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On The Marxist Cosmogony and Native American Cosmology.

--- Marxist Cosmology as an expression of the European Culture in contrast to Native Cosmology in Native American Culture ---.

1. Bourgeoisie Intelligentsia today live through their petty commotions without much reference to Cosmic contexts. This is a contrast to the "primitive people" who are very much aware of Cosmos in which they Place their existences and to which they refer significances of their daily actions.

Our Age, for those of us who are educated in the Western Science, is what some writers called "The Age Without God". Or we might say our culture is "The Culture of Alienation". Titles like "The Politics At God's Funeral" capture the prevalent sense. [M. Harrington Penguin 1985.]

To be sure, the modern intellectuals know Cosmology, Astrophysics, Space Technology, etc. They get daily bombardments from media of words such as "Big Bang", "Supernova", etc., regardless if they understand them or not. Books on Cosmology are abundant in most any bookshop, competing with Harlequin Romances, Biographies of movie actresses, How-to-get-rich, or -to-be-slim, books, etc. The loss of the "Cosmic Sense" is not a question of "knowledge". Nor that means loss of subconscious interests in the Cosmos. Modern men are just as "superstitious" in this respect, but their "ideological posture" is "rationalist". That is, they try hard to pretend being "rational". And their notion of "rational" inhibits references to Cosmic senses in business, political, and intellectual contexts.

Horoscope columns in our newspapers and popular magazines are apparently very popular. People do entertain "cosmic consciousness" etc. when they are drinking in parties. There is no shortage of "religious fanatics" in the U.S. who would justify nuking the "Atheist State of USSR". It is just that they know paying mortgages is the "reality". The real reference to their "meaning of life" is Money, not God, Buddha, nor Cosmos. One can argue, in a pedantic style, whether or not the Money Economy is "Rational". But, that would not make even a slightest impression on the sense of Reality and Rationality the people have and live by.

People have, thus, two distinct "world" so to speak. One is "Real World" which is operationally comprehended as that which concerns "Cash", and "Physical Body Existence".

If we articulate this world further, it would come to some thing similar to "Materialist View" of the world. Natural Scientists, Businessmen, Marxists and Pragmatists talks about this sense of "Reality". Even the majority Psychologists today appears to be "Materialist" of this kind they are called "Behaviorist", and they tend to deny existence of "Mind", "Consciousness", etc., let alone "Cosmic Consciousness", "God" ---.

But, the "Material World" is not complete, as much as the very same people who believe in it do make references to something outside of it. For example, "Future" is not "Real" to the materialists, yet they can hardly avoid references to Future. The Capitalists make their living in reference to future profits, which are not (yet) Reality. Marxists are examples of "materialists" along with the Capitalists, and do refer to Future (History). One difference between the Marxists and the Capitalists is what they each project (predict, prophecy) for unknown Future. If the both cut off references to Future, they would find themselves indistinguishable, except somehow fighting against each other. And even there, it would be hard to avoid references to implicit Future such as "Survival of the Fittest". (Since whoever think and talk about "survival" must be living now, it does not make sense to talk of survival unless Future is implied.)

[Natural Scientists often claim or pretend that they are solely concerned with "facts". But they do make references to Future, which is not a "fact". They call their references to the Future "Predictions", and try to distinguish them from "Prophecies". But, in claiming the superior reliability of their predictions, the scientist are saying essentially "I am the Truth. Follow etc.". In this respect, Scientists are not different from Prophets and false Prophets in religious societies.

Of course, the scientists could avoid the troubles of claiming "Truth" as to their predictions by narrating more than one "possible outcome" (options), leaving choices among them to the dominant political Power of the society. But even then, the references to the Futures (pl.) arc unavoidable.

That is, science is not about "facts" but about "predictions" which are non-facts. Its political power rests on the "trust" (authority) a culture place on it. If there is a "trust", communication can be economized. Science is, in this sense, an efficient language (rhetorical) system for securing agreements in a social scale. Religions used to do that, but in the modern society, religions no longer effective in securing social scale agreements.]

[We also note that a gathering of "facts" does not constitute a "Theory". As much as Sciences value Theories, they are not "factual". They have to do with "How one thinks" (or "how one talks").]

To be sure, the Behaviorists are right in that scientists do formulate Theories so as to be rewarded. The theory which is rewarded by social recognition becomes a part of the "established knowledge". A body of such knowledge is called "Science". What or Who decides which "theories" to be rewarded is by and large a mystery --- called "Paradigm" etc. and the process of competitions for the rewards are very much like those in the politics (power struggle) and the market (consumer taste).]

"Legitimacy" and/or "Righteousness" are the essential to any political movement and in social scale agreements. Materialists, Marxists, and Rationalists, and even "Behaviorists", as social bodies in the quest of a power or an intellectual hegemony, can hardly afford to give up "Legitimacy", and "Righteousness". And in this sense, they are not different from Religious Institutions. And in making up "legitimacy" and/or "righteousness", certain "cosmic sense" or "cosmic assumptions", do play important roles. Different cultures have different senses or assumptions --- though we do have to decipher what they are, for more often than not, the fundamental assumptions are implicit about what the Universe is like.

