Critical Transformations: Macrostructures, Religion, and Critique

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1. Critical Theory and Architectonic Critique

Addressing the First Christian Social Congress in 1891, Dutch political and religious leader Abraham Kuyper called the problem of socio-economic injustice a "social question." According to Kuyper, a social question reflects serious doubts about "the soundness of the social structure in which we live" and fundamental disagreements about the basis for "a more appropriate and more livable social order." As such, a social question does not really exist until one carries out "an *architectonic* critique of human society itself," a thorough-going critique of the social order. The violence and poverty that accompany capitalism lay at the center of Kuyper's concern. To address these social problems, he said, heightened piety and greater charity are not enough. Rather, scholars and activists need to engage in an architectonic critique. Such a critique will help people "desire a different arrangement of the social order and think it possible" (Kuyper, 1950: 39-40; translation modified).[1]

Kuyper was neither a Marxist nor a social democrat: his roots lay instead in a reform movement within nineteenth-century Dutch Calvinism. Yet his project of an architectonic critique has many resonances with the tradition of critical theory that later crystallized in the Frankfurt School. As pursued by subsequent Kuyperians such as the Dutch economist and political thinker Bob Goudzwaard, the project is transdisciplinary, explanatory, practical, and normative. Like critical theory in the Frankfurt tradition, it involves a high degree of historical

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[1] A more recent translation by James W. Skillen has the title *The Problem of Poverty* (Washington, DC: Center for Public Justice; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).

and interdisciplinary reflection; it seeks to explain what is wrong in society as it has taken shape over time; it tries to identify the agencies of social change; and it envisions a better social order that sustains human flourishing.[2]

The resonances between these two traditions weaken, however, when one compares their normative expectations. The Kuyperian project of architectonic critique involves a robustly normative vision and critique of the social order. It does not regard questions about how society is organized, and how this organization emerges and changes, as mere matters to be described and explained. Rather, in addition to descriptions and explanations, and in the very process of describing and explaining, it seeks to evaluate a society's organization and point out how it can be improved. For a society's organization makes a real difference to the quality of human life and the well-being of other creatures. According to Kuyper and his followers, well-articulated and substantive norms for social life, such as justice and solidarity, should be the basis for such an evaluation. To articulate such norms, they explicitly draw upon their own religious tradition.

This robustly normative emphasis sits uneasily alongside the normative expectations that guide critical theory, both in the Frankfurt tradition and in the projects of critical research that embody and inspire newer social movements such as feminism, post-colonialism, and ecocriticism. For these self-consciously emancipatory projects, domination and oppression are primary targets of critique, and democracy and freedom are leading social values. Like Karl Marx, many critical theorists would view with suspicion religiously inflected attempts to spell out the meaning of substantive norms: such attempts, especially when they claim universality, fit

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[2] See Bohman (2013) as well as the summary provided by Schüssler Fiorenza (2013: 43-44). Bohman writes: "It follows from Horkheimer's definition that a critical theory is adequate only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation."

all too readily into the ideological constructs that shore up current systems of domination and oppressive relations of power.

Perhaps the difference about normativity between Kuyperian social thought and critical social theory points toward a generative tension within critical research on religion as well. What do we expect from a critique of religion? If our primary concern is to show how religions are imbricated in the machinations of domination and oppression, then we will view particular religious traditions through the distancing lens of an ideology critique, and the substantive import of religious practices and organizations will have little to offer to our critique. At best, perhaps, we will regard religion as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances"—as "the opium of the people" (Marx, 2000: 72). If, by contrast, our primary concern is to reclaim religious import for a social critique and to wrest it free from ideological distortion, then we all too easily fall into the trap of endorsing, whether inadvertently or not, the role that religions play in securing systems of domination and maintaining oppressive relations of power. Is it possible for critical research on religion to offer both an ideology critique of religion and a critical retrieval of religious import?[3]

The tension between these two approaches resembles the one Jürgen Habermas once identified in the Frankfurt School between the ideology critique (*bewußtmachende Kritik*) of Herbert Marcuse and Theodor W. Adorno and the rescuing or redemptive critique (*rettende Kritik*) of Walter Benjamin. Rather than dismiss one or the other, Habermas proposed to incorporate both into a "materialistic theory of social evolution" (Habermas, 1983: 161). Perhaps something similar is needed in critical research on religion today.

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[3] The editors of this journal touch on the tension between critique and retrieval when they say that religion "has both positive and negative roles to play" and that the journal's contributors "will criticize religion not only from the outside but also from within (or for that matter from) religious traditions with which they identify" (Goldstein et al., 2013: 3, 4).

Yet Habermas did not adequately consider in 1972 how the release of the "semantic potentials" or "semantic energies" that Walter Benjamin found housed in archaic images, both artistic and religious, either would or should reconfigure historical materialism itself, including its critique of ideology. Critical research on religion also faces this sort of question. The tension between ideological and redemptive criticism raises the challenge of providing a full-fledged critique *of* religion, where "of" indicates both an objective and a subjective genitive. The challenge is to provide a critique that not only takes aim at religion in its societal roles, both negative and positive, but also takes inspiration from religion in a self-critical fashion.

This essay aims to sketch the beginnings of such a self-critical and religiously inspired critique aimed at religion. It will wed elements of a robustly normative and architectonic critique of society with social-theoretical insights derived from the Frankfurt School of critical theory. More specifically, it will appropriate elements from Goudzwaard's critique of capitalism alongside Habermas's "colonization of the life world" thesis in order to ask about the roles of religion in contemporary Western societies.

The discussion unfolds across five stages. First I briefly map three societal macrostructures that organize much of social life in Western societies. Then I discuss societal norms or principles that can sustain a critique of these macrostructures. Next I identify normative deficiencies within each of the macrostructures and in how they interrelate. On the basis of this architectonic critique, I then provide a brief account of religion and examine its societal roles. I conclude by envisioning a normative and emancipatory transformation of society as a whole, including contemporary religions.[4]

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[4] The essay's discussion of societal macrostructures, societal principles, normative deficiencies, and differential transformation (in sections 2, 3, 4, and 6) stems from two books that contain

2. Societal Macrostructures

I should say up front that my map of societal macrostructures has a normative horizon. The concept of social order is fundamentally about how human life in society is organized. As Kuyper recognized, this is not merely a descriptive notion. The concept of social order is unavoidably linked to normative questions. In Kuyper's terms, one can always ask about a social order whether it is "sound" and whether "a more appropriate and more livable social order" can be envisaged and achieved.

Certainly, for purposes of analysis, one can distinguish a more descriptive approach from more historiographic and evaluative approaches. But these approaches feed into each other. In *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, for example, Hegel draws systematic distinctions between persons and things, between morality and ethical life, and, within the realm of ethical life, among the family, civil society, and the state. Yet these systematic distinctions have historiographic underpinnings and a normative point. They draw upon a historiographic account of ever-expanding freedom, and the ethical reintegration of modern society serves as a normative telos. Similarly, as will become apparent, a historiographic dialectic between structural differentiation and normative distortion undergirds my own systematic distinctions, and the prospect of interconnected flourishing is the dialectic's normative horizon. Now let me introduce some systematic distinctions and describe three societal macrostructures.

2.1 Triaxial model

To answer the question of how life is organized in contemporary differentiated societies, I begin with the following premise: human persons exist in relation to others, and these relations

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more extensive explanations and arguments on these topics—see Zuidervaart (2007, 2011). For a lengthier version of the discussion of religion in section 5, see Zuidervaart (2010).

are constitutive of who they are. We could call this the premise of interpersonal identity.[5]

Accordingly, I give social-theoretical priority to the category of intersubjective "interaction" over such categories as individual "action" and "behavior."

