Even among such creatures the past is not reproduced in the present without some novelty, so "laws" are statistical.

Laws are also immanental. They come into existence with the emergence of creatures embodying them, and they pass out of existence with the demise of the creatures embodying them. In this sense nature provides only a plausible tale, for the creature's selection of some forms of definiteness rather than others is somewhat arbitrary.

In the case of so-called organic entities the emerging creature's conceptual phase is prolonged. In this supplemental phase, forms of definiteness not embodied in the immediate causal past and perhaps not embodied by any creatures in the past may emerge into saliency.

The contrasts and contrasts of contrasts evoked in this phase of the experience of complex entities heighten both their capacity for novelty and their aesthetic sensitivity. An emerging creature's subjective aim is derived from but not completely determined by the divine subjective aim, an all-inclusive rationality which primordially has envisaged all the forms of definiteness. The creature's subjective aim guides the satisfaction toward which the creature is aiming.

In sum, an emerging creature begins to become as its physical pole appropriates data from its causal past. In its supplement phase the emerging entity's conceptual pole introduces novel feelings and forms of definiteness. The creature contrasts these forms of definiteness and feelings with those appropriated in its causal past. Guided by its own subjective aim, the creature unifies these two sets of data into an emergent whole. After it has become, this creature becomes an object which other emerging creatures appropriate as they become. Hence every creature is both a subject and an object, for after the emerging subject "closes up" it is an object for every other emerging subject.

In some instances many creatures mutually participate in common defining characteristics, producing a society. If these shared defining characteristics are reproduced by many creatures commonly participating in them, the many creatures may appear to be one stable, solid object to the human observer.

In nature many societies are organized hierarchically. Some very general defining characteristics are shared by creatures in our entire cosmic epoch; more specialized defining characteristics are shared by a limited number of creatures in a small segment of our cosmic epoch. The general pattern seems to be thus: selected geometric forms defining the most general relations of a whole to its parts, contiguity, and overlap; particular families of straight lines defining the relations among creatures in our own cosmic epoch and giving rise to metric measurement; electromagnetic occasions whose defining characteristics physicists are exploring; various inorganic societies such as gases, liquids, and solids; and various organic societies such as plants and animals. As the presence of entities such as viruses indicates, the dividing lines among these various societies of entities are somewhat vague. At the same time the differentiation among species is rather clear-cut, suggesting that differing entities appropriate forms of definiteness with different properties.

As noted earlier, the hierarchy of nature is twofold. First, the importance of the supplemental phase of an emerging creature varies greatly. Second, there is a wide variety in the complexity and the structuring of groups of creatures.

Human beings are the most complex societies of which we have any

direct knowledge at present. Humans are comprised of living and nonliving societies, coordinated to produce reciprocal relations between the regnant center and the rest of the organism.

The regnant center is a protean "formless form" capable of "containing" the sequence of ultimate percipient occasions constituting it. In this regnant center the supplemental or conceptual phase is enhanced greatly. Consequently humans are able to respond novelly to the initial data received from their past.

Consciousness is rooted in the human capacity to entertain contrasts and contrasts of contrasts. The peak of consciousness is the negative judgment. In a negative judgment a person is able to imagine the absence of something which is present or to imagine the presence of something which is absent.

As a result of the regnant center's rich capacities for feeling and thinking, feelings and meanings are central in human life. Purposiveness and intentionality are too salient in human experience to be interpreted epiphenomenally.

The development of creatures with these capacities has interjected a new note into the processes of emergent evolution. The processes on this planet were relatively spontaneous and unreflective prior to the emergence of humankind. Both conflict and harmony are manifest in nature, but prior to the emergence of humans the various creatures had relatively modest capacities for altering the process intentionally or for effecting the short-term relations among them. The symbiotic relationships emerging between and among creatures were the outcome of unplanned interaction between them. To be sure, some creatures destroyed others and were destroyed by them, but they did not drastically alter the structure of the simpler societies to which the lives of high-grade organisms on this planet are related intimately.

