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## Chapter Thirteen

# Addressing the Grand Omission: A Brief Explanation of the Pragmatics of Intercultural Communication in Terms of Spiritual Systems— A Taxonomic Approach

Eric M. Kramer

### Introduction

While a post-theistic world would be identical to a post-colonial world for colonialism involves the imposition of what is real, doable, valuable, imaginable, and who should judge, I have argued elsewhere that we are far from living in either and so this chapter is justified (Kramer, 2003). This chapter presents two themes. First I postulate that spirituality in all three modalities that are covered in greater detail later, including magic animism, mythic pantheism and oral storytelling, and perspectival institutional religion, constitute different manifestations of a single behavioral pendulum that the expert on primate behavior Desmond Morris (1996) describes. It swings between the instinctual urge to cooperate and instinctual aggression and manifests as a dissonance between the desire for belonging and the drive for personal status as exceptional, even supernatural. Second there is a short introduction to the theory of dimensional accrual and dissociation or DAD theory (Kramer, 1992, 1997a, 2011; Kramer & Ikeda, 1998).

Briefly here, the first issue concerning the desire to cooperate and also to aggress/compete and to be exceptional helps me to offer an explanation for two closely related and overlapping questions; why is religion often the catalyst for violence and how does religious zeal lead to an eagerness to submit and seek approval even to the point of self-destruction on one hand, and to rise to pharaonic supernatural status on the other? Historical data show that quite often the behavioral pendulum swings to extremes engendering on one hand hordes exhibiting mass submission and obedience marked by riotous emotion or equally fervent devotion, supplicating, kowtowing, kneeling, begging, bowing, prostrating in what Morris calls an irrational "tidal-wave of

enthusiasm" (Morris, 1996, p. 53). And associated with this behavior hypertrophic individualism characterized by unhealthy narcissism exhibited by charismatic "super-leaders, exercising powers that make the old monkey tyrants look positively benign...giving rise to the super-subordinate in the form of [subhuman] slaves" ruled by living gods (Morris, 1996, p. 22). This huge status gap manifests as various forms of cults of personality that exist all over the world, all of which share a common discourse of infallible absolutism, and therefore mutually excluding paths to salvation reinforced literally by opposing armies of sincere followers ready to kill and sacrifice all for the cause.

As we shall see later in the discussion about dimensional accrual and dissociation, as dissociation increases, mutual exclusivity increases. As pre-spatial animism gives way to nascent spatial pantheism, which gives way to spatial monotheism, holism gives way to polarities such as the intermingling yin and yang, which finally separates completely into modern dualism. Intolerance increases until monotheism manifests the ultimate expression of a single acceptable path to salvation. Fragmenting spatial thinking spawns precision and as precision increases tolerances are eliminated in all modes of expression from art and logic to religion and science. Definition increases resolution and resoluteness enhancing differences. As nebulously ill-defined animism gives way to more defined formal gods of oral traditions, and finally to a single written truth, tolerance approaches zero.

Written religions impose highly resolved "clear" and permanent laws with profound political, sociological and psychological consequences. Deviations and differences become increasingly clarified, illuminated, purified, resolved, resolute, and valued as either definitively virtuous or categorically sinful. With fragmentation, precision increases. For instance, the more teeth a gear has or the more numbers on a clock face, the greater the precision of movement. While animism is defuse through all being, and myth is more spatial and ambiguous, monotheistic law is literally enumerated and precise. With increased fragmentation, precision increases, tolerance decreases and rationalization (ratio) becomes increasingly dominant. As we move from one-dimensional magic holism to mythic polarity to modern perspectival duality resolution is sharpened. Finally, there is no middle ground, no neutral way, and any change in doctrine becomes a schism, a cut: a crisis. In three-dimensional perspectivism, two-dimensional mythic pantheism logically consolidates into monotheism, and either you are with god or against it; there shall be no Other tolerated.

Magic unity gives way to mythic polarity, which is expressed as literal and figural readings living together. As spatial awareness continues to emerge as such, mythic polarity gives way to exclusive doctrine (fundamental literalism). As the rebirth of neo-Aristotelian discourse transitioned to structural scholasticism with Peter Lombard and Peter Abelard via Duns Scotus to the logical proofs of Aquinas it emerged finally as a distinction between natural versus supernatural, moral versus legal statuses. Either/orism was born as a fundamental metaphysical principle (Kramer, 1997a). The fragmenting push toward low-tolerant precision in thinking culminated in the proto-scientific discourse of William of Ockham who articulated positivity whereby only one answer is valued.

Clearly, there can be no leaders without followers and semiotic symbolism creates an audience by presenting effigies, holy relics, sacred places, architecture and the like to elicit and focus attention and emotion on a common visage, dance, ritual, or incantatory chant. Simply put, the more massive and obedient the following, the greater the power of the leader. As community massifies into urban imperialistic society, individualism increases. When the visions of competing leaders clash their respective in-groups, whose identities are dependent on those ideologies; on not being the Other, also clash. The leader's will is manifestly expressed through mass movement. The more sacred the ideology the more intransigent the struggle for which group will dominate. Because the ideologies present themselves as eternally infallible, negotiation is tantamount to unfaithful, perfidious sin. God's word is sacrosanct. Nothing can change. We see such intransigence in Jerusalem over the status of the piece of ground where the Dome of *the* Rock and the Jewish Temple sit. Here is the origin of "traditional enemies" that drive individuals who don't even know each other to hate each other from birth and to kill with fanatical impunity. The rule, "thou shall not kill" is not just suspended in the case of the evil Other, but killing the Other becomes a pious duty for the sincere and heroic defender of the faith. The received truth is always already conclusive and incontestable.

Sacred and semi-sacred identity is rooted in the major binding phenomena; language, ethnicity, and, of course, religion. To compromise is to defy the eternal nature of the sacred. This is why humanistic pragmatists are often attacked for holding nothing sacred, for being willing to negotiate. The sacred, by definition, is irreplaceable and nonnegotiable.

Religion is essentially opposed to humanism because it puts a god's wishes and needs before human needs and wishes. All privations and suffer-

ings, including, as we see in the Biblical story of Abraham, human sacrifice, is justified in obedience to and in defense of god. According to a religious perspective, what is good or bad for humanity is merely contingent and as such should properly be subjugated to the will of transcendental beings. Human needs are inconsequential. Humanists turn the tables and say that this temporal world is the real world and that the gods should be sacrificed for human progress. For this reason many humanists find religion to be one of the greatest threats to human needs and dignity.

A perfect contemporary example of subsuming human needs to religious doctrine and personal ambition is articulated in Mother Teresa's famous claim that the suffering of the dying in Calcutta is "very beautiful," and why, therefore, she diverted the millions of dollars donated to her in the name of India's destitute and dying away from those dying people to instead purchase real-estate around the globe to house nuns for her new order, not even bothering to purchase basic medicines that could have saved some who came to her for help or painkillers for those in the throes of the final painful stages of cancer (Hitchens, 1997, 2007). The Indian government requires all aid agencies to disclose their budgets but Teresa kept her financial dealings off-shore so that her operation never disclosed its finances and remains a mystery to this day. Many who initially volunteered to help at her "homes" in Calcutta left in total dismay at the complete refusal of Teresa to offer even rudimentary medical treatment to those who had come for help instead of reveling in and gazing at their "grace-filled" suffering as some sort of proof of god's existence scorned her typical colonial "great white hope" arrogance (Chatterjee, 2002; Alpion, 2006). She was a tourist of Indian suffering while also campaigning endlessly against any and all family planning in India. She did almost nothing materially to alleviate suffering while using it to solicit massive donations from around the world and to promote Catholicism for which the church rewarded her with fast-track sainthood. The Pope changed the traditional rules for canonization for her from two miracles to just one, and the one they counted as authentic has serious doubters including the husband of the woman in India who claimed to have been cured of cancer by a medal medallion bearing the likeness of Mother Teresa and the doctors who treated her tumor at Balurghat Hospital in West Bengal (Owen, *The Times of London*, Thursday October 10, 2002).