Assuming this premise of interpersonal identity, I have developed a triaxial model of contemporary Western societies. The model distinguishes three vectors along each of three axes. The three axes of society, which intersect, are the *levels* at which interaction in society is configured, the *macrostructures* within which social life occurs, and the *societal principles* that obtain for social life in its configuration and structuration. The three levels of interaction are institutions, practices, and interpersonal relations. The macrostructures of contemporary social life consist of economy, polity, and civil society, along with the interfaces or intersections among them. And the most relevant societal principles that obtain for social life at these levels and within these macrostructures are ones of resourcefulness, justice, and solidarity. [INSERT DIAGRAM HERE]

2.2 Economy, State, Civil Society

Contemporary differentiated societies such as we find in Europe and North America are organized into three macrostructures, namely, the for-profit or proprietary economy, the administrative state, and civil society.[6] These macrostructures do not fully encompass all social

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[5] See the chapter on "Relational Autonomy" in Zuidervaart (2011: 207-40).
[6] My use of the adjectives "proprietary" and "administrative" is not intended to have negative connotations or to portray the economy and state in a merely negative light. Although my descriptions of these macrostructures are not "neutral"—no architectonic critique could be neutral—my criticisms are directed toward *all three macrostructures and their interrelations*, and I do not intend my adjectives to be pejorative. "Proprietary" points to the fact that organizations and transactions in the economic macrostructure follow principles of private ownership and private profit. "Administrative" indicates that the primary political power within the constitutional democratic states and suprastates of contemporary Europe and North America (elsewhere too) resides in the agencies of administration and not in the legislature or judiciary. They have developed a system of governance in which the primary political power resides in a

institutions: kinship patterns and faith communities, for example, might be only partially encompassed. Yet, we cannot adequately grasp or critique the contemporary social order, at least in Europe and North America, if we do not understand the pervasive role of these macrostructures.[7]

To describe the three macrostructures, I need to introduce a distinction between systemic and informal macrostructures. The economic and political macrostructures are systemic, but civil society is not. This means that the proprietary economy and administrative state are operationally self-contained. In Habermas's terms, they follow their own "logics" and have their own "steering media"—money, in the proprietary economy, and power, in the administrative state. The advantage to this systemic mode of organization is that proprietary-economic and state-administrative operations can proceed without continual communicative interaction by human agents. The disadvantage, however, is that these systems are prone to nearly intractable crisis tendencies and resistant to normatively motivated critique and redirection.[8]

Civil society, by contrast, is not a system. It is not operationally self-contained, it does not follow its own "logic," and it does not have its own "steering medium." Instead it is a diffuse

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complex and self-regulating bureaucracy largely impervious to influence from citizens—see Habermas (1996: 505). There are both advantages and disadvantages to the proprietary and administrative character of these two macrostructures. I am especially interested in normative deficiencies that affect all three macrostructures.

[7] In thinking about the proprietary economy, administrative state, and civil society, I have drawn most heavily on the work of Bob Goudzwaard and Jürgen Habermas. From Goudzwaard I have gained a better understanding of the religious underpinnings to these macrostructures and their normative distortions. See especially Goudzwaard (1979). From Habermas I have learned to reflect more systematically about the pressures that economic and political systems exert upon civil society—what Habermas describes as "the colonization of the life world." See especially Habermas (1984, 1987). My attempts to think through dialectical relations among societal macrostructures and among social institutions derive in part from a critical engagement with Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.

[8] As will become apparent, however, I do not share Habermas's view of these systems as congelations of "norm-free sociality" that we can access only in the objectivating attitude of the social sciences. See Habermas (1984, 1987, vol. 2, pp. 171-9).

array of organizations, institutions, and social movements that have a variety of tasks and retain direct ties to cultural practices and interpersonal relations. Yet civil society is a macrostructure, a large-scale structuration of contemporary social life. Schools, museums, public media, non-commercial arts organizations, non-governmental social agencies, and advocacy groups are just a few examples of agencies within civil society. The advantage to civil society's informal mode of organization is that it engenders communicative interaction among those who participate in it. But the disadvantage is that civil society is vulnerable to systemic pressures of an economic and political sort and often unable to have its legitimate concerns registered by the proprietary economy and administrative state.[9]

2.3 Civic Sector and Public Sphere

The intersections between civil society and the proprietary economy, on the one hand, and between civil society and the administrative state, on the other, have special significance for an architectonic critique of contemporary society, as we shall see.[10] I call the first of these intersections "the civic sector." The civic sector is the economic zone of cooperative, nonprofit, and mutual benefit organizations within national and international economies. It is the primary way in which civil society achieves both economic differentiation from and economic integration with the proprietary economy and the administrative state. The civic sector is the space in society

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[9] The most important sources for this all-too-brief account of civil society are Cohen and Arato, (1992) and Habermas (1996), especially Chapter 8, "Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere," pp. 329-87.

[10] As important or perhaps more important is the intersection between proprietary economy and administrative state, as Bob Goudzwaard has rightly pointed out in comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Habermas recognizes this as well, as can be seen from his work on "crisis tendencies" during the years leading up to *The Theory of Communicative Action*. See especially Habermas (1975). While I acknowledge this point, it would require a separate treatment beyond the scope of this paper.

that is most conducive to a "social economy"—an economy in which considerations of solidarity take precedence over efficiency, productivity, and maximal consumption.

I call the second intersection—that between civil society and the state—"the public sphere." The public sphere is a continually shifting network of discourses and media of communication that supports wide-ranging discussions about social justice and the common good. It sustains widespread participation in the shaping of societal structures. It facilitates challenges to the operations of the economic system and the administrative state. And, within civil society itself, it serves to promote democratic communication.

The proprietary economy and administrative state are complementary systems heavily dependent upon each other. Contemporary capitalism requires a high degree of state regulation, intervention, and support, as on-going attempts to deal with a global financial crisis have shown, and governments have much of their agenda set by the demands of maintaining national and global economies.[11] Hence, whatever flows from civil society toward the proprietary economy via the civic sector—such as new modes of organic farming—has direct implications for the public sphere—such as advocacy for new agricultural policies and health regulations. Similarly, whatever flows from civil society toward the administrative state via the public sphere has direct implications for the civic sector. The same holds for movements in the opposite direction, from the proprietary economy through the civic sector and from the administrative state through the public sphere. In order for civil society to remain intact, and not simply to become a pawn of economic and political systems, the interfaces among these macrostructures must maintain their identity and integrity. Specifically, the civic sector and public sphere must remain responsive to the imperatives of civil society and not become fully colonized by the proprietary economy and

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[11] For prescient analyses of how crises in economic and administrative systems reinforce each other, see Habermas (1975) and Offe (1984).

administrative state. For civil society is the space of social interaction and interpersonal communication where economic alternatives can thrive and where informal political publics can take root.

To forestall possible misunderstandings, let me add two remarks about economic and political systems. First, I specify the economic macrostructure as the for-profit or *proprietary* economy. But I do not think the proprietary economy is all-inclusive. Rather, countries in Europe and North America have a mixed economy that includes, along with the proprietary economy, a governmental economy and a social economy. One can say something similar about the global economy. So, although the proprietary economy is systemic and dominant, it is not the only way in which economic life is organized. Second, although I use the label "administrative state," I do not regard democratic constitutional states as merely administrative institutions. They *are* administrative institutions, to be sure, and bureaucratic control tends to be a dominant imperative within them. But they are also institutions for public justice, and securing and maintaining public justice are their primary normative task. Taken together, these two remarks suggest that tensions might inhere within and between the macrostructural systems of contemporary society. These tensions could provide sites for normative critique and redirection. At the center of such critique lie the societal principles I discuss next.

3. Societal Principles

3.1 Solidarity, Resourcefulness, Justice

Three societal principles are central to the critique I wish to propose, namely, solidarity, resourcefulness or stewardship, and justice. Although not the only relevant societal principles, these three need special attention in an architectonic critique of contemporary macrostructures. By "solidarity" I mean the expectation, indigenous to modern democratic societies, that no

individual, group, or community should be excluded from the recognition we owe each other as fellow human beings. "Resourcefulness" refers to our carefully stewarding human and nonhuman potentials for the sake of interconnected flourishing. "Justice" is the requirement that the legitimate interests of every bearer of rights and responsibilities, whether individual, communal, or institutional, should be honored in proper relationship to the interests of others.

These descriptions of solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice are not intended to be comprehensive definitions. They are preliminary approximations for the purpose of further discussion. And this is how it should be, given my general conception of societal principles as historically emergent, hermeneutically textured, and future-oriented. Let me discuss each of these characteristics.

