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BINDING FREEDOM:
EMBODIMENT OF THE SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

“Thus says the Lord: “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths. Where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

- Jeremiah 6:16¹

The Universality of Embodiment

Human embodiment is a universal experience for all people. An experience that is composed of multiple aspects such as sense experience, a psychological life, and the agency of one’s own body. Our bodies are our basis for experiencing ourselves and the world around us. Embodiment also comes with a social aspect. Our bodies place us in the world, and through our bodies we perceive and experience the world around us. We also express ourselves to the world in a transaction of reciprocity. The world affects us, and we also affect the world. In this transaction, culture and tradition influence heavily. They operate less as immaterial mental forms and more as a body of their own, which, as our own physical bodies, orient us in the world. Culture and tradition operate as a basis in which we can know the world. Our embodied knowledges, values and participation in life all originate from our bodies’ engagement with our world in relation to a cultural context or a tradition. In this paper I am exploring two different contexts in which an individual can embody and exist in; the religious or sacred traditional frameworks, and the non-religious, modern, technological, scientific tradition. These separate spheres of the religious and the non-religious present two vastly different contexts in which human beings can express and understand their embodiment, and what they can embody.

Humankind is composed of a diversity of communities with

¹ Thomas Nelson, *NKJV, Reference Bible, Compact Large Print, Imitation Leather, Black, Red Letter Edition, Comfort Print* (Thomas Nelson, 2018). 928-929

various belief systems, senses of belonging, values and knowledges. However, what all human beings share in common is their embodied nature. Being an embodied person involves there being a bodily life including certain functions.

Foundationally, there is a sensory life in which a person sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches. Alongside this sensory experience is the sustainment of a psychological life that enables a person to be an embodied self: to have an epistemological dimension that makes a person aware of their body. And from this dimension a person has the ability to affect their body directly by intending or willing to act in some way which directly involves their body through their own agency. These aspects of being human, of being embodied, have a structured character that acts in a unified way over time – in which a person can reflect coherently about their present circumstances, recall the past, and project into the future. The structured coherence of embodiment cultivates an affectionate self-respect that at a minimum causes an individual to affectively incorporate their body as their own, and at a higher-level, allows them to seek their own well-being by learning from the past, knowing about the present, and dreaming of the future.

The body and its activities are our fundamental basis for apprehending ourselves and the societies in which we live. Our bodies place us in the everyday world and provide us with the tools to know those worlds and to interact with them. Through our bodies we perceive and experience the world around us in the context of our individually unique embodiment. The experience of embodiment is also profoundly social. This experience is “mediated by learned roles and other expectations; it is shaped by the immediate social context, as well as historical antecedents of which the individual may not even be aware; and it is apprehended and communicated indirectly through language and other cultural symbols.”² Cultures and traditions teach their members what is valuable and worthy, and what is not. These values are internalized and experienced as one’s own experience of their body and self. From this adaptation, an individual acquires a socially informed body that is structured by learned

² Meredith B. McGuire, “Religion and the Body: Rematerializing the Human Body in the Social Sciences of Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no. 3 (September 1990): 283, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1386459>, 285.

likes and dislikes that cultivate senses of beauty, morality, humor, the sacred, etc.

Our bodies orient us in our environment and are the basis in which we are able to live, know, and value. In this way we are limited and defined by our bodies, but at the same time this point of being in a body grants us our potentiality and freedom to become ourselves. Our embodied values, knowledge and life all stem from our bodies engaging our world by sensing, moving, experiencing and having ideas. This lived embodied experience takes place within, and is related to a cultural context, a tradition.

Traditions

Traditions are not only conceptual but also exist materially. “Our traditions, like our bodies, constitute our life and identity – what we live in and through, what we are – and function as that on which we tacitly rely in order to meaningfully orient ourselves and to reflect, in order to know, to value.”³ Today, tradition doesn’t exist in the religious context alone but has non-religious manifestations as well. Non-religious tradition sees reality as having no preestablished purpose or meaning. In pre-modern societies a connection to faith, to God, or some notion of ultimate reality was ubiquitous and interwoven with everything else, giving little to no room for *separate spheres* apart from an orientation to the divine. The modern Western world and the world as a whole is becoming freer from this connection and is creating a distinction between the religious, political, economic, and the social. In pre-modern society these distinctions would have made little sense.