I use a term "Culture" to designate such functions/performances of a social groups in giving the sense of "legitimacy/righteousness" to some and not to others. It is as if a society having a "collective mind". What is referred as "Mind" in individual cases is complex and often a bundle of contradictions. But it is convenient to have the metaphor of "Mind" in a social scale to talk about how different "cultures" function and perform.

[The term "Ideology" may be used instead of "Culture". But, I prefer "Culture" to include "feelings" and in viewing that cultures can contain contradictions more readily than "ideology". I am avoiding "intellectual rationalizations". For that for itself is a characteristic of a "culture". Another term "Ethos" comes close to the sense, but it is "apolitical" term. "Culture" contains the both "Ideology" and "Ethos".]

2. Marxism came when Europe was undergoing the Bourgeoisie Revolution. Whatever, ideologues said in rhetorical

expressions, there were two things which changed the "Old Culture" in Europe. One was emergence of Mass Production Industry. The other is the massive displacement of population from rural to City Living. People are literally uprooted from their Communal Life, in a manner not too unlike "refugees" in the late 20th century.

The Death of God was death of the Community. And in its place Science came to play the role of the "culture". And the Mass Production dethroned The Mother Earth from the position of The Provider.

What happened in Europe since the 16th century is extraordinary. "Culture" usually develops slowly in time relative to the practices of its society. Actually "Culture" and "Practice" are in a Feedback Loop, mutually enforcing each other. Culture stimulates developments of new practices in a certain direction, and inhibits developments in other directions and in turn Culture itself develops. But, the "scientific" culture in the modern Europe emerged as a rebellion against the old culture.

Freudian metaphor of "Killing Father to marry Mother" is an apt depiction of the way European Science came to the power. Interestingly, Freud himself was a participant of the "science" -- that is to say Freud was analyzing the "mind" of Europe of that particular historical period, and he himself was an example of what he analyzed ---.

The "Father" was the religious Part of the old culture. And we can understand expressions like "Death of God". As to the "Mother" part of the old culture, however, the modern society has problems. The Modern Science killed the "Father God" (that which was paternalistic authority). That is clear enough. But did we also kill the Mother (that which generates "understanding" or the "sensual sense of knowing")? Or are we looking for the Mother? One thing we know is that we lost the Mother, at least temporally.

[In metaphors, it is tempting to image "Culture" to be the Mother, making "science" to be "unculture", There are certain aspects of "science" which do suggest some "barbaric", or "philistine" nature. Freud maintained a distinction between "culture" and "civilization", and did not use term "culture" to Europe. One could be sympathetic to Freud and say that Technological society of ours does not have a "culture".

If so, the "scientific revolution" in Europe killed both the Old Science (Religion) and Culture.]

Just as Freud was a Product of the historical time, Marx was also a product of the society undertaking destruction of the old community, calling it "Ancient Regime". Marx did

notice the function of religions --- he was sympathetic to the lower class who needed religions to soothe the pain, hence called religions "opium" for the poor. However, he apparently did not think of religions to be important subject and did not analyze the "psychology" deeper, but rather classified it as "irrational". (In Freudian language, Marx hated the Father aspect of Religion, but had lingering affinity with the Mother aspect of Religion.) He was a believer of the rising "Science" then, Just as the Capitalists and the Bourgeois then were. He thought that enlarging of production power would solve most, if not all, social problems. Building of Industries was a common goal for Marxists, Bourgeoisie and the Capitalist. In a sense, Marx was right in believing industries. If Stalin did not push Industrialization, where USSR would be today? Of course not too many people would condone the Dehumanization that was paid as the price. But, the price of European Industrialization was no less dire. The tragedies of people in European colonies were a part of the costs. If north Americans condone what happened to the Natives on the land, there is not much position for them to condemn Stalin. The strategy, and ideology, of eliminating "unproductive population" was the same for both cases. Japan copied the same strategy. China is now copying the same.

3. Now that we have "over-production", we are coming to reflect upon the history as such. We would say today, producing tens of millions of cars and TV sets would not make us "happier". Rather, we would worry about environmental pollutions and destruction of the Nature. We care about degradation of "human quality" of our life, such as that indicated by "Crime Rate", "Alcoholism", "Alienation". Perhaps we care because we have more than enough "material things". Our "consumer market" is geared more towards "psychological" needs than "physiological" needs.

[Digital Hi-Fi electronics and Personal Computers, for example, are not for hungry people. Yet they are the "high growth" industries now, along with "Fast Food Industry". Farmers who produce foods are in trouble. Steel Mills are in trouble. Making more things is not what the market demands. And we have a "Non-Market" industry called "Military-Industrial-Scientific-Complex", which does not contribute to production of consumer goods, but is a very profitable institution. Of course, the poor half of the World Population lives in nations which cannot buy products from the Industrialized nations. Some millions die of starvation every year in those nations. But, it is not because we cannot produce enough food, but because we believe in Money as the Sacred Regulator of economy.