3.2 Three Characteristics

First, societal principles are historically emergent. They have taken shape and gone into effect as human beings have faced the challenge of organizing their lives together and have given responses within their cultural practices and social institutions. What various societal principles mean and how we should enact what they require emerge historically in our attempts to be faithful to them. What solidarity means and requires today, for example, would have been unavailable and incomprehensible in a premodern world, even though one can trace its emerging meaning and effect back to premodern societal formations.[12] Similarly, the meaning of the societal principle of justice, which pertains to all levels of interaction and all societal macrostructures, has emerged as, within their changing practices and institutions, human beings

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[12] See in this connection Brunkhorst (2005). It would be instructive to compare Brunkhorst's historical-philosophical genealogy of "solidarity" with the genealogy of "justice" as involving inherent rights in Wolterstorff (2008).

work out what it means for them to flourish. Their responses to this challenge have become constitutive for what justice means and what it requires.

This suggests, in turn, that societal principles are hermeneutically textured. Not only do we need to interpret them in order to follow them but also they themselves embody human interpretations of who we are, what we need, and what our lives mean. I try to get at this hermeneutical texture by describing societal principles as both commonly holding and commonly held. We experience justice, for example, as something in which everyone has a stake and to which everyone can contribute. But we also experience it as a site of social struggle, such that the task of doing justice is never finished, and what justice means and requires is always in need of interpretation. As I have said elsewhere, "human fidelity to societal principles is ongoing and never finished, and part of such fidelity is to continue giving shape to societal principles. The ways in which people hold principles in common are significant for how societal principles hold people in common. What people actually hold in common at a particular time might not be in line with such principles. Yet they cannot hold something in common without appealing or gesturing toward societal principles, no matter how self-serving the appeal or how ideologically distorted the gesture. Conversely, in order for a principle to hold people in common, they must hold something in common." Hence, fidelity to societal principles "always involves people struggling over principles for human existence. At stake in the struggle is whether the commonly holding/held sustains and promotes life" (Zuidervaart, 2009: 6-7).

Historically emergent and hermeneutically textured, societal principles are also open to a future we do not control. We do not know now what solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice will mean and require in a hundred years. Yet being faithful to these societal principles now has implications for the future: such fidelity is a way in which human beings can contribute to a life-

giving disclosure of society, pursuing changes in society that could contribute to an interconnected flourishing that we can barely imagine. Societal principles themselves, which have emerged historically through human interpretation, manifest the pull of an open future. And this pull from the future addresses us now, insofar as solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice, as well as other societal principles, need to be in effect across the board in contemporary society, and we cannot be fully faithful to one without being fully faithful to the others. Let me call this dynamic correlation between fidelity to societal principles and a life-giving disclosure of society "the nexus of faithful disclosure." The nexus of faithful disclosure, to which I return in section 6, plays a crucial role in my critique of normative deficiencies and my vision of differential transformation.

4. Normative Deficiencies

Many critics of the contemporary social order take a functionalist approach. The economy or the state or civil society is not working well, they say, and we need to improve the internal operations of these macrostructures. Some critics will go farther than this and identify dysfunctional relations between macrostructures, for example, the failure of governments and international agencies to regulate the proprietary economy or the tendency of the proprietary economy to undermine and dominate civil society. Relatively few critics offer substantial normative criticisms of all three macrostructures in their interrelations. That, however, is central to a comprehensive architectonic critique.

Three general claims pervade this critique. First, each of the three macrostructures suffers from normative deficiencies. Second, these deficiencies are complementary and mutually reinforcing, such that to address one we must simultaneously address the others. Third, to remove such deficiencies will require both normative redirection of all three macrostructures and

a structural transformation of society as a whole. So an architectonic critique must indicate the normative deficiencies, demonstrate their complementarity, and point toward normative redirection and structural transformation.

4.1 Proprietary Economy

I begin with the proprietary economy, which, so far as I can tell, has become the dominant macrostructure in contemporary society. Its dominance is not surprising, given two prominent features of capitalism. First, capitalism has an inexorably expansive character: it needs to keep growing in order to survive, and it is very effective at finding new ways to grow, new resources to develop, new markets to create and control. This drive to expand presupposes a second feature, namely, the imperative to channel intrinsically collective and public goods into private and privileged pockets. Capitalism must continually generate excess returns for those who occupy positions of economic power, whether they be individual investors, transnational corporations, or the most prosperous countries in the world economy. Attempts to rectify resulting imbalances in the distribution of wealth—charity, progressive taxation, debt relief, foreign aid, and the like—do not challenge the continuation of this inherently exploitative system but rather functionally serve to maintain it.

Taken together, the expansive and exploitative features of capitalism go a long way toward explaining the normative deficiency of the contemporary economic system. This deficiency involves two mutually reinforcing normative failures. First, as Bob Goudzwaard has argued, the economic system gives priority to certain sorts of economic expansion and technological innovation, and it does so at the expense of justice and solidarity, turning such considerations into mere means to achieve so-called progress. Second, the capitalist economic system also distorts the societal principle of resourcefulness. Instead of fostering a society where

human and nonhuman potentials are carefully stewarded so that all the earth's inhabitants can flourish, contemporary capitalism twists the principle of resourcefulness in the direction of efficiency, productivity, and maximal consumption for their own sakes. The second failure reinforces the first, for it turns considerations of justice and solidarity into economic afterthoughts, into belated attempts to alleviate the damage necessarily done by a system that does not prize resourcefulness in the first place. When unrestrained, contemporary capitalism shows itself to be an exploitative and unsustainable system.

4.2 Administrative State and Civil Society

Often the critics of capitalism turn to either the administrative state or civil society to make up for normative deficiencies in the economic system. Unfortunately this not only helps secure the economic system as it is but also presupposes that the state or civil society is itself normatively intact. I see little reason to endorse this presupposition. Both the contemporary state and today's civil society suffer from normative deficiencies that complement those of the economic system. Just as capitalism prioritizes "growth" at the expense of justice and solidarity, distorting the meaning of resourcefulness, so the administrative state gives priority to certain types of bureaucratic control at the expense of resourcefulness and solidarity. In tandem with this failure, the contemporary administrative state also distorts the societal principle of justice. Instead of providing legal frameworks and democratic governance that would ensure just distributions of resources and meaningful participation in the affairs of state, it redirects the justice it should uphold toward positions of power and privilege. So too, contemporary civil society gives priority to diversity and charity and thereby distorts the societal principle of solidarity. Rather than provide a robust array of avenues for intercultural dialogue and social inclusion, organizations in contemporary civil society tend to equate solidarity with tolerance

and kindness.[13] This tendency not only undermines democratic participation and recognition but also gives short shrift to considerations of resourcefulness and justice that cannot simply be relegated to the proprietary system and administrative state.[14]

4.3 Mutual Complementarity

In other words, the three macrostructures suffer from two types of mutually complementary normative deficiencies. They distort the meaning of resourcefulness, justice, and solidarity, and they make it less likely for these societal principles to be in effect across society as a whole. Instead, the principles are relegated to separate zones, as if, for example, justice is of little concern to proprietary businesses or solidarity does not count in governmental matters or resourcefulness need not be an important consideration in civil society. In fact, the two types of deficiency reinforce each other, for resourcefulness, justice, and solidarity themselves are mutually complementary: the intrinsic meaning of each societal principle depends on the others also being in effect at the same time. Instead of mutual normative complementarity, we have a society whose macrostructures both distort the meaning of specific societal principles and render other societal principles inoperative. The economic system distorts resourcefulness while downplaying justice and solidarity. The political system disfigures public justice while thinning

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[13] This is not intended as an exhaustive characterization of normative deficiencies in civil society. Because civil society is not a system, its normative deficiencies tend to be more varied and diffuse than those one can identify in the proprietary economy and the administrative state. In *Art in Public* I describe three sets of pressures—external, internal, and technological—that create or reinforce normative problems in civil society, and I discuss these pressures, respectively, as economic hypercommercialization and administrative performance fetishism, cultural balkanization and exclusion, and technologically induced pastiche and neomania. Tendencies toward balkanization and exclusion, in particular, hinder solidarity in civil society by pointing its institutions and organizations away from intercultural dialogue and social inclusion. See Zuidervaart (2011: 176-90).

