

Chapter 9

The Pagan *Quadrivium*

The term ‘quadrivium’ is purely my own, and I am employing it as a designation for what I discern as fundamental human concerns – which for me renders them automatically ‘pagan’ interests as well. These concerns are what shape and motivate our activities, and implicitly they call forth standards of behavior that delineate what we might choose to do in attempting to live life rightly and appropriately. Consequently, I am seeking here to suggest a code of norms as a formulation of applied ethics. This code that is herewith discussed in the present chapter concerns our human desires for freedom, comfort, health and specifically honor but more broadly what I prefer to designate as worship. I will begin with freedom under which the consideration includes political freedoms and personal freedoms as well as pagan freedoms. But it is important I feel to make clear that my discernment of the core concerns and/or values of life derives from my own life experiences as well as more than 30 years of encounter with contemporary pagan communities and pagan substrata in non-European societies. This and the following chapter reflect my personal reflections both as a person who identifies as pagan and one who has sought active relationships with other pagans.

My personal evaluations as well as explorations are those with which I expect many – both pagan and non-pagan – to disagree, but they are presented as part of the ethical debate in which we might all be considered to be involved as well as my own attempt to suggest what might be a good life and one commensurate with worthy aims on which to concentrate both personally and collectively. With the less clear but infinitely more challenging notion of honor, I have turned in particular to what others might designate for themselves as an honorable person – thereby augmenting my own speculations and considerations on the very quality that I will argue is of fundamental importance if not *the* most fundamental in importance.

Freedom

Freedom, like the other value virtues of the ethical quadrivium, is a difficult concept to define. What is freedom? It may be as impossible to answer this question as it is the one concerning justice. There are invariably two sides to the question involving liberty: freedom from something, and freedom to do something.¹ The nuances are endless, and all is set against the ultimate question of whether we have freedom of will, freedom of choice, or whether our course is predetermined and inevitably already set.

Platonists and Stoics, as well as many others, hold to the notion of a divine plan. A plan, however, presupposes a preexisting idea. Spinoza appears to translate this idea into a doctrine of determinism. For the majority of pagans, however, it is possible that a preset divine plan makes no sense. At best, we would be simply playing out our positions as actors perform their stage roles in enacting a dramatic play for the theater. Who would be the author of the overall drama of life? And, perhaps even more to the point, who would be its audience?

While there are always exceptions, in my own by and large experience, most pagans would appear to accept that life has no prearranged purpose. It is spontaneous and perhaps even largely accidental. Instead of a divine plan as some sort of preordained script, pagans appear to hold more to the notion of a divine process – one in which divinity is unfolding and developing itself with no inevitable rules or pre-selected directions. Life is procedural rather than pre-arranged. It is for this reason that contemporary complexity theory might appeal to pagans. The spontaneity of self-organization into greater and more complex wholes is the natural way of nature – allowing for retro-diction instead of prediction, that is, the retracing of why something worked out as it has rather than forecasting in advance exactly how things are to turn out.

What often does seem inevitable is conflict. As a world grows more complex – let alone crowded with only limited resources, continual diversification seems invariably to lead to increasing competition and clash. If we follow Hegelian logic of a thesis engendering an antithesis that ultimately becomes a synthesis that, in turn, inevitably necessitates another antithesis, this would, on its own, presuppose a cosmos of endless discord and tension. Without the idealism of Hegel or even Marx, there can be no final resolution to such endless divergence. For most pagans, there is no external absolute, no *a priori* ideal, no utopian state that exists either outside the cosmic process or at the end of the road of time to rectify the inevitable and ceaseless struggle and differentiation of individual and opposing wants. There is no

¹Another way to consider freedom is to distinguish between positive freedom (Plato, Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel) having to do with self-determination and autonomy, on the one hand, and negative freedom (Bentham, Hobbes, Locke and Hume) referring to the situation in which a person is free from the interference or coercion of others. Positive freedom is the liberty *for* something, the ability to do what one chooses. Negative freedom is freedom from constraint, intimidation or prevention *by* others.

divine plan but only process. But again, for a pagan, this process is itself divine – the perpetual divine becoming and self-fulfillment. A pagan can maintain that the only onus is to *trust* the process. Herein lies, in addition, the fundamental source for a pagan’s proclivity toward idolatry. A pagan is not one who looks outside ‘the system’ but within. Reflection within the cosmic organism is a form of self-reflection, part of the feedback looping process described by complexity theory, in which the dynamic of change and growth is located through the worship of the organism or any holographic aspect of the organism rather than with any denial of, or longing for escape from, the organic process that is our cosmos.