These separate spheres of the religious and the non-religious present two vastly different contexts in which human beings can express and understand their embodiment. Religion involves an embodied attempt to discover, and partially create, a larger holistic meaning for humans to indwell. Traditionally, this takes place in light of powers that are regarded as divine or sacred. These powers are commonly understood to be greater than the world as it can be scientifically known what causes religions to regard themselves as transcending the world, or at least possessing a transcendent dimension. Religious peoples look out

³ David H. Nikkel, *Radical Embodiment* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 74.

upon their world as being divided between *this-world* and an *Other-world*. The Other-world is transcended and represented as the Kingdom of God, or it is a transcendent attainment such as the realization of nirvana.

Secularism

Today, in our non-religious spheres we have dropped the transcendent. Not because we have discovered something that proves a transcendent dimension of deity to be non-existent, but because we have merely lowered our gaze. This lowering of our gaze to the purely immanent and material leaves human beings with lesser ways to orient their lives towards any kind of transcendent sign, truth, obligation, or commitment.

The word “secularization” is now typically used to refer to the cultural process by which the area of the sacred is progressively diminished. The secularization process and its development coincided with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’ replacement of revelation with the scientific method as the royal road to knowledge, thus spawning the scientific world view and the technology that created the modern world. Science replaced traditional societies with the modern, technological, industrial world.

In his book *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor points out three modes of secularity. There is secularity in terms of public spaces such as the economic, political, cultural, educational, and professional realms, “whose norms and principles don’t refer us to God or to any religious beliefs, the considerations acted upon are internal to the ‘rationality’ of each sphere – maximum gain within the economy, the greatest benefit to the greatest number in the political arena, and so on.”⁴ There is also a secular aspect to individuals as the falling away of religious belief and practice takes hold of them. Lastly, and most important to Taylor, is secularity as a condition of belief. The shift to secularity was a move away from a society where belief in God was foundational. We now live in a society where belief in God is an option among many others. The shift to public secularity, and its notion of unbelief, has been part of what helped to bring on a secular age.

⁴ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 2

“And in our secular civilization there are a multitude of societies, sub-societies, and settings, all diverse, but the presumption of unbelief has become dominant in more and more of society. Nonbelief has achieved hegemony in certain crucial settings such as academic and intellectual life where it can more easily extend itself to others.”⁵

The contemporary decay of religion is part of a fundamental change in point of view in the relationship between humankind and the universe. The non-religious point of view is often times “anti-traditional, progressive, humanist, rationalist, materialist, experimental, individualist, egalitarian, free-thinking and intensely sentimental.”⁶ The non-religious point of view has always existed in one form or another. What’s new is the dominance of it today. Existing world-wide and permeating into all societies, it runs almost every domain of human life and thought. Foundational to this dominant decay of religion is the persuasion of the scientific attitude: a rational humanism that sees the human mind as being unable to know or experience anything beyond the world of time and space. Human knowledge in this sense of pure empiricism can only refer to the temporal world, which in turn denies the human ability to possess a capacity for metaphysical or spiritual knowledge. This is a direct contradiction to the claims of religious intelligence that sees metaphysical realities as both existing and being apprehended. This modern empirical view limits the scope of human potential and embodiment which tends to foster a dehumanization of peoples while cultivating shallow forms of society that are built with humankind’s new image.

Revelation and the Composition of Religion

In opposition to the societies and identities that are embodied by non-religious logic, religion is not seen as a construction of the human mind but of originating from a divine and supernatural source. Its purpose is to provide an effective link between the world and God. This link is an unbroken chain of tradition to an authentic revelation. “Religion is founded on the belief – or rather

⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶ Lord Northbourne, ‘Looking Back in Progress’ Martin Lings and Clinton Minnaar, *The Underlying Religion: An Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 2007), 27.

on the certainty – that God has shown His love, as well as His justice and His wisdom to the world in the first place and most directly to His revelation of Himself through the founder/s of the Religion in question.”⁷ This makes religion and revelation much greater than anything purely human, such as reason, its validity being beyond rational or observational proof or disproof, yet containing within itself the evidence of its own truth. This truth is acceptable, discernable, or self-evident to the eye of faith and wisdom, although it may not be accessible to analytical investigation. The disposition towards religion is no mere arbitrary or invented one. Its foundations lie at the root of our being. It is often exceedingly simple and logical for anyone who understands it, offering itself as the one universal and accessible means of wisdom that is available both collectively and individually.