[14] These concerns add complexity to the debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003) about whether socio-economic justice requires redistribution, recognition, or both, and in which order of priority.

out the meaning of resourcefulness and solidarity. Civil society reduces the scope of solidarity while underemphasizing considerations of resourcefulness and justice.

Yet the three societal principles at issue here cannot have equally decisive roles in all three macrostructures. Just as resourcefulness and justice set the primary tasks of the institutions within economic and political systems, respectively, so solidarity is the primary normative consideration within civil society. An economic system that gave greater weight to considerations of solidarity or justice than to careful mobilization of the earth's resources would be no less problematic than one that blindly pursues efficiency, productivity, and maximal consumption, no matter what the social and political costs. Similarly, a political system that gave greater weight to considerations of resourcefulness or solidarity than to achieving and maintaining public justice would be no less flawed than one that pursues administrative power for its own sake. So too, a civil society that made resourcefulness or justice its highest consideration would quickly turn into an economic system or administrative state. That would be no less destructive of civil society than is diluting solidarity into the mere promotion of tolerance and kindness.

In other words, what Goudzwaard calls "the simultaneous realization of norms" (1979: 65-8)[15] cannot mean that the three societal principles have equal weight in all three macrostructures. But it does mean that the decisive weight of solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice, respectively, in civil society, economy, and state cannot come at the expense of the other societal principles. That is why normative redirection and structural transformation must go hand in hand, in a process I shall describe as "differential transformation" in this paper's concluding section.

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[15] Goudzwaard derives the idea of a simultaneous realization of norms from the work of economist TP van der Kooy and the philosopher and legal theorist Herman Dooyeweerd.

5. Critique of Religion

Next, however, let me draw out some implications of my architectonic critique for a critique *of* religion. This critique, too, is both structural and normative, and it asks about the role of religion in relation to societal macrostructures. Let me first characterize the normative structure of religion before I discuss the dialectical relations religion sustains with civil society.[16]

5.1 Organized Religion

I wish to discuss religion primarily as a distinctive array of practices and organizations in which the practices are always already institutionalized and are thoroughly intersubjective. It is in this sense that one can speak about the various "religious traditions" and "world religions."[17] This concept of organized religion is distinct from a second concept to which it is closely related. The second concept is of religion as "spirituality." Religion as spirituality is the all-encompassing orientation or direction of people's lives and of their culture and society. It has to do with what we find most important, what matters most. Certainly the orientation or direction of our lives will show up in institutionalized religious practices. But it does not require such practices in order to show up, and it can and does show up in many other organizations and practices—political, economic, artistic, academic, and the like. As Charles Taylor (2007) has argued at length, the so-called secularization of Western society may well have shaken the ability of religious organizations to shape people's spirituality. That does not mean, however, that

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[16] For the sake of concision, I shall touch only briefly on religion's relation to the state and leave aside questions about religion and the proprietary economy, except insofar as these come up indirectly in my discussion of religion and the civic sector.

[17] One of the referees for this essay has pointed out that the concepts of "religion" and "world religion" have deep historical roots in a European socio-political project and might not be adequate ways to grasp the wide range of relevant practices the world over. While I acknowledge the importance of this concern—similar worries could be raised about the concept of a "critique" of religion—I am not sufficiently well versed in the study of such practices to propose a persuasive alternative concept.

spirituality has weakened or disappeared. Instead, either other institutions have stepped into the breach (the nation state, for example, in connection with nationalism, or the market economy, in connection with consumerism as a way of life) or individuals have sought non-institutional and anti-institutional pathways for their spiritual quests (nature mysticism, for example, or an ethic of personal authenticity). One's spirituality can be an all-encompassing orientation without necessarily employing the practices of organized religion.

Organized religion, by contrast, involves a distinctive array of practices and organizations that have their own legitimacy and worth in relationship to other institutions—not only the state but also institutions of kinship, economy, education, and the like. Whereas religion as spiritual orientation *shows up* in many different institutions and practices, including organized religion, organized religion *intersects* other institutions and practices but maintains its own legitimacy and worth. From here on I use the term "religion" to refer to organized religion—to religion as institutionalized worship and faith—and reserve the term "spirituality" for religion as all-encompassing orientation or direction.[18]

More than anything else, what distinguishes organized religion from other institutions and practices is the pursuit of religious truth. This pursuit is the normative task of religion within a differentiated society. I understand religious truth to be a process of worshipful disclosure in dynamic correlation with human fidelity to the societal principle of faith as hopeful trust. In the practices of religion, people seek to disclose the meaning of their lives and of the institutions, communities, cultures, and societies they inhabit. The meaning to be disclosed pertains to what ultimately sustains them in the face of both good and evil, whether personal and interpersonal or

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[18]The distinction between spirituality and organized religion derives in part from the work of the Kuyperian philosophers D.H.Th. Vollenhoven (1892-1978) and Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977), who differentiate between "religion" (what I call "spirituality") and "faith" (what I call "religion"). For a summary and evaluation of Dooyeweerd's conception, see Olthuis (1985).

cultural and societal or historical and transhistorical. In disclosing such meaning, people place their hope and trust—their faith—in a source of ultimate sustenance. That source can have various names, and it can show up in diverse ways. Many people name the source of their ultimate sustenance "God."[19]

Religious communities often find and have found "God" speaking to them in the stories of their faith, both oral and written. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, for which certain sacred writings provide an authoritative touchstone, can be called scriptural religions. In a scriptural religion, the activities and symbols of worship typically orient themselves to the stories of faith told in that religion's sacred writings or scriptures. For adherents of such religions, to interpret scriptures, whether informally or formally, is to retell inscripturated stories of faith in a contemporary context.

Every religion, whether scriptural or not, also develops and passes on certain rituals. Rituals are ways in which a religious community finds "God" showing up. Rituals are how a religious community appropriates the hopeful and trustful disclosure of ultimate meaning that occurs in the activities and experiences of its members. Within a religious context, to participate in the rituals of worship is to reenact such disclosure, to remember and celebrate the source of ultimate sustenance, to participate in "God's" appearance.

That in turn requires the encouragement and support of others who also take this approach—something that usually occurs within a community of faithful and worshipful participants. A religious community finds the meaning of its stories and rituals to be significant when these address the community's need for worshipful disclosure of the source of ultimate

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[19] This essay uses the term "God" in scare quotes to indicate whatever religious communities take to be the source of their ultimate sustenance. The actual names for this source differ from one community to another.

sustenance in which the community places its trust. Teachings are attempts to summarize the meaning that a religious community has found significant over the generations and continues to find significant. Doctrines are attempts to render explicit the significant meaning of a community's stories of faith and rituals of worship. The propositional truth of teachings and doctrines is indexed to such significant meaning. That is why, like Hegel, I do not consider religious truth to be primarily propositional, even though I also do not regard it as mainly subjective.[20]

According to my structural and normative account, then, religion in a differentiated society involves a distinctive array of practices and organizations whose primary task is to support and enable a trusting and worshipful disclosure of what people take to be their source of ultimate sustenance. Stories of faith and the rituals of worship play a central role in organized religion. Although the actual stories and rituals will differ significantly from one organized religion to another, they are indispensable to religion as such.

5.2 Modes of Critique

This characterization of organized religion provides the basis for my proposed critique *of* religion, for a critique that, taking inspiration from religion in a self-critical fashion, evaluates the roles of religion in contemporary society.[21] At least two modes of evaluation are needed. One

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[20] I do not have space to take up Hegel's account of "revealed religion" (*die offenbare Religion*) in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §§672-808, pp. 410-93. Suffice it to say that I do not think "spirit" must rise from the religious level of representational thinking to philosophical pure thought in order to come fully into its own. Habermas observes that Hegel's "sublation of the world of religious representation in the philosophical concept enabled the saving of its essential contents only by casting off the substance of its piety. … [T]he atheistic core, enveloped in esoteric insight, was reserved for the philosophers" (Habermas, 1992: 227).

