

CULTURE, LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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A Prefatory Note: I have written this paper to clarify both for myself and colleagues in the Workshop how our own efforts might fit into a bigger picture, so to speak. Others may find it of interest in framing some of their efforts. I would much appreciate suggestions and critical comments. I would hope to make an effective statement which indicates that we have much more to offer and to gain by proceeding in a different way than following the course of cryptoimperialism.

Introduction

Amilcar Cabral, in a collection of speeches entitled Return to the Source, addressed himself to the relationship of culture to national liberation in the struggle for liberation in Africa. Tzvetan Todorov pursues an analogous inquiry in The Conquest of America. Cabral wrote about our own age. Todorov wrote about the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century. Important issues are raised in these analyses.

Todorov provides us with an understanding of how language and a knowledge of the culture of another people can be used as an instrument of conquest. Cortés used translators to give him access to Indian languages and a capacity to enquire about the beliefs and tensions inherent in Indian cultures. He was thus able to pursue strategies where, with only a few hundred soldiers, he conquered an advanced Indian civilization that could command forces numbering in the tens of thousands.

The year 1492 marked both the discovery of America and what Todorov characterizes as "the first grammar of a modern European language" (123). That grammar was prepared by Antonio de Nebrija who asserted in his "Introduction" that, "Language has always been the companion of empire" (123). Languages, then, are used as tools to gain access to an understanding that can be used to conquer another people and attempt to destroy their cultural heritage.

In leading a national liberation movement, Cabral by contrast recognizes that imperial powers will repress and inhibit critical elements in the social structure of a conquered people. The imperial colonizer "installs chiefs who support him and who are to some degree accepted by the masses . . . , creates chiefdoms where they did not

exist before" (46) and takes other measures to enhance imperial control over a subject population. Those who overtly resist are destroyed. Cultural traditions of the African peoples survived; "taking refuge in the villages, in the forests and in the spirit of the generations who were victims of colonialism" (49).

For Cabral, culture provides each individual with "understanding and integration into his environment, identification with fundamental problems and aspirations of the society, [and] acceptance of the possibility of change in the direction of progress" (44). It is upon these aspects of a culture that liberation movements are built. The conceptions that people use in thinking, the way they express their feelings to one another, and the customs that people fashion in relating to one another have an openness that is subject to "the possibility of change in the direction of progress." "[N]o culture is a perfect, finished whole. Culture, like history is an expanding and developing phenomenon" (50). It is this openness of cultures to change that presents a challenge to leaders of liberation movements.

The basic infrastructure of a liberation movement in Cabral's view must be built upon those aspects of culture that require a "return to the source" to understand the material and spiritual realities of life in human societies. These realities present "man-the-individual" and "man-the-social-being" with conflicts both with regard to nature and "the exigencies of common life" (50).

From this we see that all culture is composed of essential and secondary elements, of strengths and weaknesses, of virtues and failings, of positive and negative aspects, of factors of progress and factors of stagnation and repression (50-51).

History becomes the unfolding of human cultural development in which strengths and weaknesses; virtues and failings; progress, stagnation, and repression gain expression. Any struggle for national liberation must, for Cabral, be energized and built upon the spiritual and social assets that are reflected in the cultures of peoples. Human cultures are the most fundamental assets upon which people can build. The cultures of the African peoples are the basic infrastructures upon which to build in fashioning the future of Africa.

In confronting the future, as a new stage in African history, Cabral recognizes that a critical assessment of African cultures is necessary in relation to both the requirements of a liberation movement and "the exigencies of progress." Progress can presumably be made only with an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in light of the challenges to be faced in the unfolding of the future. Thus,

It is important to be conscious of the values of African cultures in the framework of universal civilization . . . in order to determine, in the general framework of the struggle for progress, what contribution African culture has made and can make, and what are the contributions it can and must receive from elsewhere (52).

It is one of the great tragedies of the contemporary world that Amilcar Cabral's voice was silenced in his struggle for national liberation. The thinking to which he gave voice needs to be carried forward if we as human beings are to fashion alternatives to imperialism in the unfolding of human civilization. The task is more difficult than anyone can imagine. It can only be realized in a continuing struggle for liberation in which individuals are willing to attempt a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses coming from diverse cultures. A universal civilization cannot be a culture that applies alike to all people everywhere. That would be a manifestation of cultural uniformity. Instead, we confront the task of fashioning a civilization that is grounded in a sufficiently general and critical understanding of languages that enables people to appreciate how different peoples think about themselves, their relationship to their world, the larger cosmos, to one another, and to other peoples of different cultural traditions.

There may be a potential for a culture of inquiry and reflection about the strength and weaknesses of diverse cultural traditions that becomes the basis for still further inquiry about how human beings are to understand one another in light of what it means to be a human being and to share types of experiences which are common to all societies. Ideas need not be used as weapons to war upon one another. Ideas can be used to fashion communities of shared understanding. When peoples of diverse, shared communities of understanding can achieve self-governing capabilities and learn how to communicate with one another through appropriate methods of inquiry and deliberation, they may achieve elements of a universal civilization that is nurtured by the spirituality, productivity, and creativity of diverse cultural traditions. Achieving a universality of understanding grounded in cultural diversity requires recourse to patterns of ordered complexity which challenge the limits of human cognition.

As Todorov has observed:

. . . we want equality without it compelling us to accept identity; but also difference without it degenerating into superiority/inferiority. We aspire to reap the benefits of the egalitarian model and the hierarchic model, we aspire to rediscover the meaning of the social without losing the quality of the individual (249).

We cannot have the best of all possible worlds without bearing the burden of the costs associated with the terms on which alternatives become available. Dreams of utopias will not suffice to yield alternatives to imperialisms. Can we as artisans, draw on the resources in our own cultures, the potentialities in the realm of ideas that have been generated in other cultures, and the use of our own inventive capabilities, to fashion ways of relating to one another that yield alternatives to imperialism? More than good intentions are necessary to all forms of productive artisanship.

In this essay I wish to continue the traditions of inquiry pursued by Cabral and Todorov. My concern is with how those who wish

to achieve liberation can move forward -- based upon their thoughts and actions -- without being trapped in new forms of domination and oppression. In this analysis, I shall first turn my attention to circumstances where the question for liberation can lead to the entrapment of people in new forms of subjection. Among the liberation traps I shall explore are: (1) the revolution trap, (2) independence and the sovereignty trap, (3) democracy, size problems, and coalition traps, and (4) national liberation and the security trap. There are others, but a consideration of the above is sufficient for an understanding that the struggle for liberation is plagued by a variety of traps. In the concluding section of this paper, I shall further consider the nature of the struggle that is necessary to achieve liberation.

Liberation Traps

The twentieth century, more than any other period in human history, has been marked by struggles for human liberation in all parts of the world. These struggles have been accompanied by recurrent disappointments. Erstwhile liberators become the new oppressors. Those who achieve some measure of freedom find themselves in perverse struggles for hegemony in a world, where hegemony takes on many characteristics of dominance and subjection. Struggles for liberation often get caught in one or another trap in which liberation gives way to subjection.