Finally there is the question of why religion? As stated, I think it is one manifestation of dominance display and is rooted in our animal natures. Religion allows for culturally appropriate status hierarchy but unfortunately the

dominance struggle often spins out of control to absolute proportions when people think everything is at stake, and violence ensues. This happens within religions as the problem of intragroup diversity. Within the community there arises a felt need to purge the group of deviant interpretations of doctrine. Questions of internal consistency and validity manifest as sectarian conflict. It happens between cultural specific groups as problems of external validity manifested as holy wars between differing religions.

Furthermore, it is a logical necessity that in order to be a salvific hero, there must be a threat, a person or group in need of salvation. If there is no suffering or threat of eternal damnation due to human sin, then there would be no justification or perceived need for a messianic ego, the religious hero. And when the threat is transcendently atemporal, supernatural, then the redeemer must have supernatural qualities and powers. The greatest gap in social status is between the natural and the supernatural. They manifest totally different domains; one temporal and one eternal with the eternal absolute subsuming the temporally contingent rendering it invalid. This temporal world is ignorance, and delusion. Time is the sources of relativism, of all error. The flesh is the contingent prison of the eternal soul. In such a world, the body is evil and the soul is good. The body is not real but the soul is (Kramer, 2004).

Western culture can be seen as going through convulsions at the metaphysical level effecting every manner of discourse, institution, and production, where, for the Greco-Romans the temporal world was real and the body was celebrated, and then after a convulsion the reign of religious power saw the rise of widespread ascetic self-hate and torture of the body, and then the rebirth and rehabilitation of materialism and a shift in careful and caring attention back to this world and these bodies (Kramer, 2004). Every time the emphasis is on this world we see intensified interest in space, its exploration, mapping, and colonization, and interest in the discrete (resolved) individuated bodies in space, their measurement and description of their motions and interactions. Clarity and light are the metaphors for spatial acuity and resoluteness in positivity. In spatial modernity, which has dominated twice in Occidental history, we see an upsurge in critical dialectical thinking where individuals take opposing, discrete *positions* and debate the merits of ideologies. In a spatial world, where even time is spatialized as extension, as a line, things are mutable. In the modern perspectival world, geographic, economic, and social mobility are evident, and change, experimentation, and revolutions abound. Even one's sex can be changed. Individual preference

gains influence and is seen as positive and progressive. Changing one's religion is commonplace in the modern world.

By contrast, in an atemporal world of eternal truths progress is impossible, for the idea of progress presumes deviation from the past and in a world of sacred eternal truths deviants are not merely inconvenient, they are often perceived as malevolent. In a world of law, contingency; time is criminal—it must be arrested (Kramer, 1997). Being different in a community premised upon sacred eternal truths is very dangerous. By contrast, Modernity is marked by constant churning and anxiety/freedom for nothing is certain or sacred. Both opportunity and risk abound. Social status is mutable and a person's personal status is somewhat dependent on their individual choices. As we shall see later, the very possibility of the idea of personal choice impacts religious doctrine as it does all institutions from politics to economics.

Messianic religions thrive where suffering is greatest, where people most wish for a redeemer. The humanistic goal of relieving suffering and easing irrational fear, therefore, alleviates the need for religion. Today two paths to attack suffering exist; the supernatural miraculous path of redemption offered by religion (praying for mercy), and the natural path of science (trying to solve the problem without the aid of supernatural forces). These two modes of solution are rivals. If people care about mortal human suffering and one way of elevating suffering clearly works better than the other, then one way of attacking the problem of suffering will prevail over the other making the latter irrelevant (Ockham's razor).

Having a choice, a real choice between alternative metaphysical approaches, the natural and the supernatural, opens the door to clear comparisons of practical veracity (validity and reliability of solutions). A person with appendicitis can choose to pray for miraculous healing or go to a hospital and have the burst appendix removed. Such head-to-head competition and choice has been unsettling for religion. As the Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg (2010; 2003) has noted, efforts to introduce science into universities in the Middle East have largely failed even as they are receptive to technology because the leaders there rightly perceive science as a real threat to their power, as a real and more effective alternative solution to human suffering than faith in supernatural beings.

I also want to recognize two other important reasons why religion exists other than innate dominance struggle. One is an attempt to cope with the fear of everlasting death, which Ernst Becker (1975) calls the death defying delusion which religion offers. The seduction, the attraction of such a delusion is

understandable. Imagine denying the immaterial and eternal nature of the "soul" to a child who has just lost a parent. Such a conversation would offer far less solace than the delusion that "your mother's soul is eternal, and by the way, so is yours and you will meet again in the afterlife." Aristotle is only partly correct when he says that the human is the rational animal. It is also the most emotional animal and ideologies and rituals are created to offer socially acceptable ways to enhance, express, and channel emotions.

Another reason religion exists is the human desire for justice. The moral philosopher Colin McGinn (1993) reiterates Friedrich Nietzsche's (1887 Ger./1967 Eng.) point that we are only truly moral when we do the right thing because it is intrinsically the right thing to do, not because we are selfishly seeking reward from a supernatural being or to avoid punishment from the same being. For this reason McGinn, like Nietzsche, finds religion to be essentially immoral. And like others, such as Bertrand Russell and Christopher Hitchens, McGinn calls himself not an atheist but an "anti-theist" (2004). True morality does not need a god, a being from outside of this world to validate choices made by those of us who inhabit this world. In fact true morality needs one to not presume a god so that the intrinsic nature of good and evil behavior can manifest. Only when we make choices without external coercion are we doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Only then are we being moral. So long as we expect justice to be dispensed in the afterlife, we are lax in pursuing it here and now. McGinn (2004) suggests that people are religious because they dream of, hope for justice; that the wicked will be punished and the virtuous rewarded. As the world appears to be utterly lacking in delivering justice we pray that some being outside this world will deliver it for us. McGinn considers this dream a delusion but an understandable one just, as it is understandable to be frightened of death.

And then there is the problem of evil, which makes the most devout theist uncomfortable because it argues that god gave us freedom (an oxymoron) in order to continually test our faith. This is done by god creating a world filled with obstacles or tests, such as the death of countless totally innocent people in a giant tsunami or a child getting a horrible disease just to see how we will respond. Such tests themselves would never pass the moral scrutiny of institutional review boards on college campuses that evaluate human and animal experimentation because they are utterly immoral. And the relationship is not reciprocal. We are warned not to test god's claims to power by demanding proof of miracles or demonstrations of miraculous power.

Having acknowledged Becker's and McGinn's reasons for religion I now turn to my own thesis which does not deny the validity of their explanations but suggest another piece to the puzzle; the instinctual dominance struggle. Part of the appeal of spiritual obedience is the conviction that one is submitting to a sacred and timeless cause or immortal leader for whom sacrifice is also sacred. Surrender, submission and obedience are forms of assuming an identity that is approved of by god. It is a mistake to say that obedience is the loss of identity for that is impossible. From the Modernist's perspective, one's dignity as a rational and independent minded thinker is surrendered because faith, by definition, is blind meaning lacking in independent inquiry and verification. Faith means to accept claims without thinking, without evidence or reasons. For the Modernist, "critical thinking" is a redundant phrase. While doubt is unavoidable and often gives religious apologists opportunities to reinforce faith, critical testing and curiosity are officially identified as forms of sin.

This ideological complex that encourages obedience from followers also encourages narcissism manifested as the messianic hero, or superman complex—unwavering defender of god and country. It typically manifests in young males and may be rooted in hormones and instinct. Hegel's (1807 Ger./1977 Eng.) master/slave dichotomy is an example of a scholar trying to articulate this fundamental struggle for status essential to territoriality and reproduction, but which can become deficient, or self-destructive. The human species, unlike nearly all others, tends to take the dominance struggle to deficient ends with homicidal consequences on a massive scale. A curious paradox emerges here. Wishing to be recognized for exceptional obedience, for obedience is the measure of faith and trust, some take the lead in extreme forms of self-denial and even suicidal behavior (martyrdom). This is what I call the ascetic complex or paradox.