Sometimes between the sixth century B.C. and the first century A.D. systematic or quasi-systematic thought and new levels of human sensitivity emerged in several portions of the planet. In the West the emergence of Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian religion reflects this movement of thinking and feeling.[6]

It was not until the time of the Renaissance that modern science—with all its ambivalences—dawned, for in the Renaissance epoch humans fused rational speculation, particularly related to mathematical forms, with the carefully conducted experiment. As the history of the past five or six centuries reveals, the development of the sciences has vastly increased human capacity to alter the evolutionary process in both conscious and unconscious ways. The modern sciences have introduced a dramatically new and novel dimension to the evolutionary

processes on this planet.[7] The decisions people make to use and to abuse science are primarily political ones. This situation leads to the final section of this paper, for the political process is central to the development of a fitting synthesis of unity and diversity in human life.

Human Beings and Their Social Institutions

As previously observed, human beings are the most complex creatures of which we have any direct knowledge. As self-conscious bearers of feeling and meaning, they are meaning-seeking, meaning-positing creatures. The elements of foresight, intentionality, and purposiveness loom large in their lives compared with those of other creatures on the planet. Compared with those of subhuman groups, their creative capacities have accentuated greatly the range of diversity in human societies. They make and bear history in a unique manner, and they often display substantial adjustive capacities to changing circumstances. They can create universes of meaning and can probe the structure of things in ways far surpassing the capabilities of other creatures on this planet. In short, relative to other creatures, the human organizing center is extraordinarily rich and complex.

As a result of these characteristics, human beings have accelerated and modified the evolutionary process markedly. Humans display much greater variations in values and styles of life than nonhuman creatures. This diversity raises forcefully the central theme of this essay, for the issue of the proper balance between uniformity and diversity becomes especially critical in human life. Not only can human beings reflect self-consciously about the problem; they also possess some capacities to qualify and to modify intentionally the balance between uniformity and diversity in nature and in human life. Nature and historical destiny limit these capacities, and the political problems involved in seeking to attain a relatively harmonious unity of our diversity are monumental.

If humans cannot attain a proper balance between unity and diversity with subhuman entities and societies, nature will impose it. The disturbance of the ecosphere and the disruptions of the balance of nature are stark testimony to nature's limits. Even though limits are imposed by nature, the precise boundaries are unclear. This murkiness is partly because all creatures relate to and respond to one another. It is also partly because in the evolving ecosystem it is "natural" for some life forms to pass away and for others to emerge.

In spite of this intrinsic vagueness regarding precise limits to the changes humans can impose on nature, human actions—particularly in the areas of applied science and of technology—may so alter the

ecosystem as to make life or at least human life as we know it impossible.

Since human beings are related intimately to nature and many human needs are grounded in the biological side of human experience, humans are concerned rightly about the range of organic and inorganic diversity desirable on this planet and about human impingement upon the "natural" process evoking unity and diversity. Prudence suggests one exercise great caution in applying biological techniques or using chemical compounds which may alter subhuman forms of life markedly.[8]

The notion that humans are called to subdue, master, and change nature, a secularized Calvinistic notion deeply ingrained among many people in the West in general and in the United States in particular, needs to be balanced by the notion that humans are called to appropriate, appreciate, and receive nature. This secularized Lutheran notion, emphasizing receptivity and aesthetic appreciation of nature, is necessary to attain a proper balance between the dual relation of humans and nature. Among those seeking to discern a strategy for human survival this issue undoubtedly will continue to be debated.[9]

As in the case of human-human encounters to be discussed next, the task of modifying the untoward impact of the dramatic human intervention on the evolutionary process falls primarily on political leaders. Experts in other fields serving as consultants and as participants in the public dialogue leading to political decisions may contribute significantly to the political process, but politicians will consummate the decisions. In the long run humans will have to be persuaded of the merits of restraint and conservation to sustain political decisions. Many natural scientists can share in this consensus-formation process, but the resolutions are primarily political.

This emphasis on the importance of the political process in shaping facets of the human future underscores the emergent character of the future. In spite of human efforts to discern the future's shape and pattern, the future is unknown and unknowable in many of its most important details. Alternative models can be projected; but the projections rest on assumptions about human behavior and patterns of nature, the validity of which is always questionable.