Religion is composed of three elements; the doctrinal, the ritual, and the ethical/moral. The revelation must be accepted as a whole and not in parts. Religion that rejects doctrine, ritual or ethical presuppositions compromises the faith and creates something purely individual, whereas religion in truth is supra-individual. Doctrine is the intellectual element concerned with the comprehension and foundation of truth for the combating of falsehood. Ritual is derived directly from the original revelation which it recapitulates in a certain sense, such as the eucharist, the five obligatory prayers of Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca and the Lord’s prayer. Ritual is based on the idea that God must be worshipped not only in thought and word but also in deed. These rituals and the reading or recitation of Sacred Scriptures, and the recitation of a revealed or canonical form of prayer, is an ever-present anchor to the faith as well as a corrective to error: an anchor in today’s modern psychic-environment that is actively hostile and subversive, where the soul is given no point of reference to return to again and again in its inevitable wanderings. The ethical and moral dimension of religion isn’t so much for social convenience, but it arises from a profound awareness of God as the creator and Lord to whom people are accountable. Moral behavior arises from an internal principle or truth that religious traditions reveal, cultivate, and protect. Religious ethics point towards the transformation and perfecting

⁷ Ibid., 3.

of society and its individuals, a presence and depth that is lacking in non-religious logics and knowledges.

The first two elements, doctrine and ritual, are concerned with humankind's relation to God. Ethics and morality are concerned with humanities relation to their 'neighbor', that is, everything that is not themselves. In Jesus' great commandment he says, "Thou shall love your neighbor as yourself," which is "like unto" the statement, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."⁸ They are not essentially different. A single truth is present in both forms: that *you must love*.

Inner and Outer Orientations

There is a major difference in the embodiment and relationship to the world between the religious and traditional outlook as compared to the secular non-religious way of being. Within this dichotomy it's important to note that, "we can aspire to freedom for our terrestrial nature, or, we can aspire to freedom from our terrestrial nature."⁹ Between this divide human beings have many differences, but the existence and embodied nature of each individual is not different in kind from the existence of any other. All are embodied by the same principle of being. It is with this *being-ness* of existing as human that allows a person to be as they wish. One of the final goals of the religious mentality is to not command things external to oneself, but rather to surpass oneself. The knowledge that one seeks above all is not a knowledge of the outer world, but a knowledge of oneself, an inner world. It does not deny the validity or the necessity of some command over and some knowledge of the outer world, but this must not supersede or suppress self-knowledge, as is the case in many spheres of the non-religious society.

This difference is perhaps best represented by the embodied orientation of the inward and outward focus of both the religious and non-religious ways of being, respectively. Religious traditions have an inward-looking dimension in which adherents to the faith seek to free the human spirit from all its bonds. In its purest form, this way is the way of the saint,¹⁰ whose goal is the unseizable spirit and whose inward state that is beyond the

⁸ Matthew 22:37, NKJV.

⁹ Ibid., 19.

power of words to convey. The saint seeks a truth that can only be found by inner experience and not by observation.”¹⁰ The point of departure of the traditional approach to reality is everywhere and always the same despite great differences in the historical development of traditional civilizations. Existence is envisaged as proceeding from an origin, or prime cause, which is transcendent with respect to all its productions and is symbolically the center from which all existence radiates without ever becoming detached from it. “It is the center not only of the universe, the macrocosm, but also of the individual being the microcosm. Since the latter reflects the wholeness of the former.”¹¹ The voice of religious tradition proclaims that the worth, the dignity, and the whole justification of human life lies in the preservation of the chain that binds humanity to God, who is their origin, preserver, and end.