But if we project to any kind of final bottom line, we might be able to discern that cosmic conflict is ultimately one between the nightmare and ceaseless anguish of struggle and battle, on the one hand, and the aesthetics of harmonious cooperation and adjustment, on the other. We can always imagine a situation in which these two possibilities are equally deadlocked – with no *deus ex machina* to intervene and break the stalemate. In such an equal division, one in which the forces of entropy and dissolution are fully balanced by those of growth and concord, there is one and only one additional factor, namely, will. It is here that we find not only the source of the entire cosmic impetus but also its salvational future. It is in will both as origin and as the prerogative of sentience that we find freedom. Whatever liberty we have as individuals and social collectivities is to be found in and through our abilities to exercise will – our capacity to wish and, finally, to bring that wishing to fruition. Our full freedom is the full process, but an important part of that process, indeed, I would argue, *the* most important part, is the initial will itself, the energy to wish and want. It is for this reason that desire is as central to the pagan ethos as it is. It is the heart of a pagan’s religion; it is his or her *raison d’être*; it is the locus within which a pagan finds liberty.

* * * * *

But let us return to the notion of freedom itself. In its fundamental assertion, freedom refers to emancipation from imprisonment, captivity and slavery. As a prisoner, captive or slave, this is precisely when we are *not* free. The range of choice is radically reduced – if it exists at all. Self-determined motion is denied. The classic convict, war-conquered and person owned by another are the bottom line against which the state of freedom is determined. It is these conditions of interference that allow us to explore the further extensions of the concept of liberty – both in actuality and as metaphors for many other situations in which the human individual may find himself/herself.

In all applications of the term, however, at least for a pagan, freedom is never an absolute in and of itself. It is always contextual and always suggests further directions toward greater freedom rather than any permanent condition of ‘greatest freedom’. In other words, freedom is not an independent *a priori* ideal of abstraction but an immediate assessment of any given state of being – an assessment that always remains open-ended. There can be no fixed state of liberty. It is instead a dynamic process of perpetual change.

As already mentioned, freedom is either the absence of restriction – freedom *from* something – or the presence of an unimpeded ability – the freedom *to do* something – or both. One is free from imprisonment, bellicose defeat, bondage, the control by another, illness, loneliness, poverty, hunger, boredom, pain, meaninglessness or any other innumerable countless unpleasant conditions. One may also be free to travel, to vote, to marry, to have a say over one's own life or even simply to change one's mind over a matter or in the overall course of one's life. In this way, freedom is both a circumstance that is detached from a negative and one that is for, or permits, a positive. We understand liberty in terms of free thought, free will and individualism.

Consequently, freedom or liberty as the central pagan virtue is one that connects and supports the other moral conditions almost as a common denominator between all ethical disposition and achievement.² But, as we shall see, while the virtues and liberty are mutually supportive and encouraging of each other, they can and do sometimes entail choices between them. Is one free to choose comfort, for instance, over freedom, or must one choose freedom over all other possibilities? Moral dilemma is one side of the perpetual ethical question. The idea of compensation is the other. There are times in which we are not free, just as there are times we are not comfortable or healthy. When a disposition or valuable condition is absent, the other virtues may, and may have to, act as substitutes and recompense. Nevertheless, in the pagan's navigation of life and the possibility that fewer virtues may be available in any particular time and place rather than the full spectrum, it is always freedom that is held to be the most sacred – the *primus inter pares*. Liberty is the pagan virtue *par excellence*.