The Revolution Trap

There is a general assumption, which Cabral also makes, that liberation movements involve armed struggles. Most of the great revolutions including the English, American, French, Russian, and Chinese revolutionary struggles have been accompanied by armed struggles. The character of the armed struggle was best articulated by V. I. Lenin. If we examine Lenin's theory in light of subsequent experience, we can come to some understanding about the pitfalls of revolutions. In contemporary discourse about revolutionary movements, Lenin occupies a central position. He emphasized that any successful revolution depends upon theory. If a people are to carry out a revolution, they need to know what they are doing and develop a revolutionary consciousness to guide and direct their efforts. The Soviet revolution stands as a beacon for many other revolutionary struggles in the twentieth century. Lenin's effort to develop a theory of revolution and to achieve the transformation of Russian society, as a result of a revolutionary struggle, is deserving of careful consideration not only for its successes, but for its failures as well.

In What Is To Be Done?, Lenin advances his general theory of a revolutionary movement. The basic task is eventually one of an armed struggle "for the purposes of winning, not only a few concessions but the very fortress of the autocracy" (16). Lenin points to the dangers

of viewing a revolutionary movement only as an armed struggle. In that case, terror as a form of military operation becomes the preoccupation of the revolutionary leadership and diverts attention from the more fundamental tasks of developing a revolutionary consciousness among the broader masses of people and mobilizing a larger base of support. The enemy is the autocracy that rules the country and commands the armed forces, the police forces, the secret police, and the general administrative apparatus of the state in oppressing and exploiting the people.

Lenin viewed an all-Russian newspaper as providing the essential organizational apparatus for undertaking a revolutionary struggle. Such a paper would be illegal and publish in defiance of state authorities. Its news-gathering capabilities would provide an essential intelligence function for the leaders of the revolution. In conveying its message about the revolutionary struggle, such a newspaper would become the "tribunal of the people" fashioning an articulate public opinion with a revolutionary consciousness. The regularity of its publication and availability to readers would provide unrefutable evidence both of the existence of viable revolutionary movement and a command apparatus that could reach to all parts of a country.

Lenin is vigorous in rejecting patterns of organization based upon trade unions, the leadership afforded by trade-union secretaries, student circles, and principles of primitive democracy for exercising essential leadership functions for a revolutionary movement. Trade-union activities, including strikes, collective bargaining, and mutual-aid efforts, have a public character. The membership and the leadership become known to the secret police and public authorities. Whenever decisive moments arise in revolutionary struggles, such organizations can be "captured" by the police and rendered ineffective. Methods of primitive democracy where open discussion and elections are used to take decisions and select leadership are rejected as "a useless and harmful toy" because such principles of organization "will simply facilitate the work of the police" (154: Lenin's emphasis).

Rather, the task of organizing a revolutionary movement turns upon the creation of a party apparatus where a few professional revolutionaries are carefully selected and trained to exercise leadership and to do so in strict secrecy and subject to strict discipline. The larger revolutionary movement should be broadly based so as to facilitate the "active participation of the broad masses" (140) in various revolutionary activities. By contrast, "a dozen professional revolutionaries" can "centralize the secret part of the work" and increase the effectiveness of revolutionary efforts many fold (140). The revolutionary movement itself must have as large a base as possible among all sections of the population, but "it is absurd and dangerous to confuse these with organizations of revolutionaries" (140). It is the leadership that gives unity to a revolutionary movement "capable of organizing extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all of the forces, even the most inconsiderable" (142). The party

would serve as the vanguard providing leadership for the revolutionary movement, but would itself be organized by principles of: (1) strict secrecy, (2) strict selection of membership, and (3) strict discipline in exercising professional leadership of the movement.

Lenin, in conceptualizing a revolutionary movement as a struggle to the purposes of winning the "very fortress" of the ruling autocracy, had recourse to the same principles of organization that applied to the Russian autocracy. Strict secrecy, selection of membership, and discipline of professionally trained leadership who are capable of organizing control over all of the elements of a society characterized both the Czarist autocracy and Lenin's revolutionary party. His commitment to an armed struggle relied upon the same principles of organization that applied to the Czarist regime in its control over the instruments of coercion in the governance of Russian society. Lenin's revolutionary movement mirrored the Czarist autocracy itself.

In Marxist theory, the state is viewed as an ancillary apparatus that functions only as an adjunct of the capitalist mode of production associated with the private ownership of property. Property relationships are the critical variable in the structure of society. Once a revolutionary party takes control of the apparatus of the state on behalf of the revolutionary movement, expropriates private property, and eliminates the exploiting class, the reason for a state as an instrument of coercion would be eliminated and the state would wither away.

Implicit in Lenin's formulations were two competing sets of conjectures. One turned upon the Marxist formulation where a change in the structure of property relationships would eliminate capitalist exploitation of workers and lead to the withering away of the state. Another set of conjectures pertained to the presumption that the unity of a revolutionary movement turns upon a unity of leadership in coordinating multitudinous activity into a harmonious whole. Principles of strict secrecy, careful selection of membership, strict discipline, and professional control would then be critical variables. To succeed in an armed struggle to win the fortress of the autocracy placed a premium upon principles of autocratic organization in the organization of the revolution itself. The seeds of autocracy were sown in the revolutionary struggle. The newly created and reformed society would yield the same patterns of autocracy that existed in the old society. The old autocracy was replaced by a new autocracy. In this circumstance, the change in the structure of property rights might be viewed as ancillary to the more fundamental structure of institutionalized leadership.

Lenin's theory of revolution was successful in achieving the premier revolution of the twentieth century. That theory provided the essential model for most other revolutionary struggles that have followed. If we view Lenin's revolutionary struggle and his efforts to create a socialist society as an experiment testing competing hypotheses about property relationships and leadership functions, we would alternatively expect the state to wither away or new autocracy

to arise. Milovan Djilas, a leading participant in the revolutionary struggle of the Yugoslav people, provides us with the following account:

Everything happened differently in the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries from what the leaders — even such prominent ones as Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, and Bukharin — anticipated. They expected that the state would rapidly wither away, that democracy would be strengthened. **The reverse happened.** (My emphasis.) They expected a rapid improvement in the standard of living — there has been scarcely any change in this respect and, in the subjugated Eastern European countries, the standard has even declined. It was believed that the differences between cities and villages, between intellectual and physical labor, would slowly disappear; instead these differences have increased. Communist anticipations in other areas — including their expectations for developments in the non-Communist world — have also failed to materialize.

The greatest illusion was that industrialization and collectivization in the U.S.S.R., and the destruction of capitalist ownership, would result in a classless society. In 1956, when the new Constitution was promulgated, Stalin announced that the 'exploiting class' had ceased to exist. The capitalist and other classes of ancient origin had in fact been destroyed, but a new class, previously unknown to history, had been formed.

It is understandable that this class, like those before it, should believe that the establishment of its power would result in the freedom and happiness of all men. The only difference between this and the other classes was that it treated the delay in the realization of its illusions more crudely. It thus affirmed that its power was more complete than the power of any other class before in history, and its illusions and prejudices were proportionately greater.

This new class, the bureaucracy, or more accurately the political bureaucracy, has all of the characteristics of the earlier ones as well as some new characteristics of its own (37-38).

Human beings everywhere recognize that people can make mistakes. Good intentions are insufficient to yield good results. Revolutionary struggles against repression and exploitation can yield the circumstances where those who lead the struggle for liberation become entrapped in a structure of relationships where they become the new oppressors. It is entirely possible for those who undertake a revolutionary struggle of liberation to err and to sow the seeds of oppression by the very way that revolutionary movements are organized.