The idea that extremism in the expression of devotion is no vice, leads some with strong psychological traits to pursue utter self-denial in order to be someone—someone special, exceptional, a superhero. Religion, with its structure of extreme submission/dominance, creates a peculiar complex where those who wish to achieve the greatest stature within the community seek to do so by demonstrating the most self-hate and self-denial to the point of turning themselves into a tool for the cause, a martyr. We are faced then with the peculiar contradiction that to achieve everlasting life, one should kill oneself or at least be willing to sacrifice oneself.

Nietzsche (1887 Ger./1967 Eng.) hints at this absurdity in a different way when he reflects on the paradoxical doctrine of life after death and the bad conscience of guilt for simply existing and expressing personal interests, desires: will. Surrender, the doctrine that encourages total submission into the mass, and which defines pride, vanity, sex, life as a sin, is the demand of all religious obedience. It demeans personal curiosity and will. Religion constitutes an exceptionally powerful and evolved form of groupthink including armies of mind guards (Janis, 1972). Under such conditions articulated in the typical, if not universal religious doctrine, the self is a shame, a disease; the contingent self is invalid, limited, biased, and so access to the truth can come only through the elimination, the extermination of the self. And so the embodied incarnate self, the body that is I, with all its urges and limitations, must be attacked as the realm of evil. This is the source of asceticism and its relationship to truth.

My body, me; I am the source of all sin and error. Therefore, we have the absurdity of the epistemology of empiricism, which dictates that all knowledge can come only from direct observation but all direct observation is personal—I can only see through my eyes, think with my brain, with my education, in my language, during my historical moment. And these sources are contingent. My eyesight is fading, my cognitive powers weaken with age, and so forth. No wonder Bacon, the canonizer of the scientific method, condemned the inevitable contingencies of knowledge as evil "idols" (Bacon, 1620, 2008).

It may well be that this urge to be the lowest of the low, to deny the self more than any other in the mass of self-deniers in the service to an absolute principle, infallible truth, eternal cause, is the basis of the self-erasure of the self in the doctrine of transcendental objectivity.

Much of spiritual pageantry and dramatism is dominance display. In the process of continual dimensional accrual and ego-emergence via increasing spatial awareness there can be only one: one all-powerful I against which the mass is judged in terms of obedience to its will. So long as even just two deities exist, there is conflict: this constitutes a projection of human ego hypertrophy, dominance struggle on a cosmic level. One must "pick sides." Sides evince spatial thinking, which enables atomization, objectification via dualisms such as subject versus object, and conflict. With objectification of the subaltern Other by the gaze of the master, we have the peculiar absurdity of evaluation without judgment, a disinterested regard, an objective mode of evaluation according to universal law -- fatalism. The gaze creates the Other

by apprehension and comprehension both of which are forms of judgment. The temporal Other becomes the sub-ject, the sub-altern, the sub-ordinate, defined as mortal sinner by the transcendental objective eternal mind. This is the definition of a transcendental god and it is a reflection of the status struggle as it is manifested in absolute ego-centrism.

Flux, time, is thus cast as evil and error. The world of time is the carnal world of the flesh, which is weak, ages and decays (Kramer, 2004). Time is regarded as evil, the source of relativism vis-à-vis permanent law and order—the original first cause. Thus, insofar as scholars such as Edmund Husserl (1917 Ger./2008 Eng.) equate human consciousness with time, human awareness is the source of error and evil. Absolute first cause thus takes on the power of timeless initiation, which reduces all followers to deterministic effects via predetermination. The follower fights for “the cause.” Knowing “the cause” is to know the truth of all things. Thus transcendental religion and science seek the predeterminations of human identity and behavior via regional ontologies so that sociology sees human behavior reducible to social preconditions and psychology sees behavior predetermined by psychological traits, and we have economic, technological, linguistic, and other forms of determinism in our search for the answer to “why” this and not that behavior or belief. In a spatialized world that regards reality as a timeline with a cause/effect mechanistic teleology, explanation is equated with understanding. Both explanation and understanding are reduced to being able to trace all future states from prior cause.<sup>1</sup> To understand our current conditions we must understand “how we got here,” a spatialization of temporal difference that proves that such thinking is mythic and finally modern perspectival.

In magic cultures prior to disintegration resulting from dimensional accrual, power is total—before the separation of the sacred from the secular domains, and spirit, manna, chi... is dispersed through all people and things. But as dimensions accrue and space emerges as a separate dimension that

<sup>1</sup> Talk of calculating probabilities does not eliminate this cause/effect mechanics, a picture of the universe that reflects the rise of mechanical clockworks invented in the 1200s. First, probabilities make sense insofar as one assumes the absolutes at each end of the measure; zero and one, which express absolutely no chance of causation and causal linkage. Second, the mathematical logic used to derive probabilities is not itself regarded as merely probably consistent.

functions to atomize all things with itself (space in between them), power becomes increasingly focused and localized. As dimensions accrue the spiritual field shrinks and solidifies. Spirit recedes and coalesces in form. As dimensions accrue we see an emptying-out of the world as magic animism evaporates, retreats into a pantheon of gods that take form, resolve as distinct beings that typically inhabit particular places such as distant sacred mountaintops. As dimensions accrue and dissociation increases, spirit becomes spatialized.

As dissociation and dimensional accrual continues, we observe pantheons receding, coalescing, and consolidating into single all-powerful gods that become utterly distant, existing on different “planes of being.” They are everywhere and nowhere (the absent watchmaker), an entity/concept that is a reflection of the emergent ego that has plans for everything and ultimate power of judgment/punishment. As dimensions accrue care evaporates from the cosmos. As we move from animism to pantheism to monotheism to atheism we see a correlative shrinking of association and identity from “the people,” to the tribe, to the clan, to the extended family, down to the nuclear family and finally down to the socially isolated atom, the Modern individual. We also see other major shifts such as quantification and measurement emerge as the dominant atomizing metaphysic. Meaning becomes de-meant as irrational delusion.

Before the atomization of the world via emergent spatial thinking, before the bifurcation of domains such as sacred and secular, leaders are living gods. I say “are” for at this writing, and despite the spreading tide of modernization/westernization, the world continues to exhibit much magic and mythic modes of awareness, including in Western regions and power centers. Power is inextricably entangled with desire and unequal distribution of resources. It is not uncommon for spiritual leaders (whether regarded as a vulgar cult leader or one holding high status in a sacred institution) to take several sexual partners from “the flock” and to encourage others of the flock to devotion and to be willing to sacrifice and subjugate the self for the greater truth.

### **The Case of Pat Tillman**

Three of the most celebrated forms of aggression in the modern U.S.; football, the military, and religious nationalism come together perfectly in the image of Pat Tillman (Rand, 2004). He is a good example of this hero com-

plex as he could not be satisfied with being an athletic hero on the football field so he left the National Football League for a higher calling, namely to defend America by attacking would-be Muslim terrorists on the battlefield in Afghanistan, a role his parents prepared him for. But then reality set in and the Tillmans discovered that they were playing on a much bigger field and that high ranking officials of the U.S. government were very willing to exploit their son's death using it for the propagation of sacred nationalistic and religious martyrdom (Krakauer, 2010; Tillman with Zacchino, 2008).

Tillman himself exhibited a hero complex throughout his life seeking out higher causes to which he could rush to sacrifice his body. His decision to join the military had serious consequences. He died as a sacred martyr to a cause (nationalism with overtones of religious devotion, a cause his Commander and Chief President George W. Bush described as a sacred crusade) in Afghanistan. The three binding phenomena, ethnicity, language, and religion were part of the overall discourse justifying aggression. Tillman was the visage of aggression. Tillman's story and image were heavily manipulated, sponsored and disseminated by the U.S. government. He was part of what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988), borrowing from Walter Lippmann (1922, 1997), call the manufacturing of consent via propaganda. But I would add that it was not merely consent but the manufacturing of enthusiastic support.