The inward orientation of religion is unitive in that the adherent sees both themselves and the outside world, nature, and their neighbor as one in the same through their connection with the center, the divine. Unity becomes the reality and separation becomes seen as illusory. The adherent to a religious faith doesn’t occupy a situation fundamentally different from that of their neighbor. The unity is indivisible and cannot appertain to one person alone. It begins with a knowledge and certitude that “God is, and alone is wholly real, and that Nature, (their) neighbor, and (themselves), distinct though they are and even often in conflict, are one in God, and in God alone.”¹²

Opposed to the inward orientation, non-religious modernity has an outward looking orientation that also seeks to free humankind from bondage, often by producing endeavors that are directed to the desiring soul, to desiring more material affluence: more status and power, more notoriety, and more knowledge. This outward look is separative in the way that it emphasizes the duality between observer and observed, knower and known, humankind and nature. Our environment becomes something to be exploited ‘sustainably.’ Nature and other people become obstacles or means towards the fulfillment of our desires which result in a diminishment of our awareness of the oneness between us and makes us more separate from each other. The separative

¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 28.

nature of the outward look, when it is not balanced by its inward counterpart, divides. Reality itself is compartmentalized and tends to disintegrate while human beings become ever lonelier and more confused. To counteract this, secular modernity has developed a progressive outlook which, like modern science, departs from outward observation. "It's point of departure precludes taking it into account anything which is not within the capacity of the human mind. God, therefore, must be rejected or be rationalized and humanized, eventually reducing religion to the status of an unproven hypothesis, a step to the total rejection of religion, substituted by ideologies and fancies originating exclusively from the brain or the sentiments of men. Tradition dies, and humankind is about its own reality, and becomes supreme in their own eyes, making humankind and knowledge its own 'god'."¹³ The ideology of progress envisages the perfectibility of humanity in terms of its material development and relegates it to a hypothetical future. Tradition on the other hand envisages the perfectibility of humankind in terms of salvation or sanctification and proclaims that it is realizable here and now through faith and inner experience.

Sacred and Secular – Traditions, Bodies, and Society

Sacred traditions are deeply relational and communal as they are an activity that requires at least two people. One person transmits and the other receives something transmitted. In a religious tradition something is received and handed down in a personal voluntary act that continues through various generations and ages, which demonstrates the tradition's referential quality towards "that aspect of humanity which remains the same."¹⁴ The activity of the transmission of a living tradition is a highly dynamic and demanding business, for those that seek to embody and pass down a tradition successfully must take care that the truths "be kept really alive and present – for example and before anything else, by means of a living language; through creative rejuvenation" and are "a continual confrontation with the immediate present and above all with the future, which in the

¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴ Josef Pieper and E Christian Kopff, *Tradition: Concept and Claim* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2010), 10

human realm is the truly real.”¹⁵ And in the process of receiving a tradition, there must be faith, where faith is the acceptance of something as true and valid not on the basis of one’s individual insight, but by relying on someone else. Here no experience of deduced reasoning can assimilate and surpass what is handed down. It can only inform.

Sacred traditions as traditions of truth are seen as definitive, so much so that no human thought can make it obsolete. People of these traditions are convinced that what is handed down goes back to a revelation from divine speech. This revelation gives individuals a consciousness of access to the Absolute and serves as a mediation between the person and the divine, placing the tradition wide and deep as a representative of the divine speech itself. From this basis, tradition is given more weight as it concerns the center of the world and the core of human existence. Those who embody sacred tradition see them as necessary because, “this tradition comes from a divine source; because each generation needs it for a truly human existence, because no people and no brilliant individual can replace it on their own or even add anything valid to it.”¹⁶ Sacred traditions have a unique character in that, “only in a sacred tradition that goes back to divine speech does the first in line hand over something actually received, that is something not confirmed by their own insight.”¹⁷ Because of the divine origin, the sacred tradition cannot be matched by any other form of tradition in respect to its authoritative character and its ability to create obligation.