As creators and bearers of meaning and feeling, humans are distinguished from other creatures on this planet by the variety of historical forms they have evolved. The enhancement of human freedom led to a surpassing of the rather simple rhythms of primitive life and has resulted in an increase in the degree of diversity of human social organization. Even though humans have greater capacities to surpass and to transform the past than other creatures on this planet, they are limited by the past.

Freedom and Destiny in Human Life. In areas of the world in which technical reason is salient, as it is in the United States, the destiny dimension in human life is not sufficiently emphasized. Seeking the most efficient means to attain given ends, people in these areas often strongly insist that humans can subdue nature and shape their own future. They seek to enhance the novel, to surpass traditional modes of life, to ignore history, and to minimize the limits the past imposes on the present. They frequently envisage the rapid transformation of the rest of the planet—much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America—into the Western mold, unattentive to the fact that the emergence of technical reason to a position of preeminence in parts of Europe, the United States, Canada, and a few other areas is itself the product of a very complex historical movement evolving from the Renaissance and the Reformation.[10]

Many Western efforts to effect social and cultural transformation in the so-called Third World have failed or have met with indifferent results. These consequences highlight the difficulty of direct intervention in the life of one culture by people from another. The impact certainly has had some effects—witness the dramatic decline in the death rate, particularly among infants, in many cultures appropriating Western medicine. At the same time, as the dramatic increase in the population in Southeast Asia, much of Africa, and much of Latin America indicates, the appropriation of one cultural complex developed outside a given culture without the substantial modification of customs and values of the recipient culture can induce problems as many as or more than it reduces.[11]

The prospects for preventing widespread famine in much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the next generation seem dim. Scientific, social, and political solutions of population, production, and consumption problems seem almost impossible, and nature probably will impose limits on population growth in these areas through famine, disease, and war—the restraints Malthus elaborated almost two centuries ago.[12]

Unity and Diversity in Human Social Organization. The great diversity of familial, social, economic, political, cultural, and religious institutions on the planet makes very improbable the emergence of sufficient unity to effect the social, economic, and political transformations necessary to arrest the widespread hardship likely to emerge in the next generation or two in many parts of the earth.

The unifying symbols which might serve as a focus for global brotherhood are almost nonexistent. Mutual self-interest may serve to mitigate disaster, but it seems unlikely that self-interest can serve to overcome the famine and suffering already present in some areas and

likely to emerge in others in the next generation. Indeed relatively wealthy countries will likely isolate themselves to protect themselves and to prevent inordinate domestic discord.[13]

The great world religions cannot provide unifying symbols within this time span, for each of them is enmeshed in the particularity of one or several of the great world civilizations. Within the Christian movement the persistence of high christologies, in which the categorical uniqueness of Jesus as the Christ is affirmed and reaffirmed, accentuates the ultimate superiority of one faith community over others. It is very, very difficult to see how such views—however subtle, rich, and sophisticated they might be—can serve to unify all of humankind under the conditions of existence.

At one time it appeared that the United Nations might serve as a symbol of human unity. However, its intimate relations to the principalities and powers in the political sphere have precluded this development. Even though the United Nations continues to sustain some significant economic, political, scientific, and cultural activities, it now primarily mirrors the economic and political interests and policies of its member states and cannot serve as a symbol unifying humankind.[14]

The excessive diversity of the familial, social, ethnic, economic, political, cultural, and religious spheres in the several societies of the world is mitigated by developments in some spheres of the social order and exacerbated by developments in others. Viewed broadly, the emergence of technical rationalism to a salient position in segments of the world has fostered developments reducing diversity in certain spheres of the social order, and the proliferation of nation-states has fostered developments increasing diversity in other spheres. The sciences, particularly mathematics, the natural sciences, and applied technology, have contributed substantially to human uniformity, for certain methods of scientific procedure and modes of production are accepted throughout the world.

