

LOVERS OF DEMOCRACY ***Moral Imagination***



Spring in Chapel Hill N.C., a favorite picture used at the **department of linguistics** website

Without a moral frame of mind to guide the technological civilization, in the 21st century, there obviously is no assurance that technology will be good for civilization. The explosive finance crisis of 2008, offers a clear and vivid picture of the problem. “The finance sector has not learned fiscal responsibility from this crisis. The bailout will not recapitalize our banks and businesses; it will merely reinforce the worst habits of corporate capitalism,” commented **Ashley Sanders** of *The Nader Team*, after news of the outrageous \$440,000 luxury junket **AIG executives** enjoyed from a bailout by the US Treasury to save them from bankruptcy.

Only the sphere of the mind -- the "**Noosphere**" -- one of the seven EcoSpheres of Planet Earth,¹ possesses "the power to change the face of the Earth" according to Jonathan Weiner.² Paradoxically, development of the Noosphere is not attained by following the mechanistic and materialistic world-view associated **with** modern science, which is hailed as the path to truth but leads only to an exclusive interest in changing the external factors for the attainment of happiness and well-being without the slightest concern about changing one's own inner nature. This historical pattern seems certainly "to be putting man on the path of self-destruction" observes **P. D. Premasiri**, in Humanization of Development.

One can see all around the threat to planetary life arising from the absence of **moral imagination** sufficient to see clearly and vividly exactly what is going on: as recently expressed by **Al Gore** with regard to climate change, just as **Hasan Ozbekhan** expressed almost four decades ago with regard to ecological balance. The technological civilization, without moral imagination, is inexorably driving planetary life toward extinction.

The deep underlying condition has been described by two scientists, Van Rensselaer Potter and Richard Grantham, as "evolution's fatal flaw":³

**getting to the year 3000 is a difficult matter
when the mass of individuals who make up society
have inherited "evolution's fatal flaw"--
a built-in instinct that calls for survival and reproduction
in the here-and-now, with no instinctual concern
for survival of the species in the long term.**

The distinguished American social theorist and popular teacher of cultural anthropology, Ernest Becker (1924-1974), contributed to an understanding of the problem of human morality and creativity.⁴ He observed "the meanings that one puts forth" may depend on "what one can sustain." This condition, Becker concluded, gave a clue to the promotion of human morality and creativity, namely, that "we can try to increase the strength and the courage of the individual in the face of the potential rebirth of the self."

Rousseau, Stendhal, and Nietzsche saw the great fact about morality is that it needs real

1 Earth, Water, Air, Fire, Life, Ice, and Mind.

2 J. Weiner, *The Next One Hundred Years: Shaping the Fate of our Living Earth* 5-6 (1990).

3 Van Rensselaer Potter and Richard Grantham, **Scientists' Responsibility For Survival Of The Human Species**, in FINS (Updated September 6, 2009), citing *The Scientist*, Vol:6, #11, May 25, 1992.

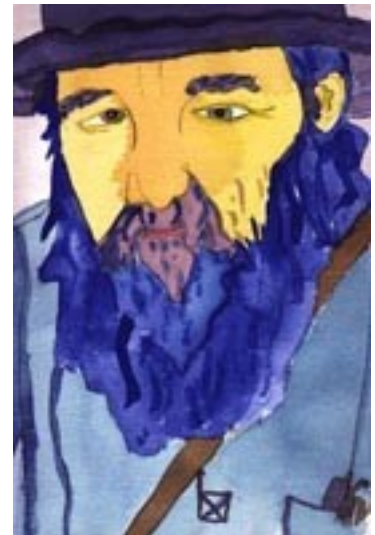
4 E. Becker, *The Structure of Evil* 258-259 (1968) (Becker won the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction, in 1974).

strength to assume the responsibility for one's uniqueness. On the individual level then, the problem of courage is clear: "man must try to frame problems in ever-more-explicit, cognitive terms, because this alone unlocks action. One can convert a situation in which there was no choice to one in which there are new choices. In this way, man liberates himself."⁵

The LoD Values Transformation Matrix, reveals the critical problems in closing the values-gap between decadent capitalism and democratic sustainability! Following the insight offered by Becker, to see clearly and vividly exactly what is going on with regard to this Matrix. one must try to frame the components of decision-making that comprise the Matrix "in ever-more-explicit, cognitive terms that can unlock action."⁶

This is the purpose of **A Deeply Transformative New Deal** offered by LoD, to engage citizens in dialogue concerning these matters to improve their **moral imagination**.

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Cornelia P. Atchley, artist,
Portrait of Vigdor in blue 2001

⁵ E. Becker, *infra*, note 4.

⁶ Id,