Political

It is through the peculiarity and centrality of liberty to the whole pagan ethical agenda and *raison d'être* that morality interconnects with both politics and spirituality. Liberty is most significantly a political question, and, as such, it lies at the heart of any and all efforts toward democracy. At the same time, especially for those with gnostic or dharmic inclinations, liberty is identified as enlightenment – whether the Hindu *moksha* or *samadhi*, the Buddhist *nirvana* or the Stoic *apatia*. Each of these

²We seek naturally to be free from discomfort, from pain, from disease as well as from error, dishonor, emptiness and stinginess. Each of the quadrivium or heptatheonic values may be understood as an expression or instance of freedom itself. The virtues, thereby, are the aim for anyone who seeks autonomous independence as part of a life of happiness or general well-being. And the virtues are best cultivated by the free agent – someone not burdened by upset, infirmity and/or disgrace and certainly someone not subject to the rule or control of another.

directions, the political and the religious, opens up the question concerning freedom to important considerations in determining the life of well-being or happiness and the right course of correct behavior.³

But for the issue of freedom, the issue of property implies that liberty itself must be modified by other ethical considerations. If liberty is the most important, it is not the only virtue there is but must operate as a consortium with the other value considerations that belong to the overall human situation. In other words, a pagan in today's world, as much as he or she might wish to, cannot agree with Socrates' opponent Gorgias in Plato's dialogue by the same name that *'ελευθερία* ('freedom') as the supreme good means the latitude to have one's desired way in everything.

A pagan recognizes that nature, however all-bountiful she may be, does not permit us our own ways in all we might want – even under the best of situations. For one, there are natural limitations to how long we can live. We are not immortal, at least within the human vehicles we presently enjoy on this earth here and now. But, secondly, there are limited resources for our planetary existence, and we are bound as a result to cooperate and share a properly managed estate if we do not wish to war and inflict loss, death and destruction on others as well as ourselves in the process. Once again, freedom is contextual. There is no absolutely free state, and this last is precluded by the 'laws' of physical existence if not by moral/aesthetic concerns as

³We have already noted that both Plato and Aristotle, let alone Nietzsche and many others, had little regard for democracy itself – most seeing that rule by the mediocre leads to a more pernicious form of tyranny and inevitably the worst possible outcome. The property-less many are seen to be too small-minded and limited by a sense of envy and desire for revenge that precludes the wise decision that is required from democracy and on which it is dependent if democracy were to succeed as a viable process of political decision-making. Within the philosophical tradition, it is John Locke who is perhaps most connected with liberal democracy. Like Aristotle and Cicero, Locke believes in the ownership of private property as a vitally important natural right. He also subscribes to the social contract theory by which human beings, facing the inevitability of disputes between themselves, allegedly agree to submission to legislative and executive authority over themselves for the protection of their natural rights – including those to property. By arguing that civil law is valid only if enacted by majority vote of a citizenry in which each individual has guaranteed equal rights in the determination process, Locke is arguing for the legitimacy of democratic government.

There are difficulties with some of Locke's assumptions – both the principle that a person has exclusive rights to his own person and to the product of his own labor, and the doctrine of tacit consent, namely, that "every man, that hath any possessions, or enjoyment, of any part of the dominions of any government, doth thereby give his tacit consent, and is as far forth obliged to obedience to the laws of that government" (Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* 8.119 – Locke 1690). As MacIntyre (1998: 159) elucidates, this doctrine is important because it is the one on which every modern state rests – every state "which claims to be democratic, but which like every state wishes to coerce its citizens." Aristotle's pragmatic solution to any equal deadlock between property owners and non-property owners in the democratic process is to award the final decision to the former since they have more at stake. Cicero (*On Duties* 2.24.85; Grant 1971: 169) insists that a liberal government is one that guarantees each of its citizens the security of property ownership: "They must ensure that poor men are not swindled because they are poor. But they must equally guarantee that rich men are not prevented, by envious prejudice, from keeping [or recovering] what is theirs." The issue of property, therefore, becomes central to the very notion of democracy, and the ethical implications of this issue are manifold.