[21] Although I hope my characterization of religion does not do an injustice to other organized religions, the specific source of my own understanding and evaluation of religion lies in a progressive interpretation of Calvinist Protestantism, as mediated by the Dutch Kuyperian tradition.

is internal to organized religion itself. An internal evaluation asks whether contemporary religions carry out their normative task. Do they in fact support and enable a trusting and worshipful disclosure of what their adherents take to be their source of ultimate sustenance? If so, to what extent? If not, why not, and how would they need to change?

Questions along these lines could support a critique of fundamentalism or patriarchy or homophobia as a normatively deficient tendency within contemporary religions—dramatically deficient, in my view. Often such normative religion-internal criticisms are most effectively made by adherents of the particular religion in question: effective because critical adherents can authentically appeal to the same stories and rituals that other adherents embrace. But nonadherents or adherents of other religions also can make highly effective internal criticisms, partly because they do not experience the same communal and institutional constraints on how they lodge their criticisms.

The second mode of evaluation—call it external critique—considers the relationships between organized religion and other institutions and practices such as the arts, education, and mass media. My own discussion below of religion in relation to civil society is an example of external critique.

At the same time, however, one cannot neatly parcel out regimes of domination and oppression in terms of either religion as such or religion in relation to other social spheres. Such regimes are deeply entrenched in society as a whole. Consequently, to ask about the role of religion with respect to current hegemonic regimes, one must incorporate internal and external approaches into a comprehensive critique of religion. A comprehensive critique will take seriously both religion's internal normative status and its relations to other practices and institutions and will ask how these together do or do not contribute to hegemony, to what extent,

and with what implications for emancipatory social change. Although providing such a comprehensive critique lies beyond the scope of this paper, I think it is essential for all religiously informed criticisms of religion. It should not simply be left to those who have no religious allegiances, even though, historically, they have been the most astute comprehensive critics of religion.

The other side to a comprehensive critique, however, is to ask what in general organized religion should offer to society as a whole. In my view, religion, as institutionalized faith and worship, should call other institutions to account. At its best, religion holds open possibilities for human flourishing and either relativizes or calls into question the specific ways in which people, in their cultural practices and social institutions, try to follow discrete societal principles such as solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice. It does so by calling adherents to hopeful trust in a source of ultimate sustenance that cannot be limited to any current practices and institutions whether in isolation or in combination. In this way religion can place in question contemporary attempts or failures to pursue solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice, including the hegemonic regimes that steer such attempts, and it can hold open possibilities for a greater degree of interconnected flourishing in the contemporary world.

Hence religion can perform both critical and utopian roles in society. For example, religious communities can challenge the operations of state power and can ask whether the state is in fact achieving public justice for the diverse institutions, communities, and individuals within the state's jurisdiction. One sees this potential, for example, in the history of Judaism, when prophets like Isaiah, speaking on behalf of their people and religion, criticized their rulers for failing to defend the widows and orphans. Decoupled from the state through modern differentiation, contemporary religions can achieve a new degree of freedom: not the freedom of

privatized irrelevance, but a critical freedom to envision what justice requires, to resist state-sponsored injustice, and to lend a voice to the marginalized and oppressed in society.

Religious communities also can hold open the prospect of a society in which the state, along with other institutions, truly sustains the interconnected flourishing of all human beings and the earth they inhabit. Images of such a society occur in every world religion: the messianic condition in Jewish prophetic literature, for example, and the new earth in the apocalypse of St. John—images that recall the promises of reconciliation (Genesis) and liberation (Exodus) in the earliest books of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. By itself, the state is powerless to pursue such a social vision. When the state tries to pursue it on its own, the state exceeds its normative task, with disastrous results. Yet the state needs religious reminders that there is more to societal wellbeing than the state can provide, and that what the state does provide is never enough. In other words, religion can offer an eschatological horizon that relativizes the accomplishments and mandate of the state and of other institutions. Accordingly, a comprehensive critique of religion would ask not only whether and how contemporary religions contribute to hegemony but also whether and how they provide critical and utopian alternatives to hegemonic regimes.

5.3 Religion and Civil Society

These critical and utopian roles acquire a specific shape in relation to civil society. Philosophically, religion as institutionalized faith and worship has had an uncertain status with respect to civil society. Neither Hegel nor Habermas, for example, gives sustained attention to religion when they lay out their conceptions of civil society. Yet both of them clearly think religion has a role to play in the formation and continuation of civil society. How should that role be understood?

I propose to regard religion as both an incubator of civil-societal organizations and a disturber of civil-societal patterns. Religious communities, in their disclosure of ultimate meaning, can help give birth to artistic, educational, and other organizations and movements that contribute to cultural, economic, and political change. One sees this, for example, in the history of North American schools and universities, in struggles to expand the electoral franchise, and in the Civil Rights Movement. Religious communities, in their refusal to find ultimate meaning in any existing practices and institutions, can also disturb the current array of organizations in civil society or challenge the direction in which civil society is heading. This disruptive role has the potential to become problematic when religious communities take a fundamentalist turn, as is evident from contemporary efforts in the United States to restrict the teaching of evolutionary biology in public schools and to resist environmentalism. Historically, however, religious communities have also opened spaces in civil society for scientific inquiry and have helped redirect civil society toward environmental concerns.[22]

Unlike other critics of fundamentalism, I do not think that all religious disturbance of civil society is inherently problematic. Moreover, insofar as fundamentalism's disruptive tendency is problematic, I would trace the source of the problem back to normative deficiencies in fundamentalists' understanding and practice of religion. Rather than pursue worshipful disclosure in hopeful trust, fundamentalism tends to substitute its own scriptures and rituals for the source of ultimate sustenance. While purporting to worship "God," fundamentalism fetishizes its own religious practices: its interpretation of sacred writings becomes sacrosanct,

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[22] These, of course, are not the only options or historical tendencies. My point is simply that the religious disturbance of civil-societal patterns can span the religious spectrum. James Davison Hunter (1991) offers one influential attempt to make sense of such disturbance within the polarized culture-political landscape of the United States. I discuss some of the concomitant art-political struggles in Zuidervaart (2011).

and its enactment of religious rituals becomes an ultimate authority. Consequently, anyone who worships differently or not at all becomes an object of suspicion and an occasion for despair. Such subversion of hopeful trust often translates into efforts either to reject or to dominate civil society.

The critique of fundamentalism has particular relevance for the civic sector and the public sphere, where religion's dual role as incubator and disturber acquires great societal significance. Let me next discuss religion and the civic sector and then consider religion and the public sphere.

5.3.1 Religion and the Civic Sector

In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel correctly observes that religious communities have an economic dimension. They have "possessions and property," he says, and this fact places them within "the province of the state" (1991: 295-6). But Hegel does not ask about the peculiar character of religious ownership, nor does he reflect on how religious ownership relates to larger economic patterns. He fails to note that the economic organization of religious communities exemplifies an economy that cannot be reduced either to a proprietary market economy or to a governmental political economy. In a religious economy, resources are supposed to be held in trust for the community as a whole and cannot legitimately be deployed to the advantage of only select members of the community. Moreover, every member of the community is expected, where able, to contribute resources, whether time, money, or specific possessions, to the ongoing life of the religious community.[23]

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[23] I use the term "religious economy" in quite a different sense from the way it is used in rational choice theory, for reasons similar to my objections to "market failure" accounts of the civic sector in Zuidervaart (2011: 129-69).

A pattern of communalizing resources is necessary for religion as the type of institution it is. Because institutionalized faith and worship require mutual encouragement and support among members of a religious community, the appropriate economy cannot operate either on the principle of private profit or on the principle of impartial allocation. The guiding economic principle must be one of mutual service on behalf of the community and all of its members—what some religionists call "stewardship."