Independence and the Sovereignty Trap

Whether the struggle for liberation from colonialism takes the form of an armed revolutionary struggle or not, independence is a universal demand of all colonial peoples. The creation of a system of government where the prerogatives of government are exercised by those who come from the same cultural traditions as the people they govern is viewed as a necessary condition for achieving national liberation. While this may be a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient condition. Taking the step to independence may still leave a people snared in a sovereignty trap. A central government with a single center of ultimate authority can become an instrument of oppression, exploiting and warring upon its own people.

Thomas Hobbes, who wrote during the period of Cromwell's commonwealth in England following the English revolutionary war, provides us with a classical statement of the theory of sovereignty. He does so in an explanatory context that provides a fuller account of institutions of governance in human societies. For Hobbes, commonwealths are artifacts created by human beings to serve human purposes. Since human beings are both the materials that comprise and the artisans who create commonwealths, he strives to understand that which is universal in human nature so that the problems associated with the design, creation, and governance of commonwealths can be adequately understood.

Hobbes takes the most fundamental attribute of human beings to be that of a continual striving that ceases only with death. With access to language and the accumulation of learning that becomes possible through the use of language, human beings achieve fertile imaginations about what might potentially be done, but each individual is subject to severely limited capabilities of what can be accomplished. Human limits on capabilities can be greatly expanded if each can take advantage of one another's capabilities to put together the diverse elements that form the human habitat within any given commonwealth.

To understand what would happen in the complete absence of any system of governance where there would be no law, no property, no "mine" nor "thine," Hobbes postulates a state of nature with individuals who seek their own good, but who continually strive for something better in a world that is subject to scarcity. He concludes that such a "state of nature" would be characterized by a war of each individual against every other individual because an absence of any shared and enforceable common understanding about a proper order of relationships would yield conflict in a world of scarcity. Conflict would escalate to violence and the continued threat of violence.

Hobbes's mental experiment about how man in a state of nature produces war is a fundamental puzzle that arises from counterintentionality: individuals sought their own good; but their unconstrained pursuit of their own good yielded misery instead. It is the basic puzzle that arises from the counterintentionality of war that leads Hobbes to consider the way to peace as an alternative to war. He formulates a number of basic rules that would constitute a

state of peace, which he calls natural laws because these serve as basic moral precepts that are constitutive of human societies. Where people act upon such rules, they can be secure in relating to one another on the basis of reciprocity grounded in goodwill.

The basic problem of governance arises because rules to be effective must be enforced by instruments of coercion. The rule-ruler-ruled relationship is the source of the most fundamental inequalities in human societies. People function in a society by having a common set of rules for ordering their relationships with one another. All societies, then, require recourse to institutions of governance where some are capable of exercising an extraordinary authority of formulating rules, deciding the application of rules, and enforcing rules. All human societies can be conceived as existing under some form of Faustian bargain where instruments of force or coercion (symbolized by the sword of justice) are necessary for realizing a state of peace. Ironically, peace, like war, depends at least to some limited, but essential, degree upon the use of instruments of coercion.

The irony that peace, like war, depends upon instruments of coercion is the source of the great tensions that apply to the constitution of rulership in all human societies. The theory of sovereignty presumes that each independent state depends upon some single, ultimate source of authority that exercises the prerogatives of government in any society. This ultimate authority is the sovereign or the ruler in any particular society who also exercises responsibility for relations with other sovereigns and for defense against external aggression. The unity of law is presumed to depend upon a unity of power residing in the sovereign. The sovereign then is the source of law and since it is presumed that there can be but one source of law, the sovereign is also above the law and cannot be held accountable to law.

These presuppositions become articulated in studies of law and the social sciences whenever the state is defined as a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in a society. Monopoly means a single ultimate power: sovereign states are assumed to be unitary states. A monopoly of rulership would imply that rulership is indivisible, unlimited, and unaccountable to other human agencies in a society. States then are viewed as ruling over societies and through a unity of power creating a commonwealth where people might aspire to peace and prosperity. In the same way that Lenin saw leadership as achieving uniform and harmonious work by employing all forces in a well-coordinated revolutionary movement, sovereigns exercise the ultimate prerogatives of rulership to yield uniform and harmonious working relationships in the society as a whole.

The sovereign state is easily transformed into an oppressive trap where those who exercise a monopoly over the instruments of violence and coercion in a society use those instrumentalities to exploit, oppress, and war upon those who are subjects. The few who exercise rulership prerogatives can use the instruments of coercion to exploit the many. National liberation can easily be transformed into national

oppression where those who exercise the prerogatives of government and associated instruments of coercion do so to exploit others. Governments can, themselves, become the greatest of all instruments of exploitation.

Hobbes can address this problem only by an appeal to reason and hold sovereigns accountable to God. If those who exercise the prerogatives of rulership fail to recognize the basic conditions of reciprocity inherent in moral precepts, that are necessary to achieve peaceful relationships in human societies, then sovereigns will be required to endure what Hobbes calls the "natural punishments" in contrast to the punishment that comes from the breach of ordinary law. The breach of the moral precepts that are constitutive of peace in human societies is subject to the following calculations in Hobbes's formulations:

There is no action of man in this life, that is not the beginning of so long a chain of consequences, as no human providence is high enough, to give a man a prospect to the end. And in this chain, there are linked together both pleasing and unpleasing events; in such a manner, as he that will do anything for his pleasure, must engage himself to suffer all the pains annexed to it; and these pains are the natural punishments of those actions, which are the beginning of more harm than good. And hereby it comes to pass, that intemperance is naturally punished by diseases; rashness, with mischances; injustice, with the violence of enemies; pride, with ruin; cowardice, with oppression; negligent government of princes, with rebellion and rebellion, with slaughter. For seeing punishments as consequent to the breach of laws; natural punishments must be naturally consequent to the breach of the laws of nature (moral precepts of peace); and therefore follow them as their natural, not arbitrary effects.

The natural punishments apply not only to those who exercise rulership prerogatives but to all who endure life in human societies. Indeed, it is possible for those dedicated to the liberation of the oppressed to undertake armed struggles against their oppressors where different elements of a society engage in intermittent warfare with one another that is only broken by the temporary victories of the oppressed. But, those who lead the liberation movement and demand all power to the revolution become the new ruling elites that yield a new cycle of oppression. Such circumstances have been characterized by Robert Michels in the following way:

The democratic currents of history resemble successive waves. They break upon the same shoals. They are ever renewed. This enduring spectacle is simultaneously encouraging and depressing. When democracies have gained a certain stage of development, they undergo a gradual transformation, adopting the aristocratic spirit, and in many cases the aristocratic forms, against which at the outset they struggled so fiercely. Now new accusers arise

to denounce the traitors; after an era of glorious combats and of inglorious power, they end by fusing with the dominant class; whereupon once more they are in turn attacked by fresh opponents who appeal to the name of democracy. It is probable that this cruel game will continue without end (371).

An iron law of oligarchy inherent in a theory of sovereignty would imply that the possibility of liberation is a fantasy of the human imagination if the only way to construct a system of governance depends upon a unit of power exercised by some single, ultimate center of authority. The concept of democracy offers a way out of the sovereignty trap, but democracies are in turn accompanied by size problems and coalition traps.