well. In other words, physicality carries with it the burden of inherent limitations – one that most pagans are willing to accept for the very experience of life, but, in addition to this, freedom is further conditioned by the social and political situation itself. This last is always a consideration, therefore, in determining the good life, what one ought to do in pursuit of it, and the related role of liberty toward the ends and means involved. In discussing Hegel, MacIntyre stresses that freedom is place and time specific and is invariably defined through whatever obstacles are perceived by men and women of the time and place concerned.⁴

Self-determination is the political issue of the late twentieth/early twenty-first century. Who has the right to be free? When should a country be allowed to be divided, as occurred with the dissolution of Czechoslovakia or is the wish of many in the states of Belgium and Ukraine? What are the rights of the Basques, the Catalonians, the Bretons, the Kurds, the Armenians, the Tibetans let alone the Kalash peoples, Yazidis, Mandaean, Amerindians, Aborigines, Maori or virtually any of the countless endangered ethnicities that struggle to maintain an indigenous identity? If liberty is an ethical concern, even the central ethical concern, it is here more than in any other moral consideration that ethics may be seen to lead directly into politics. The traditional community in its own quest to maintain itself requires the freedom to manage its own affairs. But what are the limits that the greater political entity – whether multinational state or cosmopolitan empire – can allow any minority that it incorporates?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions. The issue of liberty is one, and must be one, of perpetual negotiation with no fixed solutions or easy means of reaching compromise. If we accept that freedom is sacred and is to be respected to the best of all our abilities, then the right to self-determination must be the bottom-line starting point. But the forces of economic advantage and the frequent need for security against the possibility of violent insurrection and/or attack are such that the rights of minorities within or between borders are often sacrificed. Freedom of self-determination vies with the freedom needs of others for protection and economic well-being. It is for this reason that freedom as an ethical and axiological goal is not and cannot be self-sufficient but must be balanced by additional moral considerations. Although *primus inter pares*, there are other values that are also sacred and important and that must be worked into any viable equation that seeks to guarantee the greatest latitude for the greatest numbers. Knowledge, reason and understanding, for instance, are vital in allaying especially unwarranted and/or exaggerated fears that often lead to conflict and the suppression of autonomy by a majority or stronger party to that of a minority or weaker one.

But apart from the internal dynamics of the state or community, there is also the international arena in which political freedom is fragile and perpetually under threat. The sovereignty of any nation is challenged invariably by the sovereign demands of another nation or nations. The whole concourse of nation-states rests fundamentally on respecting the independence of the parties that comprise the whole. When does

⁴MacIntyre (1998: 204).

the stronger party have the right to intervene into the internal matters of a smaller state – as the United States and United Kingdom felt obliged to do with Saddam’s Iraq? When do aggrieved parties resist the temptation to flout national integrities and the maintenance of peaceful transaction however painful and seemingly hopeless as was not done in the preludes to the world’s two wars? When does any state prevent itself from engaging in political, economic and/or military aggression such as we see in all attempts for imperial expansion – including the desire to rectify what is perceived as colonial wrong-doing?

If we were to look at the world’s history and the rise and fall of empires, let alone the rise and fall of individual states, there would appear to be little hope for a less wasteful and clash-ridden planet earth. Everyone wants to be free; everyone wants to have his or her desired way in as much of everything as possible. This is the given situation in which we all live and within which we must carve out our own individual spaces in a manner that allows to others as much latitude for their wishes at the same time. We all have our idols, and the freedom we all crave includes the freedom to worship what we want to worship. If, as I am contending, the idol is for the most part a positive albeit something personal and not necessarily shared with others or at least many others, we must allow at the same time that there are *idola senso negativo* as well.⁵ One way to understand the positive idol is to understand what is in fact the negative idol, and to a pagan way of thinking the chief unacceptable idols are and can only be exclusive, monopolistic truth-claims, on the one hand, and anti-cosmopolitan or belligerent chauvinisms, on the other.⁶

Negative idolatry consists of exalting a representation over the thing that the representation represents – such as making the American flag more important than the freedoms that the American Republic itself enshrines. We see no such similarity of America’s protective measures, for instance, with British attitudes toward the Union Jack. It would be nice if a nation’s flag were to be respected, but that respect must be earned and not mandated. Desecrating a symbol is one way to express dissatisfaction toward whatever that symbol represents, and the freedom of protest

⁵For the ‘false god’, see York (2010: 78f). Bron Taylor considers ‘trust in military might’ as an instance (personal communication on 10 March 2014).