Technical rationalism challenges traditional views of life, and the impact of its widespread appropriation on the familial, social, ethnic, political, cultural, and religious spheres of life has been complex and multifaceted. Technical rationalism fosters the segmentalization of the spheres of the social order, accentuates social stratification by achievement rather than by ascription, puts substantial strains on traditional family structures, fosters the proliferation of secondary social relationships, and contributes to the elaboration of bureaucratic structures in all the spheres of the social order. The bureaucratic structures are most evident in the economic and political spheres.

Technical rationalism affects religious institutions markedly. It en-

courages people to qualify inherited religious beliefs and practices by challenging traditional views and by confining the significance of religious beliefs to the nonpublic spheres. Religious liberty and/or the privatization of religion is most common in the highly industrialized countries, for technical reason both sustains industrialization and minimizes the direct effect of traditional religious values on the economic sphere.[15]

On the productive side of the economic sphere technical reason reduces the diversity of human society, for it encourages the development of efficient forms of economic organization, the elaboration of specialized competencies, and the evolution of standardized and regularized work procedures and productive activities. It also tends to atomize and objectify the individual person, for he is evaluated primarily on the basis of his competence to perform specific and specialized tasks. Critics of large-scale economic enterprises and high technology often cite this objectification as one basis for their critiques.[16]

On the consumption side of the economic sphere technical reason increases the diversity of human society, for it fosters the continuous outflow of new inventions and an endless proliferation of consumer products. Humans often cannot integrate this substantial novelty into a harmonious whole. The rapidity of social and economic change then attenuates rather than intensifies the harmony of human experience.[17]

The global tendencies toward uniformity resulting from the extension of technical rationalism are counterbalanced by the diversity resulting from the proliferation of nation-states in the post–World War II era. Technical rationalism knows nothing of honor and history, but these factors loom large in the political life of nation-states. Increasing political diversity, the result of decolonization, has accentuated the already formidable problems of coordination among states. The attainment of a political unity of the world's nation-states in the foreseeable future seems utterly out of the question, and the attainment of a tolerable harmony incorporating a measure of equality seems problematic.

Centrality of Political Leadership. As noted earlier, political leaders are directly responsible for the cultivation of a tolerable balance of uniformity and diversity between humans and nature and among humans. This subsection elaborates the grounds for this judgment and considers the implications for strategies for human survival.

There are three factors embodied in every experience. The first is a formal component appropriated from creatures in the causal past and

from forms of definiteness embodied in God's primordial nature. The second is a dynamic component, embodied in the very process of becoming. The third is a unifying component, involving the ordering of the formal and dynamic components into an emerging unity. Because of the ultimacy of creativity in the nature of things, there is a dynamic bias in the universe. The pure conservative is defying the cosmos and cannot win. Nonetheless, the process of unification of formal components in any particular context requires some order.

Governments live in a house of power. Persuasion is preferable to coercion, but governments have used, are using, and will continue to use force as one of the means of maintaining order. The saliency of power in the political sphere does not preclude the presence of formal or unifying elements in this sphere of human society, but it does relegate them to secondary and tertiary positions.[18]

In the political sphere the imposition of too much order to suppress dynamic components results in tyranny; the parts are inordinately suppressed for the sake of unity. Conversely too much freedom results in anarchy; the parts are accentuated inordinately for the sake of diversity. The state, as the organizing center of a society, seeks to foster the proper balancing of uniformity and diversity, both of which are necessary for the harmony of the whole.[19]

There are limits to the degree of familial, social, ethnic, economic, cultural, and religious diversity a given society can tolerate without lapsing into inordinate disharmony. Due to a complex historical evolution, posttraditional societies generally are more able than traditional societies to sustain greater diversity, particularly in the familial, social, ethnic, cultural, and religious spheres.

In any viable state most people must be lured to obey the state's laws by suasion. Nonetheless, states always must reserve the right to enforce obedience by coercion, for humans are motivated to action both by the lure for harmony and by the threat of disharmony.