Democracy, Size Problems, and Coalition Traps

If we think of a democracy as a society where rulership is exercised by an assembly of all citizens, we immediately confront a logical puzzle. In order for all citizens to rule by assembly, it becomes necessary for those who participate in such an assembly to do so in accordance with commonly understood rules of assembly. People need to know who can participate and the terms and conditions that are to apply to the conduct of an assembly as it exercises the prerogatives of government. This would imply that there are two sets of rules in a democratic society. One set pertains to the conduct of government; the other to the exigencies of life that occur apart from the processes of governance. The one is constitutive of government; the other applies to social relationships, and is constitutive of society. We might on this basis distinguish constitutional law from ordinary law.

Where citizens rule through an assembly of all who will come together, there is a presumption that they share a common understanding of the basic rules about how the business of an assembly is conducted. The existence of constitutional rules as distinguished from ordinary law would suggest the possibility that a rule of law might apply to the conduct of government in a democracy if means could be devised to enable those rules to be enforced in relation to those who exercise the prerogatives of governance. Such a possibility has implications that contradict Hobbes's basic presupposition that those who exercise the prerogatives of government are the source of law, above the law, and unaccountable to law. A further problem arises in surmounting the limits on size. If all citizens are to participate in an assembly, the distance to the place of assembly must be limited and the size of the aggregate population that function in an assembly must also be limited.

One of the serious threats to the viability of a democracy is the strong oligarchical tendency that is inherent in all large deliberative bodies. Human beings are hard-wired so that they can listen to and understand only one speaker at a time. This is a

universal characteristic among human beings. So long as a deliberative group is very small, the problem is not of serious proportions. Rules of common courtesy will be sufficient for discussion and deliberation to occur. As deliberative assemblies increase in size, there is an increasing importance of a leadership function in having someone to preside at a meeting, establish the agenda, recognize speakers, and direct the proceedings. The larger the size of the deliberative assembly, the greater the dominance of those who exercise leadership prerogatives, and the relatively less voice that will be exercised by the ordinary member of a deliberative body.

This problem was explicitly recognized by James Madison in Federalist 55 and 58 nearly two hundred years ago. Madison warned that, under these circumstances, "the countenance of the government may become more democratic," by increasing the size of the deliberative bodies, "but the soul that animates it will be more oligarchic. The machine will be enlarged, but the fewer, and often the more secret, will be the springs by which its motions are directed" (382). "An artful statesman" Madison suggests, can, under these circumstances, "rule with as complete a sway as if a sceptre had been placed in a single hand" (382).

This is a dynamic that operates without regard for the character of those who form a deliberative assembly: "Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob" (361). Where democratic assemblies comprise several thousand persons, coherent debate in which all members might participate becomes impossible. Debate is either limited to the leadership of dominant factions; or debate loses its coherence. "In all very numerous assemblies, or whatever characters composed, passion never fails to wrest the sceptre from reason" (361).

Montesquieu recognized that these problems of size posed a critical problem for democratic republics: "If a republic be small, it is destroyed by foreign force; if it be large, it is ruined by an internal imperfection" (126). Republics small enough to enable people to rule by an assembly would be the victims of aggressive neighboring monarchical governments. Republics large enough to defend themselves would succumb to the oligarchical tendencies that are inherent in large deliberative bodies. Montesquieu, however, conceptualized confederations as a way of resolving this problem. Small republics might confederate to form a larger confederation and preserve the virtues of small republics and acquire an aggregate strength by forming a union to resist external aggression. The form of government constituted as a confederate republic, Montesquieu argued, being "composed of petty republics, it enjoys the internal happiness of each; and with regard to its external situation; by means of the association, it possesses all of the advantages of large monarchies" (127).

American experience with confederation, as conceptualized by Montesquieu, was subject to serious problems of institutional weakness and institutional failure. The Congress of the United States of

America, as a confederation, could adopt resolutions which were intended to have the force of law, but the execution of those resolutions depended upon the executive and judicial instrumentalities of the states. The Congress could recommend, but it did not have access to its own instrumentalities that would act in relation to its resolutions. It is this circumstance that led to a reconceptualization of a confederate republic with reference to a different structure that has come to be conceived as a federal republic.

The critical factor in reconceptualizing the nature of a federal system of government was that each unit of government should stand independently in relation to "the person of the citizens" (98). Each individual would then function as a citizen in diverse units of government and act with reference to the agency of officials in those different units of government. The authority of the different units of government relate to different communities of interest. All units of government exercised much the same type of prerogatives, but in relation to communities of interest pertaining to different territorial or functional domains. A federal republic then ^{can} be conceptualized as a compound republic where many diverse republics exercised concurrent authority with reference to the same land and people.

In this system of governance the most fundamental prerogatives of formulating the basic terms and conditions that apply to the organization and conduct of particular units of government is exercised by the people through processes of constitutional decision making. If citizens have an essential voice in this process; and governments cannot act on their own initiatives to alter those terms and conditions, citizens might then be viewed as exercising fundamental prerogatives of government. We, however, again confront the circumstance that the words on paper depend upon workable structures and processes to assure their application and enforcement. The question then is how to devise the structure of government so as to assure that the terms and conditions specified in a constitution become enforceable in relation to those who exercise the prerogatives of government.

A resolution to this problem required a radically different formulation than that advanced by Hobbes in his theory of sovereignty. Instead of having recourse to some single ultimate center of authority that is indivisible, unlimited, and unaccountable — the source of law, but not itself accountable to law — a contrary formulation is required where all exercises of authority would be subject to limits and no one would be allowed to exercise unlimited authority.

The formulation of limited constitutional governments, then, turns upon three types of limits in specifying the terms and conditions of government in constitutions. One relates to the authority of persons, frequently referred to as human rights, which are expressed as limits upon the authority of government in general. Another type of constitutional provisions bear upon the assignment of the authority of government to differential decision structures where each is subject to limits that can be expressed as veto capabilities.

The third type of constitutional provisions pertain to either the direct or indirect participation of citizens in the structures and processes of government. Citizens, for example, participate directly as jurors in the decision processes of the judiciary. They participate directly in election and indirectly in legislative processes through representatives chosen in elections. These different types of provisions function in a configurational way so that the constitutional rights of persons and limits upon the authority of diverse decision structures form a due process to which individuals are entitled in relation to structural and procedural conditions and substantive constraints that apply to the processes of government themselves.

Considerable debate has occurred among legal scholars and social scientists over whether the provisions of constitutions are mere formalities lacking effective meaning in the governance of human societies. This problem is inherent in all systems of governance and in relation to all law. Governments can operate in human societies where the basic principle is fear. In such circumstances, those who occupy positions of governmental authority demand simple deference and obedience from those who are subject to their authority. If deference and obedience are not forthcoming, punishment can be arbitrarily inflicted until subjects "learn" proper deference and obedience. The substance of the law is not important. The essential quality in human relationships is a deference and obedience to those of superior standing. Such societies are organized on principles of inequality. The fundamental relationship is one of subjection rather than one of liberty and equality. Most societies, through much of human history, have been organized on principles of inequality and fear.