Tillman's ideology and life had been molded to fit the needs of a grand cause—whichever one happened along, and on September 11, 2001, a great one offered itself. Each generation, ironically, has its timeless sacred cause for which to fight and sacrifice and this was Tillman's opportunity to grab elevated status by means of service (a peculiar paradox of religious devotion and slave morality). The more self-effacing one is, the lower one is, and as such, the better or higher one is. The opportunity to avenge the 9/11 attack made sacrifice and glory on the football field seem insignificant. And meaning and significance in magic and mythic senses were what Tillman craved above all else. He was the perfect image to be celebrated, the best of our culture and his generation, literally the poster boy for patriotic duty, defender of the faith, and personal strength and dominance, a complex and status his parents inculcated in him and proudly encouraged. He was to be the role model and inspiration for nationalistic duty and sacrifice.

As is fundamental to emotional magic iconography, such iconic imagery propagates and promotes both the cult of the charismatic personality and the cause with which it is identified. Re-presentational "realism" as a metaphysic

and genre of fiction appears only with spatial thinking in the modern three-dimensional mode of perceiving, which, as noted earlier has dominated in the Occident twice; first during the Greco-Roman era and again with its rebirth beginning around 1200. By contrast, in the magic world they, the image and the thing depicted, are identical, and there is much one-dimensional magic at work in the visage of Tillman's grim but handsome portrait that the U.S. government disseminated. Tillman became "the picture" of resolute warriorism. Such an idolic visage Tillman's image says you can be me. His "chiseled good looks" and "game face" seriousness, if not threatening, (certainly no jovial smile) in Ranger beret is a co-constitutional sanctification from which mutual benefit is rendered. As a recruiting tool and a talisman promoting the war, Tillman was heralded and authenticated as a true hero. Simultaneously the cause for which he fought became more legitimate by virtue of his high profile sacrifices, first for giving up a lucrative salary in the National Football League and then for giving up his life. He became a legend everyone embraced including his parents.

But then, Tillman's parents began to rebel against the rhetorical use of their son's image as superman after it became apparent that his fratricidal death by friendly fire no longer served the glorious sacrifice narrative. Instead, the terrible alternative, that he was "wasted," that his death served no higher purpose or cause, presented itself with horrific connotations. Things began to unravel only after the cause of his death was determined to be not so glorious and that he had doubts about the nobility of the cause; two facts his superiors covered up in order to keep the propaganda myth alive—to promote and keep the faith in a cause worthy of the "ultimate sacrifice." His superiors destroyed his personal letters and journal that contained doubts about the war he had so famously, legendarily volunteered for.

As the living discourse evolved, others parasitically sought out the magic of halo effect by seeking to be identified with the hero. A particularly vulgar example was the vainglorious speech given by Jim Rome, at a memorial for Tillman. When Rome, a talk radio sports pundit for ESPN told ESPN's Executive Vice President Mark Shapiro that he would be speaking at the memorial, Shapiro decided to broadcast the memorial highlighting their media property and celebrity Rome (Martzke, May 4, 2004). Stephen White, a Navy SEAL who lied about how Tillman died also gave a eulogy on the ESPN broadcasted memorial. Rome had his moment in Tillman's spotlight enthusing that he wanted his own son to grow up to be just like Tillman—to

become another Pat Tillman. In the process the cause for which Tillman became an effect was also celebrated as being worth the sacrifice.

Tillman's death was a media hit and politicians such as John McCain were quick to wiggle into the spotlight. Rome dedicated several of his national radio and television shows to Tillman's life and sacrifice telling audiences that Tillman represented the very best in American character and that anyone who disagreed with that assessment or with the policy to go to war and by implication the Bush administration whose policy it was, were unpatriotic evil people.

Of course this adoration occurred before it was revealed that those who sent him into glorious battle had betrayed Tillman. Make no mistake, martyrs are political identities and politics and other forms of aggression regularly appeal to the sacred for justification. Tillman's death, by "friendly" fire as it turned out, was concealed and his death was morphed into a sacred sacrifice and exploited not only by commercial broadcast interests but also by the U.S. government to justify its geopolitical and military policies. Tillman had become a giant, a legend, a hero, and finally a victim. Pat Tillman became a tragic double martyr.

When Pat Tillman's parents insisted on a full investigation into the circumstances of his death and full disclosure and accountability, many Americans who wanted to keep the comforting myth alive began to attack his parents. To his credit Rome aired an episode beginning with a replay of a segment of his eulogy with dramatic music in the background leading into an interview with Mary Tillman. In that interview we find the bereaved and angry mother defending her search for truth and her book about how the government covered up the circumstances of her son's death and misused his image. She came on television to help explain to "confused" Americans as to why the Tillman family would not just roll over and accept the "grotesque" use of their son as a tool for patriotic propagandizing. Many Bush supporters wished the Tillmans' would just play along. So Rome asked why government officials did such a horrible thing? Mary Tillman answered, the government launched a campaign of lies valorizing her son's death because to tell the truth would have embarrassed the Army Rangers and also because:

The Abu Ghraib Prison scandal broke the week that Pat was killed, Falujia [Iraq] was in chaos, President Bush's approval rating was very weak, and the most casualties of the war had taken place that month [April 2004]. So I think that all of those things were so embarrassing and tragic that the [Bush] administration and the mili-

tary wanted to use Pat's death to deflect public attention away from those things and to use Pat as a propaganda tool to rally support for the war in Iraq. (Tillman with Rome, Tuesday, June 2, 2008)

This demonstrates the magic identity between image and sacred cause that is still functional in the contemporary world. Only independent minded inquiry running not on faith but facts, a mind set embodied by the Tillman family, disrupts such idolic association.

### **Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation**

The thesis that religion is a form of dominance display rooted in reproductive instinct is followed here by the second thesis: There are three distinct structures of consciousness with corresponding forms of spiritual expression, which sometimes co-exist but in historical terms generally do not. This thesis accounts for the variability of religious expression as well as spiritual experience. It is also offered as an explanation for the various levels of emotional commitment we encounter in religious behavior, which addresses religiously inspired violence.

The three structures of consciousness are: 1) the one-dimensional magic idolic structure articulated via incantatory acts, ideographs, and objects; 2) the two-dimensional mythic symbolic structure that exhibits linear storytelling and a polar dissociation between the literal and the figural import of sacred acts, objects, and texts; and 3) the three-dimensional modern perspectival signalic structure that exhibits dualistic dissociation in the form of arbitrary expression that is allowing for, as we shall see, an explosion in the invention of countless new spiritual movements. As dimensions accrue, dissociation increases. Progress is not assumed, only difference. Dissociation involves increased abstraction and a decline in emotional valence or attachment. For instance, in the modern world being disinterested and emotionally neutral or detached is considered essential for rational assessment.

Overall, as dimensions accrue dissociation increases. There is no presumption of progress, for the efficacy of one structure "over" another depends on environmental context. Sometimes it is more efficacious to be emotional rather than rational. Exposing and expressing one's honest heart when confessing one's feelings is an example. Also the accrual of dimensions is manifested as a shift in modality from magic collectivism to modern individualism. Three-dimensional perspectival Modernity has happened twice in European history; first during the Greco-Roman era and again be-

ginning around 1200 A.D. There was a hiatus of about 1200 years during which Europe was predominately magic and mythic in worldview. During high-modernism the status of the sacred is diminished and consequently we see a lessening of emotional intensity and a tolerance for multiple spiritual doctrines exemplified by a proliferation of faiths side-by-side. Hence, we had the original intent for the Roman Pantheon, which was later rededicated to a single exclusive religious faith signaling a less tolerant more sacred/emotional attitude. Going the opposite direction, in parts of today's world where three-dimensional modernity is gaining ground, the old mutually exclusive organized religions are facing a rising tide of individual preferences in spiritual experience and manifest expression. Some such as Frank Foster call this post-theism as compared with atheism for the very notion of theism becomes so de-meant (insignificant) that it fades from conversation altogether (Dorrien, 2003). To be post-theist is also to be post-atheist. For a post-theist integral person it no longer makes sense to even bother to choose sides in the modernist theist/atheist dichotomy. The whole debate is senseless. But very few exhibit an integral mode of being.