Excepting times of the threat or reality of civil war, the element of coercion or threat of coercion is generally greater between states than within states, for, as observed earlier, universal unifying symbols and a sense of universal unifying history are almost absent among humankind. Thus coercive elements loom large in interstate relations.[20]

The establishment of rules and regulations defining economic relations within and between states is a political act. Political decisions produce the forms shaping the context for economic activities. As a consequence the dynamic component in the form-dynamics-unification triad is the leading component in the political sphere, and

the formal component is the leading component in the economic sphere. In the political sphere the formal component is the secondary component, and the unifying component is the tertiary one. In the economic sphere the dynamic component is the secondary one, and the unifying component is the tertiary one.

The tertiary character of the unifying component in both political and economic spheres is the fundamental and inexorable basis for the frustration and alienation people so frequently express toward economic and political institutions. People's deeply felt needs for wholistic, integrating, loving relations cannot be met fully by any political or economic system, for power and forms predominate in the political and economic spheres. This reality should serve to chasten advocates of radical economic and/or political transformation, for no rearrangement or reorganization of economic or political institutions can lead to human fulfillment. At the same time modifications of these institutions may enhance human life, and such modifications ought to be fostered. More suasion and more humane forms of social organization can contribute positively to human life.

At the legal level the formal dimension is manifest in the rules and regulations of justice—formal and informal, written and unwritten—which evolve in the life of a living community. Generally speaking, the more highly rationalized the society, the greater the importance of formal, written legal codes, lawyers, and courts. The unifying dimension is manifest in the actions of officials who apply the rules and regulations of justice to specific situations.

At the cultural level the formal dimension is manifest in the meaning-giving symbols and in voluntary observance of the rules and regulations of justice, producing the persuasive aspect of community life noted earlier.

Implications for Strategies for Human Survival. The predominance of dynamics in the political sphere and the persistence of self-interest among humans highlight the importance of power in the relations between states. Ecological imbalances precipitated in part by human innovation, persistent ethnic strife within and between nation-states, inordinate economic inequality, political instability, and inordinate cultural and religious diversity contribute to the disharmony manifest on this planet.

So far as temporal life is concerned, it falls primarily upon the political leaders of the several states to try to coordinate this diversity into a tolerable if not an enriching unity. Because power, understood as the ability to attain one's will in conflict with other wills, is so salient

in this sphere, the leaders of the superpowers—the USSR, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, present-day China—bear a special responsibility in these matters.

Various suasive efforts through international agreements to minimize ecological imbalances, economic injustices, and political controversies point to the possibilities of cooperation among the human family. The continued manifestations of self-interest in all the spheres of the social order, the persistent antagonisms between nations, the inability of people in some nations to limit population growth, and the ambivalences of technical rationalism point to the persistence of coercion and disharmony among the human family.

The development of technology and of a reasonably productive economy requires substantial capital accumulation. Such capital accumulations are limited in many countries in the so-called Third World, and often the government is the only agency large enough to accumulate sufficient capital to enhance economic productivity.[21]

In many of these nations the concentration of political leadership in the hands of elites, the need for development capital, and the rapid transition from traditional to posttraditional modes of life foster the emergence of the rule of the one or the few. Because of a need for order, dictators or oligarchs often emerge in these nations.[22] Such governments are likely to continue in the foreseeable future, for the confluence of factors giving rise to Western-type democracies was unique in human history. As the Vietnam and Korean experiences vividly revealed to Americans, democracy is not easily exportable to peoples with markedly different lived histories.

Multinational corporations and economic diplomacy have received much criticism in some circles in recent years. Some of it undoubtedly is deserved, but force is subordinate to persuasion in economic relations.[23] Granted the inevitability of some coercion in human affairs, economic coercion may be preferable to political or military coercion. If so, one of the factors offering some hope for the future of humankind is the growth of reciprocally beneficial world trade.

It is naive to expect the element of coercion to be absent in economic interchange. It is similarly naive to think governments will refrain from imposing their self-interest on economic matters. Cartels, tariffs, government subsidies, and the intermeshing of government economic and political policies attest to this reality. Nonetheless, the growth of trade does represent a move from coercion toward persuasion in the relations between states.