This guiding principle for a religious economy places religious communities in both proximity and tension with the social economy of civil society. The normative priority of solidarity as a societal principle in the economy of civic sector organizations helps explain both the proximity and the tension. Economically, both religious communities and civic sector organizations give normative priority to a "common good" rather than to either "private" or "public" goods. Yet this similarity harbors an important difference. Whereas the common good emphasized by religious communities is first of all the good of their own communities of faith and worship, the common good emphasized by civic sector organizations is more diffuse, a good that in principle would be tended and provided for all who need it, regardless of their community memberships.[24] From the perspective of civil society, religious organizations can appear unduly parochial. From the perspective of religion, civic sector organizations can appear unduly open ended.

Nevertheless, interactions between religious and civic sector organizations can open up religion. If the addressee of religious faith and worship is indeed a source of ultimate sustenance,

[24]This difference gives rise to some of the concerns that surround government funding for "faith-based initiatives." Such funding involves a tricky balancing between the community-oriented concerns of religious organizations and the civil-society orientation of civic sector organizations, together with the concerns about public justice that should be uppermost in government programs.

then religious communities cannot properly be concerned about only their own wellbeing. What ultimately sustains members of a religious community in the face of both good and evil would not be ultimate if it sustained only them. Furthermore, if the point of their religious practices is to disclose the meaning of their lives, this will include the meaning of the nonreligious relationships they have as citizens, workers, consumers, and so forth. Religious practices are unavoidably about more than religion. To be parochial with respect to the religious community's resources would violate the ultimacy of its source of sustenance and would subvert the import of the community's religious practices.

Accordingly, participation in the civic sector can help remind religious adherents of a religion's inherent potential for inclusiveness and generosity. Civic sector organizations can also challenge religious adherents to relativize their own religious community, to regard religious truth not as their exclusive possession and the community's resources not as exclusively theirs, to recognize that the good is more common than a devout religionist might expect, and that the goods a religious community holds in common are also for the common good. In other words, religion needs to sustain a dialectical relationship with the civic sector, such that religion's role as incubator and disturber does not degenerate into control and violence.

5.3.2 Religion and the Public Sphere

Just as Hegel acknowledges but attenuates the economic dimension of religious communities, so he recognizes but resists their political dimension. Although he constructs a dialectical relation between religion and state, he has little to say about the role of religion in the practices and media of communication where political interests and advocacy take shape. Yet it is precisely here, in the political public sphere or, better, in the political dimension of the public sphere, that many contemporary concerns about religion arise.

Lying at the intersection between civil society and the state, the public sphere is both a societal structure and a normative principle. As a structure, it encompasses formal publics (e.g., parliaments) and informal publics (e.g., advocacy groups) and allows two-way traffic to flow between the state and civil society. As a normative principle, the public sphere embodies the promise, built into the operating assumptions of various organizations, that communication and decision-making about matters of general concern such as health care and the environment will be genuinely democratic. This principle of democratic communication implies that groups should demonstrate universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity when they call attention to matters of general concern and should be prepared to justify their procedures in that regard.[25]

On the face of it, this principle of democratic communication seems incompatible with the process of religious truth. Do not religious practices unavoidably lift matters of general concern out of the public arena and into a place where democratic communication is either impossible or inappropriate? Conversely, if religious communities try to bring the worshipfully disclosed meaning of their lives to bear on matters of general concern in the political public sphere, will they not automatically violate the principle of democratic communication?

The apparent incompatibility between democratic communication and religious truth has two conceptual sources. One is an overly constricted notion of truth. Many religionists, like their contemporary critics, restrict the character of truth to propositional truth. They thereby tend to reduce the import of institutionalized faith and worship to whatever can be stated in propositional form—to teachings, creeds, and doctrines, for example. Although such formulations do have a

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[25]See "Models of Public Space" in Benhabib (1992: 89-120).

legitimate role to play in religious communities, it is a mistake, in my view, to reduce faithful and worshipful disclosure of ultimate meaning to statements about it.[26]

The other source of apparent incompatibility is inattention to the democratic presuppositions of religious life. Inattention arises from how religionists and their critics understand the justification of religious beliefs. We tend to view such justification as primarily or exclusively a discursive procedure, as a matter of arguing for the validity of linguistic claims. This tendency removes the justification of religious beliefs from the practical contexts where such a discursive procedure has significant meaning.

It would be better, it seems to me, to regard the justification of religious beliefs as just one element within a more comprehensive process that I call the "authentication of truth." By "authentication" I mean the ways in which people bear witness to truth (Zuidervaart, 2007: 101-6). Authentication of religious truth is the process whereby religious communities attest in practice to a dynamic correlation between the worshipful disclosure of what ultimately sustains them and their hopeful trust in this source of ultimate sustenance. Religious communities can attest to such religious truth in retelling the stories of their faith and in reenacting the rituals of their worship. They can also bear witness economically in their organization and deployment of communal resources. And they can testify to religious truth in how they discursively justify their religious beliefs. If such justification becomes isolated from other modes of authentication, however, or if discursive justification becomes the full extent of a religious community's authentication, that will impede a community's ability to live out the import of its religion.

Moreover, the authentication of truth, whether religious or otherwise, is invitational and public. It openly invites others to recognize what truth requires, and it welcomes a response from

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[26] My colleague Ronald Kuipers (2002) gives an extensive argument that supports this view.

those invited, a response of uncoerced acceptance or rejection or inattention. Hence the principle of democratic communication is intrinsic to genuine authentication, including the authentication of religious truth. Democratic communication is thereby also intrinsic to the discursive justification of religious beliefs, which makes up one element within religious authentication. The apparent incompatibility between religious truth and democratic communication is just that: it is merely apparent, even though failures in democratic communication are all too common in the actual conduct of religious communities.[27]

I have suggested that religion is first and foremost a matter of retelling stories of faith and reenacting rituals of worship. If these stories and rituals have a bearing on matters of general concern—as they surely do and must—then contemporary religious communities need to communicate the meaning of their stories and rituals in ways that show respect for others and remain open to being accepted, rejected, or ignored. There will be no knockdown arguments for religious beliefs in the public sphere, for the point of such arguments will not be to knock down the opposition. But there will also be no refusal to give arguments, because arguments are intrinsic to respectful and open communication in the public sphere.

Yet the most important "arguments" to be given by religion in public will not be merely discursive justifications. They will be demonstrations in practice that a religious source of ultimate sustenance truly deserves hopeful trust. The prophet Micah summarized as follows what the religion of his community comes to: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly

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[27] I realize, of course, that this account puts me at odds both with critics like Richard Rorty who consider religion to be a "conversation-stopper" in public political discussion and with "true believers" who consider the truth of their religion to be the only truth. To answer their objections adequately would require a more expansive account of truth and authentication. Of greatest interest in the present context is how both sides give priority to propositional truth and discursive justification. They simply disagree about the compatibility of religion with propositional truth and about the discursive justifiability of religious beliefs. Moreover, this disagreement truncates their debate about the role of religion in the public sphere.

with your God" (Micah 6.8, NRSV). If contemporary religionists were to follow this injunction in their dealings with others, they would be worthy conversation partners in the public sphere. To the extent that they fail in this regard, they undermine the critical and utopian role of religion in society, and their practices deserve both internal and external criticism.

6. Differential Transformation

Insofar as contemporary religions provide critical and utopian alternatives to hegemonic regimes, they hold open the possibility of society-wide transformation. Envisioning such a transformation is intrinsic to the architectonic critique I have proposed, drawing inspiration in part from my own religious tradition. What I envision is a differential transformation. By "differential transformation" I mean a process of significant change in contemporary society as a whole that occurs at differing levels, across various structural interfaces, and with respect to distinct societal principles. Because no single societal site can suffice as an arena in which to promote creaturely flourishing, and because the various levels and macrostructures intersect, the change must occur in society as a whole. Yet changes within many diverse sites will not suffice if they do not move in mutually reinforcing directions. Hence the change in society as a whole needs to be an internally differentiated and complementary process. And, given the role of macrostructures in organizing social life and their mutually reinforcing normative deficiencies, this process must involve both structural transformation and normative redirection. I believe that the differentiation of levels, macrostructures, and principles in Western society provides a historical basis for such a process. Let me illustrate the required structural transformation by discussing interfaces among civil society, the proprietary economy, and the administrative state. Then I will consider normative redirection.