The conception of a rule of law where all individuals have equal standing before the law must always confront the circumstance that words on paper are without meaning unless they are related to appropriate structures and processes that achieve properly ordered relationships in human societies. The development of structures and processes associated with a rule of law has been widely accompanied by a differentiation of structure and processes characteristic of a division of labor in human societies. The development of distinguishable bodies known as legislatures and as courts implies that differentiation of functions with regard to the formulation of law and the adjudication of law has occurred to some significant degree apart from the exercise of executive prerogatives in many societies.

The rationale behind these distinctions is to establish publicly known rules by representative bodies that are sensitive to problems confronting communities of people in a society. General rules of law establish the lawful scope of executive action and the entitlements and obligations of those who are subject to law. If publicly knowable standards apply, then there are grounds for persons subject to executive action to contest the actions taken whenever there is an improper exercise of authority or an improper application of law. Where rights to trial by jury prevail, such executive judgments are subject to scrutiny by a panel of citizens who themselves also stand as potential subjects in relation to law.

Where law is properly grounded in a generally shared community of understanding about fundamental standards of propriety for distinguishing right from wrong, and where the structures and processes of government act reliably in relation to those same standards, then demands by members of the society become the basis for maintaining a social order grounded in a rule of law. If these conditions are absent, law itself becomes arbitrary and can no longer serve as the basis for maintaining a social order that is grounded in moral standards for distinguishing right from wrong, justice from injustice, and for taking independent action on the part of morally responsible and socially sensitive individuals. Instead, laws can become shackles to immobilize people, obstruct reasonable courses of action, and oppress and exploit people. Publicly knowable and acceptable rules of law depend critically upon opportunities for contestability. Through contestation, proper standards and limits can be established for people -- officials and subjects alike -- to order their actions and relationships with one another in ways that yield mutually productive relationships grounded in standards of propriety, justice, and liberty.

Perhaps the greatest dispute about the constitution of democratic societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has pertained to issues bearing upon the differentiation and distribution of authority with respect to the exercise of legislative, executive, and judicial prerogatives. Presuppositions held during the French revolution that the actions of a democratically elected national assembly is an articulation of the general will of the people faces the challenge that all democratic assemblies are subject to strong oligarchical tendencies. Theses with regard to parliamentary supremacy emphasize the critical link that a cabinet serves in tying parliamentary leadership to control over the executive apparatus. The independence of the judiciary is at issue when questions of legislative and executive prerogatives are at stake. The contestability of issues as among political parties and some basic independence of members of parliament were essential for maintaining the deliberative character (government by discussion) of parliamentary government even in Bagehot's The English Constitution. Bagehot's misgiving, in the introduction to the second edition, about government by "blowers" and "wire-pullers" indicates his own reservations about threats to deliberative processes of government when narrowly constituted leadership groups exercise disciplined control over party coalitions in parliamentary bodies.

The nature of the threat to free discussion and open deliberation is perhaps best indicated by the rise of machine politics and boss rule in the United States where constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances were most explicitly formulated. Democratic constitutions invariably turn upon the authorization of decisions by some form of plurality voting. Most frequently the plurality is a simple majority of a quorum of eligible members. Incentives exist for members of democratically organized decision structures to form coalitions so as to prevail in the taking of collective decisions. This process extends itself to the organization of coalitions to win elections. If an advantage can be

gained by individuals who are not direct adversaries in a contest for election to join with one another in teamwork to conduct a joint election campaign, we would expect such coalitions to form.

If the constitution is such that legislative, executive, and judicial officials all stand for election, then incentives exist for coalitions to form where slates of candidates, competing for different offices, join together in a concerted electoral campaign. Cooperative alliances form among those who are not direct adversaries engaging in a win or lose contest for particular offices. Where frequent elections reoccur, incentives also exist to create permanent organizations on the part of "professional" politicians who devote themselves on a full-time basis to slating candidates, organizing electoral campaigns, and getting out the vote. Where such efforts are successful, the professional politician can then organize his winning slate to act as a team in exercising the prerogatives of government. The team can obtain popular support and, at the same time, procure resources in exchange for political favors to support the organization's future efforts at slating, campaigning, getting out votes, and running the diverse institutions of government. The professional organizer becomes a boss directing a political machine that runs the different instrumentalities of government in much the same way as Lenin's vanguard party would lead a revolution, or a single sovereign would govern a society.

The openness of democratic societies necessarily means that opportunities exist for some to form coalitions as either networks or segmentary stratified structures to capture control of the diverse instrumentalities of government. Political coalitions as network organizations or segmentary stratified structures may come to occupy positions of dominance so that bosses and political machines are able to use the instrumentalities of government to exploit those who are subject to their control.

Ostrogorski, in his study of Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, was critically concerned with the potential threat that tightly disciplined political parties posed for democratic societies. His observations led him to conclude that tendencies toward machine politics and boss rule become manifest in local politics in communities that exceed 100,000 in population. Most large American cities and most states were dominated by machine politics in the late nineteenth century; and the U.S. Senate became a club of bosses which wielded dominance in national affairs.

The organization of electoral systems presents a fundamental tension in all democratic societies. Constitutional resolutions were achieved in the United States through the development of primary elections in which any party dissident ^{was} free to challenge any machine candidate in a public election for party nomination, through a variety of other electoral reforms and through the interposition of limits upon state legislatures to act by general law rather than special legislation that applied to particular instances. European democracies relying upon different modes of election and representation have each experimented with different methods to

achieve electoral systems and deliberative arrangements that allow for contestable debate and deliberation. Viable arrangements depend, at least in part, upon opportunities for electorates to achieve some measure of countervailing power in the exercise of governmental prerogatives. The governance of democratic societies is always subject to a variety of coalitional strategies that may permit ruling elites to come to dominance and use the prerogatives of government to oppress and exploit others. Vigilance in maintaining human rights, contestable debate, open deliberations, and constitutional limits in the discharge of governmental prerogatives is the price of liberty in a democratic society.

National Liberation and the Security Trap

The conditions of national independence and sovereignty yield two fundamental sources of tension. The first has been explored in the section on independence and the sovereignty trap. The presumption that national unity depends upon a single ultimate center of authority capable of exercising a monopoly over the instruments of coercion in a society yields a circumstance where "government" as the center of ultimate authority is the source of law, ~~is~~ above the law, and cannot be held accountable to law. The central government as the ultimate source of authority is in one sense an outlaw in relation to the rest of society. The same problem arises in relation to machine politics and boss rule. If a single coalition can achieve the standing of a single stable dominant and disciplined coalition, that machine can dominate the various instrumentalities of government and its leader (the boss) comes to occupy the position equivalent to that of a single sovereign. The boss becomes the source of law, is above the law, and cannot be held accountable to law. Such a boss occupies a position of an outlaw in relation to the rest of society and cannot be held accountable by those who are subject to the exercise of monopoly power over the instrumentalities of government.

In turn, those who exercise sovereign prerogatives within independent nation-states face each other as a club of outlaws in the larger international community. The strongest sources of tension and conflict among nation-states become the basis for forming coalitions among nation-states that yield contending alliances or security blocs. The security of these contending alliances depend upon their capabilities to mobilize the instrumentalities of warfare to defend themselves against their rivals. Instruments of warfare, which serve the requirements of national defense and collective security, reinforce the instruments of coercion that ^{are} necessary to internal peace in human societies.