⁶The reifying of the nation-state is a major instance of the ‘false idolatry’ of the negative idol. It disallows people to seek balanced understandings: to weigh wrong-doings against them against those that they themselves might have committed on others. Chauvinism is itself an incarcerator because it renders the chauvinist blind and unable to participate in the freedom that comes with the wider scope of understanding. The over-glorification of the state, rather than seeing the polity as simply a vehicle for moving towards our well-being and as the *ad hoc* protector of our cultural legacies, is among the greatest of threats to the freedom of expression. For instance, United States Senator Dianne Feinstein, in defense of the proposed constitutional amendment to outlaw and prohibit the physical desecration of the American flag, says, “I strongly believe that the American flag holds a unique position in our society as the most important and universally recognized symbol that unites us as a nation. The flag – as a symbol of our nationhood – can and should be respected and protected from attack” (Email sent 25 May 2005 to the mother of Trinlay Tulku Rinpoche). This, however, is idolatry *sensu negativo* and one that curtails the freedom of self-expression even if and when we might not agree with what is being expressed.

as part of the freedom of expression and speech is among the sacrosanct allowances that constitute human liberty, particularly, in this case, that of political freedom.

In short, we are permitted to say that all the exaggerated patriotism that surrounds the American flag represents idolatry at its worst – the classic example of false idolatry or the kind of idol worship that renders one sightless rather than expanded and enhanced. Moreover, the refusal to allow the flag to touch the ground expresses the implicit gnostic notion behind this expression of American idolatry. The American national idol is one of a nation that is transcendent, something above and beyond the land that is its foundation. Once again we have that implicit notion that the earth is lowly, is matter and is something to be repudiated and rejected. Nevertheless, while American idolatrous nationalism comprises a form of idol-worship that the ethical person does not wish to encourage, it allows that in itself idolatry enshrines the very principle of choice, namely, the virtue-value of liberty.

Destroying the American flag is not the same as destroying the American principles that the flag was originally designed to symbolize. All idols are precarious and may be destroyed in one manner or another. But the ethereal idol behind them cannot be obliterated. In this case, the spirit of democracy or freedom is the ethereal idol behind both the flag and the American republic. Nevertheless, the ethereal idol does not exist apart from the instances of its manifestation. While it itself cannot be annihilated, it is dependent upon the persistence of its physical vehicles for its actuality.

Likewise, whenever we encounter expressions containing the words ‘*the truth*’ as if there is no question that the truth which is being referred to is anything but an absolute given, we have another instance of the negative idol and the inflexibility of countenancing other ways of seeing, doing and understanding things. Doctrinal rigidity is found in all religions but particularly among the Revivalist branches of Protestant Christianity: the Pentecostal Charismatics, fundamentalist Baptists and, especially, Calvinist, Presbyterian and Dominionist Reconstructionists. Dominion Theology, holding that Christians alone are mandated to hold all secular positions until the return of Christ, insists that there are only two options: the God-centered (theonomy) and the human-centered (autonomy).⁷ It is clear from the terminology alone that the taking of dominion over secular society is tied up with truth-claims and the elimination of all dissent and independence from a particular belief system. Biblical inerrancy becomes the substitute for any open-ended search for knowledge and understanding. It is also evident that with such rigid inflexibility there is the loss of freedom. When this is the outlook of a majority opinion, there is obviously less scope for maneuver for those who hold different outlooks. In other words, there are not the same freedoms for the minority, but, simultaneously, even the majority becomes locked into a restricted and less than emancipated state of being. Consequently, in radical contrast to the agenda of the Christian Right, the idolatry

⁷ Accordingly, the Dominionist seeks to produce a generation of biblically trained politicians whose first task is to eliminate religious choice and freedom. Adulterers, homosexuals, witches, idolaters, heretics and blasphemers are to be executed – either by stoning to death or by being burned alive.

of freedom is one that precludes both excessive patriotism and prejudice, on the one hand, as well as all unquestioned dogmas, on the other.