The word "magic" shares the same Indo-European root with "might," "make," "mechanism," "machine," and so forth. One must recall that the word machine originally denoted a massive weapon of war that would enable invaders to breach city walls. Magic was the first systematic expression of the human extricating itself from the rest of the cosmic whole, turning back upon it and seeking to control aspects of it such as fertility, illness, and death. It is an effort to change the world, to exert power. In more abstract but no less ambitious a vector, mytho-religious systems also seek to establish an order and control people. As dissociation increases so too does fragmentation. The first great "crack in the cosmic egg" is between nature and culture when the two come into existence as distinct from each other.

Also from origin, magic and mytho-religious systems have provided norms, mores, and laws for governing everything from how to hunt to reproductive behavior, to clothing and food preparation, proper domicile construction and habitation, health practices, et cetera. Magic and mytho-religious rules and sanctions form the essence of community and culture. Additionally Hall (1966/1982) described the domestication of aggression and open hostility as a form of "servo-mechanism" that can fail (p. 5). In communication terms we exhibit signs that foreshadow a movement of building annoyance and agitation due to perceived transgressions until we reach a tipping point of overt hostility. Failure to read or heed those signs leads to conflict. Hor-

rendous violence has been perpetrated time and again in history by charismatic leaders espousing supernatural powers and messianic intentions (Becker, 1975; Lifton, 2000). Violations that justify symbolic and material violence presuppose rules that, under proto-perspectivism, become dissociated, objectified, written law.

As dissociation increases with the accrual of dimensions of awareness, rules are increasingly regarded as arbitrary. This is very disturbing to conservative collectivistic groups. Arbitration over rules and laws require the basic freedoms individualism presumes such as freedom of association and dialectical speech (including the cross-examination of claims). As individualism increases, people gradually concretize space in visual terms and comportment expressed in talk by phrases such as "I resolve that" Taking a position, defending a clear perspective, characterizes individualism. As rules and laws become less transcendental and sacred and more arbitrary and available for critical examination, politics emerges as the mode of interaction concerned with the contingent establishment of rules and laws as social constructions.

Forensic and deliberate forms of talk are largely absent from the one-dimensional magic world. Disputation in such a conservative world is regarded as painfully disharmonic. But dialectical forms of interaction are hallmarks of the three-dimensional perspectival *Weltanschauung*, even regarded as the primary method of rendering knowledge, which is very much at odds with infallible, meaning unquestionable, supernatural revelation—pharaonic rule whereby living gods walk among us and their every word is a divine edict—the essence of dictation and self-legitimizing, self-evident dictatorial power.

### Three Modes of Spirituality

There are three major forms of religious experience that can be explained and understood according to the theory of dimensional accrual and dissociation (Kramer, 1997a; Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). They are: The *proligiō* magic form that corresponds to the egoless spaceless and timeless tribal world, the *religiō* mythic form that corresponds to the "we" oriented world that stresses parental authority and ancestor worship (father/son; mother/daughter imperatives). Finally we have the sectarian and dogmatic modern form that is highly

spatial often restricting the sacred to specific structures and even rooms within structures or “houses of worship.”<sup>2</sup>

Magic animism is characterized by no spatial valence and no temporal valence. Magic has no history. A magic curse is effective no matter distance or time. In the magic world, there are no myths including myths of origin or final end. Time does not exist. By contrast time is cyclical in the mythic world and linear in the modern perspectival world. Indeed the term “secular” means temporal. The duality of sacred versus secular does not exist in the magic world. Magic systems, which include incantations and rituals, are not teleological. In animism, everything is spiritual. Magic is characterized by hierophany. The Greek roots are (*hieros*), which means “sacred” and (*phainein*) meaning, “to bring to light” or “manifest.” Spirit is more appropriate than sacred as spirit preexists the mythic polarity of sacred and profane that marks dissociation from the original field of being. Hierophany means a manifestation of spirit. By contrast, as we move from animism to the mytho-religious *Weltanschauung* and expression, hierophany gives way to a more restricted sense of theophany, the appearance of a deity. Animism has no deities. Rather everything is spiritual. Unlike omnipresent animistic “spirits,” Titanic forces are restricted to domains and gods often even have shapes and reside in localized places. Spatial awareness intensifies as dimensions accrue.

As we move from one-dimensional magic animism and idolic expression to two-dimensional myth and symbolic expression and finally to three-dimensional mental-rationality and signalic expression space increasingly emerges as a thing-in-itself. Intensifying spatial perception enables fragmentation and dissociative objectification. The object perceived and the subject perceiver emerge simultaneously. Individualism as perspectivism is born. Concurrently, the aspatial spiritual field shrinks. In most cultures, the spiritual coalesces into a finite number of discrete gods that become localizable in distant places such as mountaintops or deep caverns—places other than domestic space here and now. The spiritual vacates many places leaving empty spaces. As dimensional accrual continues, the pantheon shrinks to a monotheistic distant or absent god and finally the quality of the universe changes, manifesting the “twilight of the idols.” Modern atheism, while disturbing to

2 The most extensive work on the distinction between the spiritual and the religious and their association is the two-volume *Ursprung und Gegenwart* by Jean Gebser, translated and published as *The Ever-Present Origin* in 1985.

some, is acceptable to many. We note a corresponding shrinking in family from all true humans down to clan, down to extended family, to nuclear family to the modern individual and finally that too suffers the fragmentation of identity and “identity crises.”

Because there is no spatial aspect in the magic world there is no nascent atomization, no difference between the sacred and profane, no subject-object duality: they do not exist as such. The polarity of the sacred and the profane, which often switch places as in the story of Lucifer, is a mythic 2-dimensional structure indicating nascent spatial awareness. By contrast, in the magic world everything is alive and aware everywhere and nowhere. The magic cosmos is finite, full and finished. Therefore, technologies that disrupt the world are muted. Care, being careful, etiquette is an aspect of all being. By contrast, in the modern three-dimensional world the universe is dead, empty, and expanding at nearly the speed of light. It displays neither sentience nor care. Because it is comprised of uniform and dead “building blocks of nature,” the universe takes on a qualitative status making it available for unrestrained manipulation. The will-to-power, indeed the “world as will” as Arthur Schopenhauer (1818 Ger./1969) put it, becomes predominant as the modern human (the Modern from here forward) commences reorganizing things at will and from an emotional distance.<sup>3</sup> For an increasing number of people, technological activity, including personal consumption becomes a central aspect of life, even the predominant measure of human “development.”

3 The German title is *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. In all editions *Vorstellung* is translated as “representation” and I prefer this rendering because Schopenhauer’ notion of idea is Kantian and Kant was a pure modernist noting the constitutive process of forming psychic epiphenomena. We know without a doubt that intoxication, brain injury, illness and other factors can change our sense of reality. Reality is a constitutive, synthetic product. All things, for Kant are fundamentally interpretations of the *ding an sich*, the thing in itself which we cannot know positively “as it is” but only through our sensory system which is perspectival in nature (biased). Since Kant and Schopenhauer, greater understanding of the linguistic manifold has further complicated the issue bringing language/culture into the synthetic process. I reject Richard E. Aquila and David Carus’ rendering of *Vorstellung* as either “presentation” or “representation” in their 2008 Longman edition of *The World as Will and Presentation*. When Schopenhauer refers to the “theater” upon which ideas play he is referencing Francis Bacon, Kant, and David Hume who recognize the limitations of perception as sometimes inaccurate re-presentations.