6.1 Structural Transformation

Arguably an achievement of modernization has been to create societal macrostructures that follow their own imperatives. The result is a society in which, for example, law and politics are not supposed to serve merely private economic interests, and the organizations and agencies of civil society are not supposed to serve merely the interests of state. Admittedly, the integrity of these macrostructures is under constant threat. Indeed, the economically and politically powerful regularly subvert it in their pursuit of greater wealth and control. Yet the macrostructures remain mostly intact, and their boundaries are relatively clear.

This provides a basis for evaluating patterns of social order. As Habermas's thesis about the "colonization of the life world" suggests, patterns that subsume one macrostructure under another are inherently destructive and unstable. Two obvious examples are economic imperialism and political authoritarianism. Yet a critique of imperialism and authoritarianism needs to go beyond simply identifying and rejecting violence. It must insist on the integrity of distinct macrostructures, and it must detect those spots where structural interfaces have been weakened or overridden. For a macrostructure cannot maintain its integrity if it is not open in appropriate ways to the imperatives of other macrostructures. Here the civic sector and the public sphere, as intersections between civil society and the proprietary economy and administrative state, become especially important for structural differentiation and integration. To achieve sufficient focus, let me concentrate my remarks on the civic sector and leave the public sphere out of consideration.

6.1.1 Structural integration

The apparent dominance of the economic macrostructure in contemporary society raises questions about the relationship between differentiation and integration. Some types of integration, while allowing for functional differentiation, can nevertheless hollow out

differentiated spheres, destroy the earth, and foster oppression on a massive scale. This seems to characterize contemporary turbocapitalism. It provides global integration that sparks and supports functional differentiation, but in a hollowing, destructive, and oppressive fashion. So how are we to conceive of a proper structural integration under conditions of economic globalization?

In line with my previous comments about "the nexus of faithful disclosure," I think a proper structural integration will have as its horizon a life-giving disclosure of society: a historical process in which human beings and other creatures come to flourish, and not just some human beings or certain creatures, but all of them in their interconnections. This idea of societal disclosure relativizes the achievements of functional differentiation. It encourages us to ask to what extent and in which respects the current array of differentiated levels and macrostructures supports, promotes, hinders, or prevents the interconnected flourishing of human beings and other creatures. The idea also enables one to engage in an internal critique of specific differentiated levels or macrostructures with a view to the larger historical process and structural constellation in which they participate and to which they contribute.

All of this has implications for how we understand the civic sector's social economy. Although it is an economy, and neither a polity nor a set of values, the social economy of the civic sector is one in which solidarity needs to inflect considerations of resourcefulness and justice—just as resourcefulness needs to inflect considerations of justice and solidarity in the proprietary economy, and justice needs to inflect considerations of resourcefulness and solidarity in the political economy of the administrative state. From a normative perspective, then, one can distinguish between a social economy of solidarity-inflected resourcefulness and a political

economy of justice-inflected resourcefulness. In the proprietary economy, by contrast, resourcefulness should play the leading role, inflecting considerations of solidarity and justice.

This normative understanding supports a more-than-pragmatic conception of how the three economies would properly intersect. Intersections with the civic sector's social economy would not be thought to arise as mere responses to what economists call "market failure." Rather, we would regard the social economy as the sort of economy that is especially appropriate for the civic sector, one that enables civic-sector organizations to foster solidarity in society, always with a view to considerations of resourcefulness and justice, but not as a substitute for what the proprietary economy and administrative state should properly accomplish. Because the latter systems are normatively deficient, as is civil society too, pressures have built for civic-sector organizations to take on what these systems fail to provide, such as sustainable sources of energy or universal health care. It would be better for agencies of civil society, together with religious communities, to call these systems to account than to act as the de facto dumping ground for systemically generated problems.

6.1.2 Submerged social economy

Part of calling economic and political systems to account is to point out the social economy submerged within them. I realize it is controversial to claim that these systems have a hidden social economy; initially the claim might strike other social theorists as implausible. Yet one can find evidence of a submerged social economy in both systems.[28] Thanks in part to examples and advocacy stemming from the civic sector, proprietary businesses often use the language of "social responsibility." They develop procedures of social accounting and undertake

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[28] Here I disagree with Hauke Brunkhorst, who claims that differentiated social systems "use human substance without replacing it" and that "functional systems like the market economy or sovereign state power, taken in themselves, represent new forms of social integration without solidarity" (2005: 82–3).

social audits. They also adopt voluntary codes of conduct within specific branches of industry and commerce that go beyond business ethics toward something like a social ethic. In other words, there is a growing recognition, at least among socially enlightened firms, that the proprietary economy has a social-economic moment, that showing solidarity toward the workers, customers, and communities that sustain these enterprises and are affected by them cannot be an economic afterthought. So too, government agencies regularly use the language of "community involvement." They develop procedures of consultation with stakeholders and undertake impact studies before launching new projects. They also put in place self-regulatory guidelines that go beyond minimal legal requirements toward something like a social ethic. In these ways politicians and civil servants, at least in some branches and departments of government, demonstrate awareness that the political economy has a social-economic moment, that showing solidarity with citizens and with the beneficiaries of government programs cannot remain on the margin of government operations.

To point out this hidden social economy in economic and political systems is not to deny that they need redirection, nor to ignore how social-economic rhetoric can be used to put a gloss on practices and policies that are inherently anti-social, nor to suggest that systemic economies should become full-fledged social economies. The point instead is to indicate a social-economic basis within economic and political systems for giving appropriate weight to considerations of solidarity, considerations that their own focus on efficiency-reduced resourcefulness and administratively diminished justice would seem to preclude. There is a social-economic basis within the proprietary and political economies for a differential transformation of all three macrostructures and their interfaces. Religious communities and civic-sector organizations need

to highlight this social-economic basis. They need to call for significant restructuration of both systems. And they need to pursue a redirection of the civic sector.

6.2 Normative Redirection

My critique of normative deficiencies in societal macrostructures envisions a different social order, and this social vision stems in part from religious stories and rituals in which I have participated.[29] The social order I envision would promote the interconnected flourishing of all earth's inhabitants. To move toward such a social order will require normative redirection throughout society and especially within and across society's macrostructures. The societal principles of solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice provide substantial guidelines for the normative redirection required. Let me describe this normative redirection first *within* and *across* societal macrostructures, and then *beyond* them.

6.2.1 Internal and interlinked redirection

I said earlier that solidarity is the decisive societal principle for civil society, and I criticized contemporary civil society for reducing the scope of solidarity and underemphasizing considerations of resourcefulness and justice. There are many sources to such normative deficiencies, some of them internal to the organizations that make up civil society, and others stemming from external pressures exerted by the proprietary economy and administrative state. Philosophically, however, the dynamic that most undermines solidarity in civil society today is a dialectic between abstract individualism and identity politics. Organizations in civil society find themselves pushed and pulled between individuals pursuing their own self-interests and cultural or religious groups promoting their own agendas. The typical response from those who see the destructive consequences of this dialectic has been to promote greater tolerance among the

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[29] See especially "For Justice in Shalom" in Wolterstorff, 1983: 69-72.

various groups and more charity toward individuals who have fewer chances to pursue their own self-interests. Unfortunately, this response fails to challenge the mistaken approaches to individuality and community that underlie the dialectic.

I believe that solidarity requires a new direction in civil society. If every individual, group, and community deserves recognition, then our schools, arts organizations, and media of communication need to develop patterns of critical and creative dialogue where all are welcome to participate. In education, for example, the old division between state-funded and faith-based schools is outmoded, even when supplemented by interest-based charter schools and commercial learning centers. We need to envision a different way to organize truly public and inclusive schooling. And this will not occur unless other organizations in civil society and adherents of the most prevalent religions also embrace a vision of robust solidarity.