Whether ameliorative efforts will prove adequate to the ecological, social, economic, and political problems confronting humankind is a moot question. The radical critics and doomsayers say no; more mod-

erate prognosticators say yes or maybe. Since none of us is graced with the wisdom to know that which is yet to be, the best one can do is to make judgments informed by past and present experience and by visions of better paths to follow. Unforeseeable historical events, technological innovations, and novel emergent entities inevitably will obscure the future, but some of the foreseeable consequences of human action can inform current and future public policy.

A Concluding Note

Concerned humans with a vision of the whole, a sense of proportion, and a sense of responsibility are among those most likely to foster the proper balance between uniformity and diversity in human life. Both by participating in the political process and by offering appropriate counsel to the magistrates, they may seek to contribute to our lives together.

In spite of the best of human efforts, humans are likely to continue to experience substantial disharmony in the next century or so. Scarcities of food and natural resources, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the continued technologization of the human spirit, slower rates of economic growth, and an increase in tension between the more industrialized and the less industrialized nations seem likely. Statesmen and politicians will have to be exceedingly gifted and fortunate to assure human survival.

It is beyond the power of any of us to know whether this level of statesmanship can be attained and sustained. Some modifications of current patterns and values, involving some diminution of diversity and some enhanced concern for the whole, seem necessary for human survival. Through a blending of suasion and coercion an increased concern for the whole of humankind may emerge. Some problems, such as inordinate population growth and continued conflicts between states, seem intractable, and they will have to be endured.

In order to sustain itself the human spirit must have the capacity to receive and to appreciate that which is given to it in the present. To enhance aesthetic satisfaction in the specious present, humans need to maintain a proper balance among their concerns for the past, for the present, and for the future. If the reality of the future is ignored or is inordinately preoccupying, the present also is enfeebled.

The greater part of morality lies in the assessment of the impact of the present on the future; but if one is to accentuate the aesthetic satisfaction of the specious present, at times one must be a bit oblivious of morals. Those Puritans, old and new, who are preoccupied excessively about the future risk the loss of all they actually possess—the present.

To sustain themselves in the coming century, humans will need some sense of fulfillment beyond the strife and conflict embodied in the temporal world. Whether many humans will or can attain this sense of peace is a moot question.

The theological notion of ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom of God is related to this sense of peace. For a variety of reasons, traditional theological formulations are currently not attractive to many contemporary people. Nonetheless, some reformulation and/or reappropriation of the idea of a kingdom not of this world which people can maintain with emotional, intellectual, and spiritual integrity is much needed. If the quest for a harmonious unification of human diversity is even modestly successful in the coming century, the realization of this reformulation and of a nontemporal fulfillment may be essential.[24]

NOTES

1. The debate on the relative importance of the biological and sociocultural factors in human life emerged earlier in the history of Western thought, and it has continued to the present day. In *The Republic* Plato opted for the predominant importance of heredity, and he proposed an elaborate eugenics plan. In *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle emphasized the importance of the environment and proposed to focus on the sustaining environment to cultivate good habits leading to virtue. In various forms the debate is still carried on today. Some will emphasize one factor but may not eliminate the other, blunting the sharpness of the debate. If it is held that both factors are inextricably and interrelatedly involved in human experience, as it is held here, the debate will be interpreted as an endless one.

2. This volitional emphasis relates this point of view to the strand of social scientific theory rooted in the tradition of Max Weber and some nineteenth-century English liberals (see, e.g., Max Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* trans. A. R. Henderson and Talcott Parsons [New York: Oxford University Press, 1947], and John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* [Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., n.d.]). It contrasts with the causal strand of social scientific theory rooted in the traditions of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Émile Durkheim (see, e.g., Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* ed. Lewis S. Feuer [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1959]; A. A. Brill, ed., *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* [New York: Random House, 1938]; and Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* [Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1938]).

3. In some portions of the world, political leaders must engage in a substantial consensus-formation process to modify existing life patterns; in other portions, elitists—at least in the short run—formulate policy with much less concern about a public consensus. In the short run political leaders in democracies must try to cultivate substantial domestic support for their foreign policy. Leaders in nondemocratic countries are not under such direct, short-run pressures.