Modern spatial thinking is axiomatic. It is a necessary condition for the process of atomizing division and subdivision into segments, units, and sectors. Categorization comes to equal knowledge *ala* Neo-Aristotelian nomenclatures (Carolus Linnaeus' work for instance). The magic aspect of language endures in the power to name and identify in the service of perspectival rational systems. Spatial thinking erupted twice in the Occident, first among the Hellenes and again with the rebirth of their mentality around 1200 A.D. For reasons space here does not permit, I can only suggest that Aristotle is a good candidate for being the first full-blown Modern. While Socrates disrupts the oral collective, Plato begins to write but in dialogue form, and finally with Aristotle analytical form of expression consumed silently and individually becomes prosaic. Modern spatial thinking supports the notion of linear logic including the excluded middle and resolute mutual exclusivity as the law of non-contradiction, qualities that characterize modern written dogmatic religion. The great linear-spatial chain of causation marks the Modern's quest for understanding via apprehension of preconditions. For the modern, truth is not a gift from a deity, an epiphany from introspection or a miraculous revelation. Rather truth is won through dialectical contest and examination of prior causes. Truth is a consequence of methodical, step-by-step interrogation. *Anyone* familiar with the method can achieve the truth.

The magic form of *proligiō* is characterized by ritual where magic transforms reality. Either it works or it does not. There is no interpretation or extensive commentary because magic is unified idolic communication. The magic world is not characterized by polar separation between figural and literal aspects that mark the mythic world and which enable interpretation and ambivalence, a muting of emotional identification as in mythic symbolic communication. Nor is there the total dichotomization between the totally arbitrary signified and signifier as found in modern signalic expression (Saussure, 1916 Fr./1986 Eng.).

In magic idolic communication ideographs such as "hex signs" and incantatory speech has the immediate power to change reality by invocation and evocation. Their power is manifestly identical with their utterance and drawing. Evocation, which means "air," articulates the semantic aspect of aspiration and inspiration in the process of conjuring. Sympathetic magic speech and act transforms reality. This mode of expression lives on in oath taking, christenings, and sacred promises. In the magic modality, the "statue" is god. When it is present the god is present. It is not a mere mythic symbol

that ambiguously stands in for an absent god or a modern arbitrary expression of the personal style of an artist.

Compared with univalent magic identity (*pars pro toto*, *pars pro parte*, *toto pro parte* and sympathetic identification), mythic *religiō* manifests dissociation and two-dimensional am-bi-valence. While magic is done through ritual, mythic *religiō* is expressed as ceremony that is ambivalent regarding its transformative power varying in dramatic intensity. Magic is pure emotional identification. If one cries in the village, all cry. By comparison, mythic dramatism begins to structure emotion, to spatialize or contain it for appropriate times and places. Thus is born symbolic pageantry and religious theatrics. Finally, in ancient Greece we see the bifurcation of ritual into theatrical distance where one of us takes the stage and the rest of us passively watch. If we are drawn to identify with the protagonist, then the stage magic has worked. If not, then we become critical consumers of re-presentational acting. The stage is a lens accentuating the visual-spatial mode of expression that characterizes three-dimensional perspectivism. Magic identity gives way to mythic polarity, which in turn gives way to modern duality. In the modern world and dogmatic religion dichotomies proliferate. Due to the advent of dualistic metaphysics, fiction becomes sharply demarcated from reality. Modern re-presentational truth displaces the mythic consensus truth. In the modern world, one person may be correct while everyone else is wrong. Such is the origin of the modern hero in the mold of Achilles and Galileo.

For comparison, let us consider the Christian Eucharist. Some Christians believe that the Eucharist (communion) is a magical ritual by which bread and wine literally are transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ by means of ritual magic expressing supernatural power. Others see these things as symbolic figurative metaphors and yet the ceremony is semi-sacred and not entirely arbitrary. They take it "seriously" implying identification with the ceremony so that mockery, for instance, would provoke strong emotional reaction. The more magic one-to-one identification pertains, the stronger the emotional dimension.

A vital aspect of *religiō* is its foundational import for identity. Identity connotes permanence. A powerful magical aspect of utterance is the process of naming or christening. This establishment of permanent identity (until death do us part) constitutes a fundamental conservatism within religious communities. Often children are named after saints and characters from sacred writings indicating the power of association and connotative action (Austin, 1990). It becomes extreme (fundamental to meaning and identity)

when a few demand a return to purer times and practices called “orthodox.” Purification, a return to true “authentic” doctrine is the essence of conservatism even as it becomes a radical movement centering on religious or even pseudo-religious doctrines such as “pure Constitutionalists.” Such fights inevitably get down to the definition of the “real,” “genuine,” identity of “authentic” Americans or Jews or Hell’s Angels, versus fraudulent claims to membership and belonging.

Dissociation is the dwindling of associative identification. The more dissociated a person, the less emotionally involved they are. Mythic ceremony is less emotional than magic ritual but it still invokes and evokes identification. It would not do, for instance, to use a beer and a hamburger for communion, which for most Christians, would seem sacrilegious. Mythic oriented people tend to decry modernity because for Moderns “nothing is sacred.” Meanwhile Moderns denigrate mythic peoples as delusional and “superstitious.” Meaning is associated with emotional identification. As Moderns demean magic and mythic beliefs and ceremonies, they literally demean them. Here is one of the roots of intercultural conflict.

Finally modern sectorized and sectarian forms are rooted in semi-permanent writing. For Moderns religion is merely a literature. Theological scholars such as professor of Biblical Studies Bart Ehrman analyze religious texts for inconsistencies, logical contradictions, external validity and historical authorship. In his book *Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions of the Bible and Why We don’t Know about Them* (2010), Ehrman complains that while major, well known, and demonstrable problems exist in both Christian testaments, they are rarely if ever honestly discussed in churches, even though seminary trained preachers have been made aware of the problems. They are “hidden” from the flock, perhaps to protect the presumed infallibility of the magic word and the power of the institution. Ehrman’s objective form of Biblical scholarship is very modern. For Ehrman the *Bible* is a temporal, historical document. Hermeneutics was the first method developed by the Ancient Greek philosophers.

For the Modern, ceremony lacks the power and passion of incantatory ritual and the church is as much a socio-economic institution as a spiritual one. It stands alone separate from other secular institutions such as law, which may actually come into direct confrontation with church policies, as for instance, the conflict we see between secular law enforcement and the Catholic Church with regards to proven cases of child molestation. The modern world is characterized by endless atomization and divisions, from labor

and quantifying measurement to sacred versus secular domains. Jurisdictions, domains of authority, powers separate and proliferate in modern rational systems. Quality is displaced by the quantification of identical units via material reductionism; denomination—value defined as quantity. In so far as numbers exist they are not merely identical place markers on an endless number line but manifest magical auspiciousness and powers. In Hong Kong, for instance, a license plate with a “lucky number” sold for 2.1 million U.S. dollars in 2008 (Asia World News, Sunday, February 24, 2008).

In the magic world there is no separation of powers, no demarcation between the sacred and the secular. In most languages there are no words for these domains. The magic world is a unity. The statue is god and if a tourist picks it up and walks out of the temple with it, the locals will become enraged. Deadly rioting may ensue. For the mythic person if I steal a crucifix from an altar and throw it in the mud, people will be very emotional but it is more likely they will call secular authorities and have me arrested than tear me limb from limb in a frenzy of religious zealotry. The crucifix is a metaphor. It is not literally the actual cross upon which the Christ was crucified. And yet, as a mythic symbol it is not without (inherency) meaning and corresponding emotional attachment and it is not completely arbitrary in intent and form. While a congregation may pool their funds and decide if they want a wooden or gold cross or one with the Christ on it, the basic form cannot be abandoned. They will not decide that it would be appropriate and “better” to put a golden triangle or hexagon on their altar.

Mythic symbols are ambivalent. They encompass both literal and figural aspects. There is “space,” wiggle-room, tolerance for interpretation and choice, but it is limited. Modern religion functions methodically/dogmatically (as in the Methodist sect) and in Northern European churches the expression of emotion is muted. Some have decided to not even have a cross at all suggesting that such a symbol would be tantamount to a religion worshipping before a golden electric chair or guillotine if their savior were executed by such means. And with the explosion in hypertrophic individualism, New Age spirituality allows for almost any arbitrary form that satisfies an individual. Some traditional religious denominations are suffering a collapse of attendance. The most modern of nation-states, Scandinavian countries exhibit this trend most intensely. This is because, I submit, the institution no longer satisfies the basic need to validate emotional reality. Religion is at its core a communicative process for expressing and elaborating emotional urges in a social/symbolic form. Various modes of expression

from poetry to architecture, from dance to music and rhetorical homiletics, function to engage group identity—community. Passion thus becomes compassion.