Those who devote themselves professionally to creating and maintaining the coercive instrumentalities of warfare now come to occupy key positions to participate in alliances with those who control military capabilities in the contending coalitions of nation-states; and, at the same time, to gain dominance in the internal affairs of nation-states. Human watchdogs turn upon their masters and usurpt the prerogatives of sovereignty by eliminating

those who were sovereign and of making themselves sovereign. Such opportunities abound among professional soldiers who are specialists in mobilizing and using instruments of coercion to gain dominance over others. Under these circumstances, heads of state and would-be heads of state become specialists in fashioning the instrumentalities of control and repression to assure their own dominance over the instrumentalities of coercion in a society. Coup d'etats and revolutionary struggles follow coup d'etats and revolutionary struggle. What survives is the persistence of efforts to maintain dominance over the instrumentalities of coercion and repression within societies. Explicit forms of national imperialism associated with the German, Austrian, Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, Russian empires, and imperialisms of earlier vintages, are succeeded by forms of cryptoimperialism supported by contending coalitions of nations which proclaim the liberation for mankind in the name of democracy.

The peoples of the world are more apt than not to find themselves in circumstances that are best characterized by Rousseau in the opening paragraphs of his Social Contract:

Man is born to be free, and everywhere he is in chains. One who believes himself to be master of others is nonetheless a greater slave than they.

Until we have come to appreciate why such conditions are likely to prevail, we have not prepared ourselves to participate in the struggle for human liberation. Those who believe themselves to be masters of others are less well-prepared for the struggle for liberation than those who have no such illusions.

The Struggle for Liberation

Both Cabral's concept of return to the source and Todorov's concept of language as a key to understanding need to be used in any struggle for liberation if we are to have any hope of avoiding the variety of traps that plague all liberation efforts. The two concepts need to be viewed as complementary efforts to achieve the levels of understanding where people might come to appreciate what it means to be human beings, to live in human societies, and to consider the latitudes of choice that people might exercise in fashioning their own ways of life. People are born to be free because they are endowed with a capacity to think for themselves, to reflect upon their own capabilities and limitations, to understand, communicate, and act in relation to others with respect for their standing as fellow human beings, and to choose from among the possibilities that are available so as to yield mutually productive, rather than destructive, communities of relationships. Walter Bagehot, in Physics and Politics, saw the potentiality of a human civilization grounded in methods of discussion — the age of discussion — as he expressed the concept. The key question is whether these concepts might enable human beings to contemplate an alternative to imperialism, one where freedom could be enjoyed in peace and where a universal civilization could exist amid great cultural diversity.

Cabral's emphasis upon "return to the source" was grounded in several considerations. The "source" was among the peoples who had taken refuge in villages, in forests, and on distant savannahs. There the cultural traditions of the African peoples survived in a spirit that nurtured the potential creativity of Africans as human beings. These were the potentials upon which to build, because culture provides a configuration of meaning that enable people to build in relation to requirements of life that flow into the future. Cultures represent accumulations of capital in shared communities of understanding that are the foundations for future development.

Cultural infrastructures are the more important in serving as foundations for the future because imperial systems of whatever tradition had transformed and shaped the institutional superstructure to serve the purposes of imperial dominance. National liberation then would require the fashioning of new institutions that could reach out to larger domains in which peoples of diverse cultural traditions have interdependent relationships in wider communities of interest. Human cultures are never complete. They remain open to new ideas and to fashioning ways to meet new and changing circumstances.

Those who are of African cultural heritage can perform the task of articulating ideas and fashioning new African institutional arrangements to cope with the challenges of national liberation by, in part, returning to the source. There are certain universals in human experience with which all people must learn to cope in order to survive as social communities. All human beings must learn how to draw upon each other's capability to enhance prospects for survival, to live in ways that people can give expression to their feelings as human beings, and achieve ways of relating to one another that give meaning to life. Patterns of exchange and reciprocity exist in all human societies. All human beings acquire experience in teamwork because human beings can accomplish tasks by working together that they cannot accomplish by working alone. Scarce interdependent resource systems require patterns of usage that take account of the joint interests of peoples in common-pool, flow resource systems so as to avoid what we today call "the tragedy of the commons." Conflicts arise in all human experience. All societies confront problems of how to constrain conflict, mediate conflict, and achieve conflict resolution. All human societies confront the transformations which occur as a function of birth, life, and death so as to achieve processes of an orderly succession among generations of people.

National regimes which do not "return to the source" squander a vast accumulation of capital that people in the immediate exigencies of life have accumulated by learning to work together, maintain reciprocity and exchange relationships, and to take ^{joint action in the use of interdependent} common facilities ^{systems and the} of village and community life. All of these experiences accrue in family, kin, and village relationships and are plagued by many of the same types of tensions that are associated with sovereignty, democracy, coalitions, revolutions, wars, and collective security. Life abounds with temptations where some may accrue special advantages at the cost of others. Wherever such opportunities arise, potentials occur for some to exploit others. These are the sources of conflict; and the

dynamics of conflict can lead to violence on a small scale that is analogous to warfare on the large scale. Human experience is such that all peoples learn to live with such problems and reach more or less constructive resolutions. Human societies cannot have survived through millenia without learning how to cope with such problems.

The recursive nature of problems that confront people in all human societies means that there is a residual basis for understanding how problems in the exigency of everyday life come to manifest themselves at radically different scales in human societies. Size is an important contingency. The tragedy of the commons can occur on a worldwide basis with much the same structural characteristics as might apply in kinship groups or villages. Everyone has the potential for understanding the possibilities that accrue from social organization and the difficulties that arise in manifestations of institutional weaknesses and failures.

Human beings conceptualize and achieve many different ways of coping with similar problems that reoccur in all societies. The repertoire of ways to cope is immense; and the experiences of different peoples in finding ways of resolving similar problems inherent in human experience is a major source of innovation in human societies. Problems arise in all societies in conceptualization and fashioning patterns of order that apply to larger social contingencies — communities of relationship that reach ~~for~~^{to} beyond the exigencies of everyday interpersonal relationships. Since the dawn of history, such relationships have been predominantly resolved in struggles for power associated with warfare. Many great empires have existed. The peace achieved through imperial dominance has often been marked by extraordinary achievements among the Persians, Egyptians, Chinese, Macedonians, Romans, Tartars, and Germans long before the rise and decline of the modern imperial powers.

With the eclipse of self-proclaimed empires, those who assume leadership in national liberation movements and the efforts to fashion new nation-states in a "free" world confront difficult problems of where to turn for concepts and what to do in fashioning the structures of human relationships that are liberating in some basic sense. This is a critical problem that people in the twenty-first century will have to address in light of the heritage of the twentieth and earlier centuries.

The dominant repertoire of conceptions that are available to people everywhere is derivative from the age of empires. We have millenia of experience that go back to the earliest forms of writing which articulate languages of discourse that serve the purposes of empire. There are other traditions of discourse of equal duration, but they are not carried forward with the organized dedication of those associated with imperial institutions.