Today, we no longer live under the sacred as a whole. It is now marketing and progress that is the backdrop of our modern non-religious culture. The message of this culture is that fulfillment is found in the things that we possess or the statuses that we reach. It is clear that this message is serving us poorly and so we should be aware of the worldview that sponsors it. Our era is defined by two closely related movements: the rise of urban civilization and the collapse of traditional religion. “The age of the secular city, the epoch whose ethos is quickly spreading into every corner of the globe, is an age of “no religion at all.”¹⁸ This

¹⁵ Ibid , 15.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35

¹⁷ Ibid., 41

¹⁸ Carl Raschke, *Neoliberalism and Political Theology: From Kant to Identity Politics*. (S.L.: Edinburgh Univ Press, 2021), 141.

“cosmopolitan confrontation of city living exposed the relativity of the myths and traditions that people thought were unquestionable.”¹⁹ Modern secular society has experienced a *death of God*, in which there is a denial of any divine transcendence or selfhood, that then brings about an absence of any absolute human meaning. Concluding that there is an absence of any complete human connection to the Absolute can follow from a consistent upholding of the contextuality of all human meaning. However, the recognition of human contextuality does not at all settle whether the Absolute exists and can be known. These modern epistemological assumptions discount and dismiss any role and value of sacred traditions, leading to a loss of meaning and, in the extreme, to personal and cultural insanity.

The spirit of modern secular society, like the world and the people it embodies, lacks a sense of divinity, revelation, or ultimate truth and meaning. Today, the ‘spirit’ of the times has its source in neoliberalism, which is “an operation of power relations that employs a full ensemble of various strategies of discourse, valuations, social pressure, economic mechanisms and political instrumentalities both to colonize effectively those outside its realm and to maintain control over those it has already subjugated.”²⁰ The power relations of neoliberalism express themselves as social values that often preach the rhetoric of economic wellbeing through a theological structure that creates moral values out of the production of knowledge. These values produce information that leads to a narrowing vision of reality and achieves control through its claims to serve as an omniscient explanation for everything.

The production of knowledge and information is led by the leaders of our new ‘knowledge industries’ that are allied with intelligence agencies, governmental bureaucracies, and the infrastructure of technological communication networks that more and more manage and regulate the content of information we have access to. The economic dimension of neoliberalism transforms everything into capital, “especially the kind of ‘personal capital’ that thoroughly reconstitutes individual self-worth as professional identity in keeping with socially enforced criteria of symbolic comparison.”²¹ Authority in this system is

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Ibid., 58.

derived from its elite class of economic, political, and cultural personalities. The cosmopolitan elites see themselves in a sort of 'priestly' roll that manages the techniques of human well-being in as many situations as possible. These elites advocate for good 'global citizenship' and a righteous self-satisfaction that is the new 'secular' nirvana, and the community, a secular 'kingdom of heaven.'

Neoliberalism is composed of a universal republic, a network of powers, a decentralized economic network that encompasses financial institutions, multinational corporations, and mass media. Its spirit encompasses the emerging culture and cultivates a corresponding morality that justifies the economic arrangements that create a substitution for the role faith traditionally played, resulting in a "struggle between the world's disenfranchised and the material religiosity of the world's elite."²² Miguel De La Torre argues that the alternative to the spirit of neoliberalism can be found within the faith of the people. "The faith of the people as a worldview understood by the world's disenfranchised, can very well hold the revolutionary message for a new vision of justice for all of humanity by providing the masses the spiritual strength and courage to resist the imposed neoliberal construction of reality."²³

A historical example of what this new non-religious economic orientation of embodiment brought, and how it developed, could be seen in the first half of the nineteenth century. At this time Western society was enmeshed in the activities of industrialists and bankers that were possessed by a single-minded devotion to making money. They extended power through the production and use of complicated machinery and other instrumental devices. "These men were crude, self-assertive, people pushers to the top, greedy and ambitious, excellent speculators and organizers, wizards of the factory and of the counting house, with little or no patience for normal human needs."²⁴ Their great achievement in the nineteenth century was to standardize the factory slum as the normal type of urban dwelling and to extend the area of human and natural

²² Miguel A De La Torre, *Hope of Liberation in World Religions* (Baylor University, 2008), 6.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Philip Sherrard, 'Modern Science and the Dehumanization of Man', Martin Lings and Clinton Minnaar, *The Underlying Religion: An Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 2007), 70.

desolation at a rate never before reached. People were dragged out of their prior existence into conditions of foulness and filth, and today, from this, we live in the throes of what we call the ecological crisis, which is primarily a crisis regarding the soul of humankind and not so much the environment directly.