Like the universe at large, a church without either passion or compassion dies. We are witness to this in the twentieth century as the universe became largely a dead vacuum. This is the dominant paradigm in science. This is what has been called the *horror vacui* since ancient times, the terrible dread of purposeless, meaningless, nothingness. This marks the complete revolution, a term taken from the acceptance of a spherical earth that rotates in space in the 1500s, the complete turning away from magic and mythic culture (Kramer, 1993). In this sense, religion is the core of magic and mythic cultures and its demystification and demythologization marks the advent of modern perspectival thinking, first with heretical philosophers in ancient Greece and again during the Renaissance. Growing atomization and individualism manifests as intensifying personal freedom—temporal humanism. Absolutism, essentialism, and universalism give way to probabilities and personal truths, even faiths. The liberation and celebration of individual free will presumes an increasingly arbitrary accidental universe that enables the modern individual to reorganize information at will to suit her personal uses and gratifications. Even sacred incantations such as wedding vows are increasingly rewritten by the very people who are presumably submitting to the transcendental binding function of ritual.

In hypertrophic modernity, everything is arbitrary, optional -- available to be personalized. The sacred tribal tattoo that once manifested power and collective identity is now replaced by personalized signs, which may mean nothing except to the individual.

### De-meaning the Other as Invalid

In the face of relentless demystification and demythification, the universe loses its meaning: it is *de-meaned* and reduced to vast emptiness punctuated by dust and a few reactive gases. As the sacred recedes the human becomes foregrounded as the only source of meaning and purpose. The transvaluation or revaluation of received values (*Umwertung aller Werte*) as Nietzsche (1887 Ger./1974 Eng.) put it, is enabled.

After about a thousand years of predominantly magic and mythic worldview, the predominantly three-dimensional modernistic Greco-Roman world reemerged. The European Renaissance (rebirth) of this attitude began with

the urgent compulsion to create vaulting space driving architecture beyond its medieval limits. This rebirth of three-dimensional spatial thinking which locates individual objects and egos, manifested itself in the “Cathedral crusade” sparked by Suger (c. 1081–1151), the abbot and architect at Saint Denis and his friend, Bishop Henri of Sens, who was censured for promoting ideas propagated by the philosopher and logician Peter Abelard (1079–1142). Churches of the Middle Ages were built like grottos. They suggested the magic spaceless and timeless womb of spiritual human. But suddenly, a tremendous urge to create vaulting space seized the European consciousness, forcing trial and error and innovation in material construction to realize this obsession.

First the manufacture of glass was compelled and then the desire to erect ephemeral walls of glass that could not be self-supporting. This conscious demand that overreached material ability is evident in several cases of cathedrals collapsing while only midway through construction and the fact that Florence built a cathedral that stood for over a century with no roof. What a peculiar projection of uncompromising ambition. Services were occasionally interrupted by rain. It was not fixed until Filippo Brunelleschi solved the problem of how to span the gaping 144-foot maw of the central nave. The base of the dome began 75 feet off the ground at the top of the nave. Brunelleschi erected a double-walled copula, an interior octagonal dome with a second ovoid shell with a staircase built between the domes to access a lantern at its peak at 177 feet above ground level. This was grander than the greatest ancient dome, the Pantheon, at 142 feet, a span unsurpassed for 1,300 years. The construction technique itself not only resurrects the classical Greco-Roman fascination with spherical created space, but Brunelleschi’s solution for structural integrity itself emphasizes the lightness of being that Renaissance optimism expressed after a millennium of squat cave-like Medieval structures. It took 16 years to complete, and the total weight is about 37,000 metric tons comprised of over 4 million bricks, some of which were laid by Brunelleschi himself when workmen refused for fear of falling to their deaths. Almost simultaneously, Donatello created the first three-dimensional statue “in the round” seen in Europe for over 1300 years, his bronze David (c. 1442). As young artists, Donatello and Brunelleschi literally dug classical, ancient three-dimensional perspective (modern) pagan sculpture out of the trash heaps and muddy grazing fields around Italy to bring the broken masterpieces into their studios for study.

But this reignited Classical modern attitude affected more than art and architecture in the service of the Church. It became thinkable to challenge the logocentric and infallible authority of the Church itself. The humanists began to write in vernacular and with Gutenberg's invention, cheap books became available so individuals could get their hands on the sacred texts and decide for themselves, what the books—what God meant.

Egoistic individualism comes to fruition. Religion and religious identity changes fundamentally. It becomes changeable. To a magic person this is unthinkable; that religious identity and "affiliation" becomes a matter of personal choice and free will. Religious expression becomes increasingly conventional and a matter of personal expression. Sectarianism accelerates and many new forms of spirituality are arbitrarily invented. The bonding power of *religiō* weakens and with it a fundamental aspect of community. Even the incantatory aspect of *proligiō* and *religiō* weakens as sacred mass changes to acknowledge several languages other than Latin. Meanwhile, for many Muslims it remains a contention that if one cannot read the *Holy Koran* in Arabic then one cannot read it at all.

After 1200 years, the reemphasis on the individual (the Renaissance celebration called humanism) is reflected in a particularly modern turn in spiritualism in the West. Rather suddenly all individuals had access to the word of god itself and the individual felt that it was completely appropriate to ask the maker of the universe, of time and space and life, for personal favors and salvation. God speaks to me, and I talk to Him. This is a profound elevation in personal salience, a previously unthinkable self-valuation as the modern "I" came to regard itself as being worthy of having a personal relationship with the Almighty. The mass judgment when all would rise from their graves on a single day is replaced by the personal deathbed judgment. The transcending mystery that constituted sublimity beyond my personal comprehension, even beyond my tribes' understanding, is made knowable, familiar, even private. My personal and private desires and needs become worthy of the Almighty's attention. Mass singing is replaced by silent prayer just as oral performance of text is replaced by silent, private reading. The Modern is cognitive: pensive, analytical and self-reflective—self-absorbed, determined to comprehend, apprehend, and understand everything for one's self.

As for identity, choosing one's religion is utterly unthinkable to a magic person. For the mythic person, conversion is possible but very emotional, even traumatizing. Meanwhile, since the three-dimensional Modern sees all

things as demythologized and arbitrary the Modern shops around different religions and churches seeking the one that suits her personal tastes. She may switch religious affiliation with little more emotional trauma than she experiences in changing health club memberships or jobs. "Membership" is a modern notion that presupposes the ability to choose according to personal preference. As inherency weakens we enter the post-modern world where everything is utterly arbitrary and a matter of hedonic calculus. Would-be charismatic leaders regularly pronounce themselves messengers of God and start churches based on their individual and personal predilections. The ego hypertrophy is evident. According to the FBI, of all groups clergy are most likely to falsify claims of military heroics, what is called "stealing valor" which is a federal crime (Crewdson, October 26, 2008). Their sermons are increasingly opinion pieces about current politics, economics, entertainment, social trends; and less of canonical catechism or Biblical exegesis. While the magic spiritual dimension is not at all personal but pure identification, and the mythic god is one of the masses, with the advent of modern individualism, the idea of one having a "personal" relationship with deity occurs.