I also have claimed that resourcefulness is the decisive societal principle for the economic system, and I have criticized the current proprietary economy for distorting the meaning of resourcefulness while downplaying considerations of justice and solidarity. One way to counter these deficiencies is, as I suggested, to strengthen the system's hidden elements of a social economy through social accounting and voluntary codes of conduct. Yet the central problem from a normative perspective is that the proprietary economy pursues the twin goals of continual growth and private profit. Nor do I think that the classical socialist approach of state ownership can solve this problem: it does not challenge the goal of continual growth, and it introduces patterns of administrative coercion that run counter to genuine resourcefulness. So we need to imagine a different economic order, one where stewardship for the sake of interconnected flourishing, not continual growth or private profit, is the overriding consideration. Either religious communities can help in this regard or they can continue an all-too-common

acquiescence toward and even celebration of the capitalist system—to their own long-term detriment.

Similarly, I have suggested that justice is the decisive societal principle for the political system, and I have criticized the administrative state for disfiguring public justice while thinning out the meaning of resourcefulness and solidarity. Again, normative redirection is required, and for this we need a normative vision of the state's task in contemporary society. On my own view, the state's primary normative task is, through legislation, administration, and judicial decisions, to achieve and maintain public justice for all the individuals, communities, and institutions within its jurisdiction. Matters of public justice occur in three domains. One is the plurality of distinctive institutions—religious, ethical, economic, educational, and the like—that need societal room to pursue their own legitimate tasks and that have a claim to state protection from illegitimate incursions by other institutions. I call this the domain of institutional pluralism. The second domain of public justice is that of cultural pluralism. Many different cultural communities, including religious communities, have claims to public recognition from other communities. Such claims need to be adjudicated within the context of statewide legislation. The third domain of public justice pertains to the diverse needs and concerns of all the individuals who live within a state's jurisdiction. The state must protect persons from gross injustices at the hands of others, and they can expect a rightful share in the benefits afforded by government policies and programs.

Admittedly, the fact that national governments today take the shape of an administrative system makes it difficult to see how the state can be an institutional framework for public justice and not simply a hegemonic center of political power. Yet the power of the administrative state is not unlimited, nor is the task of achieving and maintaining public justice unconstrained.

Rather, the state's power remains subject to the requirement of public justification. State power needs to prove justifiable before the court of public opinion if it is to be sustained. The state's normative task, then, is to pursue enforceable public justice on the basis of publicly justifiable force and thereby to provide political and legal integration in a pluralist society.

The public sphere, as the intersection between state and civil society, is crucial in this regard. And this fact is just one indication that normative redirection must occur *across* the interlinked macrostructures and not simply *within* them. That this is so follows from the claim that each societal principle holds for all three macrostructures and that these principles are mutually complementary. But it also follows from the practical challenges of pursuing normative redirection within existing organizations and interpersonal relations. The main point, however, is that the societal principles of solidarity, resourcefulness, and justice pertain to all of the levels and macrostructures of a differentiated society, even though each principle holds in a special way for a distinct range of levels and macrostructures. The theoretical challenge, and a practical one as well, is to envision normative integration across these differentiated zones without either allowing one to dominate the others or exempting any zone from the requirements of all three principles. In other words, we need to pursue normative redirection not only within but also across all three macrostructures.

6.2.2 Faithful disclosure

The sheer scope of the redirection required raises the question whether it is historically possible. And that question forces us to look beyond the current social order both toward the past and toward the future. Looking toward the past, we can see that no social order has been inevitable or permanent and that our own social order has emerged from a complex process of social change. This insight allows us to ask whether and to what extent the current patterns of

macrostructural differentiation and integration are historical achievements or historical failures. Looking to the future, we can envision possibilities for structural transformation and normative redirection that build on the historical achievements and repair or remove the historical failures. In the midst of such historical orientation and reorientation, people can hear a call to life-giving disclosure that resonates in historically embedded societal principles and in our attempts to be faithful to them. In other words, within our organizations, institutions, and interpersonal relations, we can undertake faithful disclosure.[30]

Yet, given the preponderance of normatively deficient macrostructures in the current social order, and the extensive ways in which they organize all of social life, faithful disclosure cannot be the prerogative of one community or tradition. It requires concerted efforts and what Theodor Adorno called the "transparent solidarity" of humanity as a whole.[31] Unlike Adorno, I do not believe such efforts in solidarity are in short supply. Rather, along with economic globalization and transnational governance, we are witnessing the gradual emergence of a global civil society in which many communities and traditions, including religious ones, can fashion

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[30] This raises the question of agency: Who can and will bring about the change I envision? "All of us" would be too simple a response. Clearly there is more to the issue than that. Structural transformation occurs both via and despite intentional human effort, and human effort occurs in many different contexts and ways. My main point is that all the inhabitants of a social order are in some sense responsible for that order and in some sense capable of contributing to the change of that order, not simply as individuals but as members of organizations and institutions and as participants in traditions and communities. Moreover, these organizations, institutions, traditions, and communities also should and can contribute. Both an individualist "You can make a difference" and a collectivist expectation of a vanguard class or sector are insufficiently nuanced on the topic of large-scale social change—as are privatist resignation and structuralist determinism. See in this connection the chapter on "Widening Ways of Economy, Justice, and Peace" in Goudzwaard et al (2007: 169-205).

[31] According to Adorno, the telos of the social order both required and prevented by the capitalist economy lies in "the negation of the physical suffering of even the least of its members, and of the internal articulations [*Reflexionsformen*] of such suffering. This negation is the interest of everyone, [and] ultimately to be achieved only by a solidarity that is transparent to itself and to every living creature" (Adorno, 1973: 203-4; my translation).

and enact a global ethic. This emergence holds potential for both structural transformation and normative redirection in countries around the world.

Critical theorists and religious critics alike can contribute to this process by articulating societal principles in the direction of life-giving disclosure. They can present a vision of significant social change. The change I have envisioned would be a society-wide transformation and not simply a modification at one level or one structural interface. Yet this transformation would be differential, involving mutually reinforcing developments across the various levels and interfaces and strengthening the legitimate differentiation of macrostructures and societal principles that, on my view, is a historical achievement in Western society.

Normatively, differential transformation would redirect the proprietary economy away from the maximization of private profit toward the societal principle of resourcefulness. It would redirect the administrative state away from merely bureaucratic power toward a genuinely democratic pursuit of public justice. It would also allow societal principles such as resourcefulness, justice, and solidarity, which are distinct and pervasive, to be in effect across the board and not be relegated to separate zones within society. The envisioned redirection of economic and political macrostructures, along with complementary changes in civil society, would generate freedom to pursue a life-giving disclosure of society.

Structurally, political and economic systems would become more open to the legitimate concerns of civil society. But they would also foster within themselves elements of democratic communication and a social economy that are mostly latent at present. If the state would place priority on the task of promoting and securing public justice, it could give appropriate attention to concerns for economic resourcefulness and social solidarity as well. So too if the economic system would give priority to pursuing resourcefulness and not to exploiting people and habitats

for private gain, then hidden elements of a social economy could become stronger, and considerations of economic justice could find their proper place.

In tandem with these structural transformations and normative redirections of the political and economic systems, the institutions of civil society would need to become robust sites for social solidarity and not be mere release valves for pressures generated by normative deficiencies in the administrative state and proprietary economy. In its networks of public communication and its social economy, civil society would provide solidaristic inflections to justice and resourcefulness that political and economic systems need but cannot themselves fully provide. A differential transformation along these lines would result in a more genuinely life-giving society across the board, within and among all three macrostructures.

In the end, the question all members of society face, as citizens, as workers and consumers, as educators, artists, and scholars, and as religious adherents or nonadherents, is whether we want a life-giving society. Such a society would go beyond one in which the state is formally democratic to one where the state pursues and maintains justice for all. It would be a society in which the resources everyone needs in order to flourish do not continually flow into the private coffers of the most wealthy and powerful. It would also be a society where the solidaristic norms of participation and recognition prevail in the institutions and organizations of civil society. The macrostructures of such a society would have undergone internal transformation; the conflicts among them would have been resolved; and people would enjoy justice, resourcefulness, and solidarity across the entire range of their social lives. We might not arrive at such a society in the foreseeable future. Imagining it, however, and disclosing the potential of a life-giving society, will remain critically important endeavours.

Acknowledgements

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