We should not be surprised then if those who are at the vanguard of liberation movements draw upon the basic conceptions associated with imperial aspirations to fashion the structure of new regimes while proclaiming national liberation. This is consistent with the structure of the control apparatus with which colonial peoples are familiar and

is also characteristic of the more overt manifestation of the structure of governing institutions at the centers of imperial authority. Those who seek liberation follow the models afforded by their erstwhile masters on the assumptions that their masters were free. But as Rousseau understood, masters are greater slaves than subjects. They cannot liberate themselves from living amid instruments of coercion and, as slaves, ~~manipulating those~~^{to} instruments of coercion ~~and manipulating~~^{destruction.} *them to oppress and destroy.*

To transcend the limits of experience with imperial institutions, and the writings of those who celebrate the achievements of imperialism, it is necessary to rely upon human language as a key to understandings that transcend mere words and penetrates to the conceptualizations, or ideas, in the experiences of peoples that give meanings to words. This is much more difficult to achieve than to learn mere words and to assume that the words transform all other people's experiences of themselves, their relationship with one another, and to the larger universe of meaning into an equivalent to one's own understanding of words, one's own understanding of oneself, one's own relationship with others, and to the world in which one lives. Others cannot be understood only in ~~my~~^{one's} image of ~~myself~~^{one's} and ~~my~~^{one's} society.

Instead, we are required to use the vehicle of diverse languages to attempt to appreciate how human beings might have recourse to quite different conceptualizations and ~~that~~^{that} these different conceptualizations will yield different ways of ordering relationships in human societies that give rise to different shared communities of understanding in human societies. To achieve such levels of understanding, it is necessary to go beyond dictionaries in defining mere words and move to common foundations in human experience that are characteristic of human beings in all societies. This is why it is necessary to "return to the source," so to speak, in coming to appreciate the diverse ways that human beings can conceptualize relationships in human societies against the background of commonalities that give a sufficient degree of commensurability to enable human beings to understand the meanings of diverse conceptualizations.

I can use myself and my own experience with language to appreciate the vast realms of tacit understandings that go beyond mere words. I can appreciate that this is a problem that is of a universal dimension in human communication even though I cannot appreciate what it means to have access to a rich pictographic language like Chinese that goes far beyond the bounds of phonetic languages. Different languages draw upon different intuitive images and give us cues to differences in tacit understandings. But these differences only gradually become apparent when both the conceptual and computational ~~of~~ aspects of languages get linked together as logics to account for the way that elements and relationships get aggregated into configurations of relationships that become composable and decomposable in still larger and smaller configurations of meaning. Beyond the tacit and explicit levels of understanding associated with languages, there must still remain puzzles, paradoxes, and mysteries that reach beyond human

understanding. But, we still struggle to understand the puzzles and mysteries that have defied understanding, but may yield to new efforts to understand. The more sharply that contending conceptions from diverse experiences enable us to confront contradictions that bear upon puzzles and mysteries, the more we are likely to penetrate to new levels of understanding by coming to terms with a deeper structure and meaning that makes incommensurables commensurable at other levels of understanding.

When we recognize that different conceptualizations can yield a structure of meaning that is different than relying upon mere words, great difficulties arise in construing the significance of human experience. When we reach such a level of understanding, we can then begin to inquire into the importance of different ways of construing meaning and move beyond a superficial battle of words that get expressed in contending "ideologies."

There are those who see the rise of absolute monarchs as a basic step forward in the development of Western civilization. Prussia, to these observers, exemplifies progressive tendencies in the march of civilization; Poland exemplifies failure. Prussia no longer exists. Its distinguishing characteristics in organizing its way of life led to its own destruction. Poland still struggles in its efforts to achieve human liberation with dignity. There are those who view Louis XIV as the "sun-king" -- the most lustrous of French monarchs. There are others who see his "achievements" in self-glorification as destroying the essential infrastructures in French society leading to the collapse of the monarchy and the peculiarly destructive force of the French revolution. *The superstructure in the governance of society has a perverse way of destroying infrastructures in society and squandering accumulated social capital that nurtures enterprise and community.*

Can we use our understanding of the conceptualizations and experience of diverse peoples to come to an understanding of how a new form of human civilization might arise from processes other than those of warfare and imperial dominance? Can we anticipate how the age of empires might be succeeded by an age of discussion in which people use language as a key to understanding rather than as an instrument of warfare and conquest? We have many sources of potential understanding to which we can turn.

The Swiss historian, Adolph Gasser, for example, has in his Geschichte der Volksfreiheit und der Demokratie (History of Freedom and Democracy) juxtaposed different principles of organization that have been used by European peoples to fashion differently structured societies. In some, the concept of Herrschaft (lordship) is used as a basis for constituting societies relying upon strong patterns of dominance relationships. In others, the concept of Genossenschaften (comradeship or companionship) becomes the dominant principle of organization. According to Gasser, principles of Genossenschaften occur in societies where military organization is also based upon comradeship. Something like universal armament prevails where each member of the society has his or her own arms and participates in a militia where citizens also serve as warriors. Swiss citizens organized as militia were among the best of European soldiers. Swiss communities were organized upon rules of association of a

constitutional character which citizens were bound by oath to uphold. Fashioning associations of associations is still the organizing principle of Swiss confederation and citizens are referred to as Eidgenossen (comrades bound by oath).

Gasser sees those principles of Genossenschaften and what might be called universal armament as having roots in the prehistory of the European peoples as nomadic pastoralists living on the land mass of the Eurasian continent. Similar conditions still exist among pastoral peoples on the Eurasian and African continents. Acephalous societies, or stateless societies, have endured as well as societies that rely upon headships to exercise sovereign prerogatives where a state rules over society. There are conceptions to be understood and lessons to be learned about how principles of Genossenschaft and militia organization might enable people in acephalous societies to become as independent and prosperous as the associated peoples of Switzerland. Peoples who learn how to live in peace with one another under conditions of universal armament have learned how to achieve an important degree of liberation in society.

The principles of Genossenschaft among the Germanic and Swiss peoples have their parallel to principles of covenanting which had its origins among the Hebrew people in establishing the foundations for a civilization that has survived for four millenia upon teachings that are grounded in rules of what the Swiss would call Eidgenossenschaft. Both Christianity and Islam draw upon the basic Hebrew teachings that stand as the core of their religious beliefs.

Implicit in the most fundamental Hebrew teachings is the place of discussion to reach a level of human understanding that goes beyond mere words. Perhaps the most fundamental of all commandments is "Hearken unto Me." The first obligation of being human is to listen. The chosen people were called Israel: the one who talks back -- not to mimic or be obsequious but to clarify and to achieve deeper levels of understanding. But, words can lose their deeper levels of meaning and people can stray from their obedience to those laws that liberate by loving thy neighbor as thyself and learning how to draw upon the ties of a community to do together what cannot be done alone.

The roots for discussion as an inquiring and organizing principle go to the earliest antiquity among human beings. How do we explain the rise of a new and enlarged civilization that began to use discussion both as a method to deepen human understanding and to order relationships with one another on scales of continental proportions? A plausible conjecture can be entertained that it was in the so-called Dark Ages following the collapse of the Roman empire that European peoples began to use the method of discussion as a fundamental vehicle for ordering life in European society. At first it was a peripheral method. There is some doubt that it is yet the dominant mode of organization in governing human relationships; but we need to look to the articulation of this principle to see if it may offer a method for reconciling the requirements of organization and the conditions for freedom.