In the magic world there is no bifurcation between culture and nature or the natural and the supernatural. In fact words to these effects do not exist in most archaic languages. Dreams are as real and influential, if not more so as waking experience. Such oppositional spatial perception is not evident in the magic world. Nor does one choose to be a Shaman but instead it happens to a person usually in the form of a traumatic psychic event (Campbell, 1988, p. 85; Eliade, 1951 Fr./2004 Eng.). But what Campbell, being a Modern fails to grasp is that the event does not happen just to that individual but to the entire tribe. All are affected by the transformative event. Very often the person who has inherent Shamanic qualities also has some form of inherent bloodline identification. A shaman or holy person herself embodies magical qualities and powers. She *is* powerful.<sup>4</sup> They are literally mystical beings. A lock of

4 An example of magic in mundane life today? I have powerful sympathetic emotion (attachment – association) for a particular afghan blanket made by my mother that she gave to me just before she died. If it is lost in a fire another at any price cannot replace it. Magic is not dissociated. It is one-to-one identity. The statue is the god, not a representation. This is the phenomenon of inherency, the self-identity of presence that Nietzsche (1887 Ger./1974 Eng.), Ludwig Klages (1928 Ger.), and Husserl (1917 Ger./2008 Eng.), explore. Later the late-modernist Heidegger (1927 Ger./1962 Eng.) will develop the investigation as "the problem of ground," and only much later will Jacques Derrida (1967 Fr./1997 Eng.; 1967 Fr./1978 Eng.) join the analysis of logocentrism, a

their hair or a piece of their body after death can confer power. All over the world we find local ways of incorporating the skulls and bones of ancestors into domiciles. In Christianity an example is a piece of a saint, a shin bone or hand or skull buried under the altar of a Catholic cathedral as a talisman, a holy relic with spiritual powers.

In the magic idolic world, you cannot separate the power from the ritual, incantation, word, hex sign, blood, tattoo or amulet. This is the nature of magic identity. It is not abstract. Mystery is an inherent quality. It is palpable and resendent, not transcendent. Only within the Modern metaphysic does the mystical become unreal. As dimensions accrue, in the mythic symbolic world the priest tends to be more individualistic and self-selecting. A mythic or modern priest may gain limited power through the ritual of ordination rather than being born with such inherent powers. As dimensions accrue and dissociation increases, in the three-dimensional signalic modern world, a person becomes a free agent. A person becomes a religious leader by personal choice, often attending university and seminary. They may quit if they so prefer. It is a vocation—a choice. The attainment of sacred powers is reduced in the late-mythic/early modern world to “a calling,” one of the last vestiges of oral mythic culture.

As dissociation increases, *am-bi-valence* gives way to trivalent randomness. The possibility of multiple faiths, of multiple identities dawns evoking contestation between groups within the same society. A tipping point of tension ensues that is what Hall (1966, 1982) calls the delicate balance of the servo-mechanism of aggression.

### **Mutual De-meaning: Dominance Struggles over Modes of Worship**

A problematic emerges here. Magic rituals are loosely defined. Orality by its nature allows for variance in recitation from one period to another. As dimensions accrue dissociation increases. Dissociation is a form of abstraction

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term that Klages coined, which evaporates in the postmodern world. Inherency and immutability give way to arbitrariness and mutability. Power becomes dissociated from its magic object. In the three-dimensional modernity power becomes negotiable, as does identity. Power is no longer an inherent quality of a person, place, or thing. It can be gained and lost through behavior and force of will. In modernity nothing is sacred. This has been linked to a shift from oral to written culture, by Plato, and by others (Mumford, 1934; Gebser, 1949 Ger./1985 Eng.; Innis, 1950, 1951; Giedion, 1962; McLuhan, 1962; Hall in 1966; Ong, 1982; Carey, 1989).

and it can be seen as a process of increasing objectification. The magic group dances and sings together, the Modern sits and watches performances, and the first hypertrophic ego is born as the first personality-celebrity, be it a singer, gladiator, Olympian, actor or orator. Individuating exceptionalism is heralded even as Achilles, the first individualist is met with suspicion and fear by the collective that would claim him. The age of heroes is born. As religions become more established they tend to exhibit charismatic leaders struggling to express their dominance. The consequence is not a hero striking out to initiate his or her own new faith but to take another dangerous vector toward purification of the old faith. This takes the form of sectarian violence and also tests of faith. One of the problems with efforts at purifying a faith is that first it must be accused of becoming polluted, decadent, and degenerate. Once this point is made then the purging can begin.

### **The Hero-God as Infinite Ego**

The second problem is knowing when to stop. Things can always be purer, more exaggerated, especially in a religious context. And so the process ends up weeding out nearly everyone until rigidity dominates manifesting as a form of dogmatic mania. Puritanism is a particularly dangerous trajectory for dominance displays to evolve. Who will determine what the true way and true faith is, is a manifestation of dominance struggle within sacred context. The sacred nature of the quest for perfection makes the conflict all the more fervent. Hence, Lifton's (2000) observation that puritanical movements end up destroying the world to save it—Noah's great flood and the total obliteration of Sodom and Gomorrah are perfect examples of ultimate authority imposing its will to eradicate the filth of sin, returning creation to its pristine state. This is total intolerance, total domination.

Here we face the unsettling analysis of terrorism. Bertrand Russell (1957) noted there is terror and then there is total terror; exceptionalism and total exceptionalism. There is only one god and it is absolutely unique. Gods are the ultimate terrorists. Dominance demands enforcement, mechanisms of feedback and control. Total terror is when a being that is not only all powerful but is also all knowing, constantly threatens to attack physically, psychologically, and spiritually with all its might. This monstrous image inspired the panoptic design of mortal prisons called “inspection houses” by Bentham (1787, 1791 in 2 Vols., 2010). One is thus submitted to endless and systematic surveillance and judgment. There is no escaping an omniscient and om-

nipotent being that is willing to torture you for eternity. Death offers no sanctuary from divine judgment and punishment for your soul I eternal.

As social animals we wish to belong and yet we need to aggress. As is well known and understood in the biological sciences, aggression is a necessary impulse to assure the viability of species; most commonly exhibited as territoriality that is essential to reproduction. Organized religion is rooted in a natural propensity of the species to establish group identity and dominance, which is often articulated culturally in messianic form.

### Conclusion

The physically dominant display their exceptionalism on the fields of play and battle, and on the podium of victors and memorials. For the intellectual and artist it is through various awards and recognition (tenure for instance or an Emmy), and the pageantry of convocation and edifying statues. For the holy person it is through various powers and perhaps the most lavish of all dominance displays from great feathered headdresses to extravagant vestments and the most astonishing architecture and artistic efforts known: from the Pyramids of Egypt and Mesoamerica, to the great medicine wheels and mounds such as the 1,370 foot long Serpent Mound in Peebles, Ohio, across North America; from the giant geoglyphs of the Nazca People in ancient Peru, to the Parthenon; from the Cathedrals of Christian Europe to the great Mosques of Islam; from the Pantheon to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; from the *Liàodi* Pagoda of the Kaiyuan Monastery in China to Angkor Wat in Cambodia; from the Sumerian and Babylonian ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia to the monolithic Moai statues on Easter Island, and so forth. All speak of power, of might, mystery, and magic.

Dominance displays vary from culture to culture and time to time. As Campbell (1988) observed, myths change over time and vary from place to place exhibiting local styles and references, but they present a handful of common themes such as “the hero” rooted in the vital organs of the body, the “impulse to live” (p. 189), that Freudians call the libidinal energy source driving all creative efforts. It is this common structure of our embodied, incarnate consciousness with its sensate architectonic that binds us to a primordial common experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 Fr./1962 Eng.). As the spiritual domain shrinks from animism to pantheism to monotheism, fertility and offspring, is an essential motif. We find it in the theme of virgin birth, Hindu sutras, and Shinto rituals to fertilize rice fields. Fertility, fruitification is at the core of religion and culture insofar as cultures are all based in magic

and mythic structures. Campbell bluntly stated what countless scholars from Emmanuel Kant to Wilhelm Dilthey, from Bronisław Malinowski to Franz Boas and Marcel Mauss, from Claude Levi-Strauss to Pierre Bourdieu and James Clifford have observed—“Civilizations are grounded on myth” (p. 59). While folktales entertain, magic maintains reality and myth teaches how to interpret life-conditions.

The symbolic presentation varies from place to place but the message is surprisingly similar but surprising only if one does not see myth as rooted in the common structure of our embodied subjectivity and instinctual needs.

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