We cannot give foodstuffs to those starving people, even if we let our over produced food to rot. Because, in our money intelligence, to give something for no return is not a "rational" thing to do. In historical sense, we have barely escaped from "Appropriation Economy" --- the Economy that is based on "taking away" by force ---. Or rather, we have not finished that phase. We invented "Exchange Economy" to overcome the horrors and atrocities of the Appropriation Economy. We still have residues of the Fear from the past. We can intellectually see that the economy is evolving from Appropriation to Exchange, and Exchange to Gift. But the historical apprehension about "Appropriation Economy" prevents us to go into "Gift Economy" which do deny "equal exchange".

To be sure, we can look at the troubles in and with the economy of "The third World" countries, and Welfare cases within the developed countries, and say it is not "equal". That is, we are not really in the "Exchange Economy", but rather still in the Appropriation Economy. But, we cannot deal with the problems of Inequality on the basis of the exchange economics. The reason is that the Exchange Rationality is powerful and able to provide legitimacy for social scale action, precisely because it conceals inequality. Lenin noticed this and said "Equality is not equal", meaning that one has to go to "Gift" level beyond superficial equality in exchange. However, Lenin was a "scientific" European intellectual, and could not use the term "Gift". Such was the Culture of his time. We are now able to talk of "Gift", only because we came to a crisis of Exchange Rationality.]

4. What is "Culture", in the Native sense? What do the Native Americans mean when they say "Whiteman destroyed our Culture"? My guess is as follows;

[[[Dear Professor Colorado please help me here!!!]]]

"Culture" is what makes a community functional in providing a certain set of symbols and expected actions associated with them so that the member can communicate and get things done.

The expected actions may be rituals, code of ethics, set of obligations. They may be called "customs". It informs an efficient way of organizing co-operations.

The kinds of expectation are also defined in the Culture. The members have the right to expect certain things and identify with the set-up. The Natives expect to be given foods when they somehow fall short of foods. They expect

that they be cared by others when they get sick. They expect to be treated with respect as to their dignity. They may not be conscious of those, but the surprise, shock, which they experience when they are denied, tells that they have taken the expectations granted. And if they are betrayed too often, the community breaks down and that is break down of a Culture.

There are also a set of expectations about how to express "displeasures", "disapprovals", "warning", etc. People knows a certain gesture would trigger a certain reaction in other members of the same Culture. For example, in Native Culture, issuing command is unacceptably rude. Even powerful chiefs make "suggestions". Members carry out the chief's wish out of respect, but they are not "slaves" to a commander. Europeans who came from Slave society (Slave Culture) cannot understand this. Europeans often wondered how Native community keep a social order without "command".

[Native God does not give "commandments", but merely give "advices". Incidentally, Buddhism does not issue commandments either. Judeo-Christianity is a religion of a Slave Culture, and very peculiar in that. This cultural background makes problems as to understanding of Science as "command" or as "advice".]

Above narration of the set of "expectations" sounds very much like Social Welfare that European Culture come to practice recently. The Natives had it for a long time. Besides, there is very important difference. The Natives had the mutual helps as a part of their Culture. One does not "beg", let alone feel loss of dignity in receiving the Gifts. One expects to be loved and it is given as a matter of "natural occurrence". It is analogous to the expectation of Love from mother. It is given absolutely free. One would hesitate to call it "Right". But, one would be justified in the Native Culture to be extremely upset, if the expected Love is not granted. And, one would not refuse to give Love to the others, unless there is grave reason for not to do so.

The European Social Welfare is not based on such cultural principle, but from "charity", "appeasement", "economic necessity for pump priming" etc. It has a logical stigma, even in the best of understanding, from a thinking that if the economy is functioning perfect Welfare would not be needed. That is Welfare is an anomaly, disease, emergency, not normal. It should not ideally be there.

Such is the European Culture. And this has a great deal to do with the European Cosmogony is that of "isolated bodies in vast emptiness".

For the Native Community, the Community is the Welfare. There Welfare is the normal state of affair. It is sure family, not market for economy. Native culture is a Culture of Community. And its Cosmology is "Sensual," --- as if they are still inside the Womb of the Cosmos ---.

The Native Cosmology is not only an expression of Native Culture, but the preserver of the Culture.

(Part I. 01/05/87.)

[We shall use for the part II.,

Douglas Sturm.

"Cosmogony and Ethics in the Marxian Tradition: Premise and Destiny of Nature and History."

in R.W.Lovin and F.E. Reynold (ed) Cosmogony And Ethical Order U. of Chicago Press 1985.

among other references. We like to locate and identify the wellspring of Social Change (revolution) in the Culture. Cosmology is an expression of the way a society or a community thinks, which I referred as "Culture". People have implicit cosmology to make sense of what they do. And it is the founding metaphysics that facilitate communication, and hence the basis of the actions. That give us clues as to what are options for the Native Community.]