4. The informing perspective shaping the discussion in secs. 1 and 2 is rooted in process philosophy. See esp. Alfred North Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933) and *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929). See also Charles Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court Publishing Co., 1970), and William Christian, *An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959).

5. Whether a sequence of entirely living occasions can exist without an inorganic support system is a moot question. Certainly there is no metaphysical necessity for an

underlying support system. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this issue. Problems of telepathy and the persistence of the sequence of events constituting the "soul" after the demise of the "body" are of special interest (see, e.g., William A. Beardslee, *A House for Hope* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972]).

6. See, e.g., Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), and Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939).

7. See, e.g., William Cecil Dampier, *A History of Science* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944); E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1954); and Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930).

8. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962) and Barry Commoner's *The Closing Circle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972) reflect these concerns. Some may hold that the arguments in these volumes are exaggerated and polemical, but they do point toward legitimate and authentic concerns.

9. Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* is the classic study exploring the relationship between Calvinism and capitalism. For a neo-Lutheran critique of the mind-set overemphasizing mastery, see Paul Tillich's intellectual autobiography in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952) and Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). For a discussion of the saliency of technical reason and the vision of the human mastery of nature in contemporary American society, see Robin Williams, *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1970). For an analysis and critique of technocracy, see Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1969).

10. See, e.g., Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pt. 2: "Religion in the Modernization Process," and Wilbert E. Moore, *Social Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963).

11. For a trenchant critique of Western efforts to facilitate the "development" of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, see Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973).

12. See, e.g., S. J. Behrman et al., eds., *Fertility and Family Planning: A World View* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970); Daniel Callahan, ed., *The American Population Debate* (New York: Anchor Books, 1971); Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb,* rev. ed. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971); George R. Lucas, Jr., and Thomas W. Ogletree, eds., *Lifeboat Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

13. For four contrasting views of the emerging future, see Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), and *The Cultural Contradiction of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Victor Ferkiss, *The Future of Technological Civilization* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1974); Robert L. Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1974); and Donnella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972). For two suggestive discussions and summaries of this literature, see Robert Benne's "Values, Technology and the American Future" and J. Ronald Engel's "The 'New Primitivism' " in *Belonging and Alienation,* ed. Philip Hefner and W. Widick Schroeder (Chicago: Center for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1976).

14. For two suggestive discussions of symbolism, see Paul Tillich's *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) and Alfred North Whitehead's *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927).

15. For a discussion of this situation, see W. Widick Schroeder et al., *Suburban Religion: Churches and Synagogues in the American Experience* (Chicago: Center for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1974).

16. See, e.g., Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) and Gibson Winter's "Symbol and Society" in Hefner and Schroeder, pp. 219–48.

17. Alvin Toffler elaborates this theme in *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970).

18. For two differing but complementary interpretations of this situation, see my

"Religious Institutions and Human Society" in Hefner and Schroeder, pp. 181–218, and Tillich's *Love, Power, and Justice.*

19. For two analyses of this problem from different but complementary perspectives, see Ernest Barker's *Reflections on Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958) and Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

20. See e.g., Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948); Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959); Frederick L. Schuman, *International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1969).

21. Broadly viewed, no social institution should be larger than is necessary to enable it to fulfill its functions effectively (see, e.g., Pope John XXIII's "Mater et Magistra," in *Seven Great Encyclicals* [Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1963] and E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* [New York: Harper & Row, 1973]).

22. See, e.g., Moore and Bellah (n. 10 above).

23. For a volume offering a balanced assessment of the impact of corporations and governments of industrialized powers on economic affairs in other areas, see Kenneth E. Boulding and Tapan Mukerjee, eds., *Economic Imperialism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972).

24. The most significant movement in contemporary theology seeking to reformulate classical views is process theology, rooted in the seminal work of Alfred North Whitehead. The following representative texts illustrate various dimensions of this mode of thought: Beardslee, *A House for Hope* (n. 5 above); Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr. and Gene Reeves, eds., *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1971); John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); Ewert Cousins, ed., *Process Theology* (New York: Newman Press, 1971); Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1948); Schubert M. Ogden, *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Daniel D. Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).