As a result of the activity of these people and of their twentieth and twenty first century successors, a new type of world has come into existence: the world of the modern urban industrial state. A world of artificial environments that sophisticatedly manipulate machines and techniques that gradually eliminate the human element of humankind. "What this world represents is a new type of order, a new inorganic order, one not created by God but invented by man – one that is, in fact, precisely an externalization of man's desire to make his own world without God."²⁵ The mentality of our modern technological world and its social embodiment is one in which modern technology is harnessed and put to work for us, licensing the technological world to desecrate the whole social context of previous civilizations and the entire planet. This is accomplished by "sending out squads of scientific-technical experts that chart, dissect, ransack, and ravage dispassionately, on the basis of empirical evidence of experiment."²⁶ They are in search of markets and speculations through the means of a vast proliferation of specialized interferences of the natural order, drawing everything into its processes and leaving nothing sacred or belonging to the sphere of the divine or supernatural.

It is important to reflect on the point that the fabrication of a society that is artificial and mechanized has its price. We can only exist in it on the condition that we adapt ourselves to it. This social form cuts our consciousness to fit its needs, with an imperative to tailor our experience. "The inorganic technological world that we have invented lays hold on our interior being and seeks to reduce that to a blind inorganic mechanized thing."²⁷ This technological world seeks to eliminate whole sentimental areas of our lives and demands we become a new type of being that is not as human as has been understood in the religious ages. One of the things that we are forced to recognize is that the form of society that we build around us is the mirror of our own inner

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 73

²⁷ Ibid., 73.

world. In it the state of our consciousness and our attitude to the fundamental realities of human existence take shape and are given an external form. A society can be an image of integration, beauty, and significance, or it can be an image of disintegration and ugliness. What it is depends on us. If we have fabricated a society whose forms now dehumanize us, this is because prior to such a fabrication in the material realm, we have already given assent to thought forms which deny and cripple the recognition and growth of our humanity. Correspondingly, if we are to remake our society in the image of an integrated humanity, we must first be clear on what it means to be human.

Our current modern society has ideals that are purely temporal and finite which concern only the material welfare of its members. This society is not the consequence of any supernatural revelation but is simply the result of empirical and inductive methods of reasoning based primarily upon the observation of individual needs and characteristics which, when accepted as true, purport that human beings are basically two-legged terrestrial animals whose destiny and needs could best be fulfilled through the pursuit of social, political, and economic self-interest. Led by cosmopolitan captains of industry and political leaders, we're initiated and guided onto a course into the brave new world of consumer goods, limitless economic growth, and 'progress.' Scientists, industrialists and bankers of the nineteenth century bulldozed their way to fortune and produced the devastation of the modern world that continues on today: a Godless world full of profitable opportunities.

The religious dimension of human life and its embodiment is unique in comparison, and I argue that its presence in individuals, societies and civilization is important. *Religio* - which means to "rebind,"²⁸ is the root word of *religion* which "shows people bonded to the ultimate source of things by their very lineage. And because human beings have derived from bonding, it becomes incumbent on them to bind to others."²⁹ St. Paul said that "we, being many are one body in Christ,"³⁰ and Confucius counsels us that "within the four seas all men are

²⁸ This is of course only one root word of the word 'religion,' and being rooted in Latin only speaks towards the Western point of view. It is not my intention to dismiss non-Western points of view. Rather, it is the scope of the paper that does not allow for an extensive and wider analysis of this subject.

²⁹ Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters* (HarperCollins, 2009), 51.

³⁰ Romans 12:5. NKJV.

brothers.”³¹ Sacred traditions also see human beings as theomorphic creatures, as people whose form is *Theos*, or God encased within, and created in the *Imago Dei*, the image of God. In the religious worldview, human beings are the less who have derived from the more as children of their Creator. As such, religious traditions concern themselves with the deeper spiritual aspects of being human, aspects that relate one to another and to God as well. The loss of this dimension is a loss for humankind’s embodied nature on the earth, collectively and individually.

³¹ Confucius, *The Analects* (Everyman’s Library, 2000), 154.