My conjecture, following in the tradition of Berman's Law and Revolution, is that the decisive step in making discussion the essential process in the ordering of human relationships in Europe was the ecclesiastical revolution articulated by Pope Gregory VII in the Roman Catholic church. Gregory's proclamation asserted the independence of the church from secular authority and also asserted that secular authorities were accountable to ecclesiastical opinion and authority regarding the proper discharge of secular authority. This gave rise to contestable disputations that have been a fundamental part of Western civilization ever since. Both church and secular authority structures became arenas for intellectual disputation and attempts to achieve resolutions. Both church councils and secular courts and parliaments became, in part, arenas for taking decisions and, in part, fora where the contestation of ideas had a fundamental place in fashioning larger communities of understanding that applied to the governance of human affairs, both secular and ecclesiastical. A few could no longer exercise a monopoly of the instruments of coercion to rule by fear alone.

No single structure was able to come to dominance in the centuries that followed the ecclesiastical reform measures advanced by Gregory VII. Contestations about ideas were often repressed by the coercion of arms, but contestation was never effectively eliminated. Efforts to assert orthodoxies always found challengers. The cruelty of efforts to stamp out heresies never succeeded in creating a reign of fear that effectively ruled out contestation over ideas except in confined territorial domains and limited periods in European history.

The blossoming of a new era in Western civilization in the sixteenth century had been nurtured by a half of a millenium of disputation in the realm of ideas. Ideas from diverse sources were used to inform human actions that thrust out in many diverse directions. Law had been and continued to be the subject of systematic disputation and inquiry in both the ecclesiastical and secular realms. The institutions of human governance in both the secular and ecclesiastic realms were subject to disputation and experimentation in the fashioning of both religious and secular orders. Principles of lordship and of comradeship were applied in both secular and the ecclesiastical realms. Free cities and principalities existed within the loose confederation called the Holy Roman Empire where the emperor was elected by secular and ecclesiastical princes and crowned in the free city of Frankfurt. Monastic communities organized on principles of comradeship existed within the hierarchy of the Roman church. A monk, named Martin Luther, in turn led a Protestant reformation which yielded further disputations in the realm of ideas and experiments in ecclesiastical governance where some churches become confederations of self-governing congregations.

Disputations in the realm of ideas, deliberations in the realm of collective choices, and experimentations in the realm of actions engendered by the blossoming of European civilization have created difficulties even for those who have been a part of that experience to construe its meanings. Most have been preoccupied with popes and kings, with principalities and empires. Some have focused upon

patterns of enterprise, communal organization, and local governance in the lives of people. The place of ideas and the orderings of actions into ways of life that characterize European society has gone beyond the bounds of easy human understanding.

By the midpoint of the twentieth century, the European efforts to conquer and control peoples of the world had collapsed. The methods of disputation and contestation in the realm of ideas had been turned against the imperial pretensions of European powers. At this juncture in human history, there remain fundamental questions of whether ideas are to serve primarily as instruments of warfare or whether it is possible to fashion contestations in the realms of ideas, choices, and actions which might stimulate processes of inquiry to enable human beings to come to a deeper understanding of the terms on which alternatives are available for the constitution of ways of life in human societies.

Such efforts will be plagued by great difficulties. It is not enough, for example, to profess beliefs in ideas that are conceptualized as either "capitalism" or "socialism." Instead, the ideas or conceptualizations inherent in what can be characterized as "capitalism" and "socialism" need to be explored and understood in relation to basic underlying characteristics that apply to all human societies. We can conjecture that such underlying characteristics, as are common to all societies, occur and reoccur in ways so as to build extraordinarily complex configurations of relationships.

Beyond crusading for "capitalism" or for "socialism," there is still another task to be pursued in attempting to understand how conceptualizations inherent in both "capitalism" and "socialism" yield consequences that are to be understood in light of characteristics which human beings share in all societies. That which is common to all societies is universal across all societies. As we understand that which is common to all societies, we can have reference to commensurabilities that enable us to compare incommensurabilities. We have the prospects of learning both from the successes and failures on the part of those who profess "capitalism" or "socialism" as the basis for organizing ways of life in human societies. There is much that is counterintuitive and counterintentional about all patterns of relationships in human societies. The method of critical dialogue in a civilization grounded upon discussion, deliberation, and experimentation requires that people move beyond mere words and attempt to penetrate the structure of meaning that serves as a ground for understanding words in the fuller context of human experiences. These experiences, in turn, will be grounded in presuppositions that reach beyond the tangible world of practical experience into the ways that human beings experience themselves as life, intelligibility, and spirituality. Words can be used as a key to understanding, but the quest for human understanding must always go beyond mere words.

When we dismiss others without listening to what they have to say and fail to respond with queries and contentions that would lead to deeper levels of understanding, we breach, in the realm of discussion, the basic precept that one do unto others as you would have them do

onto you. Adhering to that precept in the contestation of ideas opens possibilities of moving beyond human cultures as they exist to an appreciation of opportunities that may arise — from an exploration of what is to considerations of what might be. It is such a course of inquiry that might enable human beings to develop a critical awareness about the traps that plague liberation movements and enable human beings to participate in liberation movements that are appreciative of the opportunities afforded by cultural and social diversity for further inquiries about the nature and constitution of order in human societies.

If we begin to explore and become "conscious of the value of African cultures in the framework of a universal civilization" (Cabral: 52) and do so in relation to other cultures including American, Asian, and European cultures, we become aware of vast potentials for human development so long as we explore these possibilities as yielding a great variety of ideas and experiments that have potentials for human liberation. If people are to take advantage of such ideas they can do so only in relation to their own understanding of those possibilities. We must always begin by "returning to the source," wherever we may be. Human languages provide us with keys that can take us beyond mere words and come to deeper, tacit understandings of the meanings of conceptualizations that are constitutive of ways of life in human societies.

There are requirements of organization that always pose a threat to freedom and those requirements may become traps that plague all efforts to achieve human liberation. Human societies can be put together in many different configurations of organizational arrangements. For analytical purposes, they can be composed and decomposed in many different ways. For practical purposes, various combinations of human communication, exchange, and teamwork can be organized with reference to diverse media of language, law, and symbolic forms, such as money, to advance human understanding, productivity, and cultural development. We have hardly begun to clarify the range of possibilities.

In the course of doing so, we shall come to understand how it is possible for human societies to become self-governing in interdependent communities of relationships that provide alternatives to independence, sovereignty, and struggles for dominance. When we understand how principles of association among comrades or companions can be used with methods of discussion and a due process of deliberation to fashion configurations of self-governing communities, we create potentials for self-governing societies which can exist without having states ruling over societies.

The essential foundations for fashioning such structures have existed since the beginning of human history and are inherent in concepts of covenant and association (Genossenschaft). When we come to appreciate the liberating potential of contestation in the realms of ideas, deliberation in the realms of collective choices, and of experimentation in the realms of actions, we can begin to appreciate the potentials for civilization in the age of discussion. But that way

is plagued by potential errors that will ensnare those who presume that they are lords and masters over the realms of ideas, choices, and actions. The quest for understanding and liberation never ends. This is both the burden and the challenge that always confronts homo sapiens, the thinking one. So, we need to carry on in the steps of Cabral and Todorov by using languages as keys to understanding conceptions derived from diverse cultural traditions to achieve liberation in a civilization that facilitates contestation in the realms of ideas, deliberation in the realms of choices, experimentation in the realms of actions, and continued inquiry about commensurabilities and incommensurabilities among human beings and human institutions.