But in discussing the value of liberty, let us return to the polity itself to look at the independence that it allows or prohibits to its citizens now less as a deprived class within the state but rather across the board to everyone. Certainly, the protections of the alleged social contract are the supposed benefits of organized group living, the freedom from assault, the protection of property and so forth, but social organization at the same time often precludes individual rights that are not belligerent or reasonably harmful to others. We are now discussing the paternalism of the state – what the artist David Hockney, for instance, and in reference to Great Britain, has called the ‘nanny state’. Because of the ever-increasing complications of modern life, many restrictions imposed by government we are apt to accept without question – such as the stipulation to use seat-belts in a motor vehicle.⁸

State paternalism also extends to the prohibition of so-called ‘recreational drugs’. In the United States, the Supreme Court has even denied the use of medical marijuana for the alleviation of pain with the terminally ill. While the inhumanity of this last is one thing, governmental attempt to control the states of consciousness an individual may have is a further restriction of a person’s right to choice. With minors, such control is more understandable, but when this constraint is expanded to include adults, there is a blatant infringement on the scope of individual self-responsibility. The exploration of consciousness is a pursuit that some people undertake seriously, but whether earnest or frivolous, for all people who sacralize freedom the question remains whether, short of a person harming another, any government has the right to determine what kinds of conscious states we are allowed to have or which ones we are not. This is understood instead as something for the individual himself/herself to decide. The government’s only proper role is educational – informing people what the possible risks and consequences might be.

It is obvious, therefore, that freedom is intimately tied to democracy. In other words, the ethical impacts directly on the political. While the anti-paternalistic suggests a form of libertarianism, the consideration of intrinsic human dignities is

⁸Gun laws prohibiting the unrestricted right to possess fire-arms, however, are more ambiguous. The United States does not have them; most European countries do. The issue rests on the right to self-defense. European paternalism argues that allowing people to own guns makes its citizens more exposed to their abuse. Americans, backed by the powerful gun and rifle lobby, have steadfastly refused to surrender this right. Certainly the number of deaths in Europe that can be attributed to unlawful use of fire-arms is significantly lower than that in the United States, but the question is between state paternalism, on the one hand, and the freedom of the individual, on the other.

essentially politically liberal.⁹ I suggest therefore that the ethico-political position that best sums the dynamics of freedom that are commensurate with pagan aspirations as well as all freedom-loving people is a form of liberal libertarianism. The question before all of us, however, concerns the scope of democracy, in particular, the rule of the people. Plato and Aristotle both thought little of the process of popular vote – seeing the rule of the many as impairing viable governing management and allowing the worst possibilities rather than the best. My own contention is that democracy is something that was conceived for the *polis*, the small political community, rather than the sometimes mega-nation-states that we have today and in which there is frequently a potential minority that is greater than all but the largest of the world’s nations. Political decision-making, accordingly, is perhaps best suited for the local, immediate levels of existence. On the larger level, referenda may be the general means for the wider say, but republicanism is or at least should be by and large constitutional with the emphasis on civil rights, a bill of rights, on individual protections – perhaps with the governing management undertaken by trained professionals, rather than *ad hoc* politicians, with some general means of expressing concord or assent by the people.

It is to be understood that political democracy is the central concern of all peoples and is something infinitely more complex and contentious than can be adequately dealt with within the present pages. I wish only to signal at this point the centrality of the ethics of liberty to the ways we politically associate and come to manage our day-to-day affairs as well as the more encompassing concerns for security and protection. As McGraw has elucidated in relation to the intention of the American Founding Fathers, the civic forum is to be an arena of exchange open to all peoples – whether traditionally or conservatively religious, on the one hand, or agnostically or humanistically oriented, on the other.¹⁰ In other words, in the original conception of American democracy, both the religious right and the secular left – as well as all minority positions – are to be guaranteed access to the public forum. The government’s role is to ensure such access and freedom of expression to one and all. The government, accordingly, is to enable that no one party comes to dominate to the exclusion of any other legitimate body of thought – legitimacy being defined as adopting a political and social stance that tolerates and allows competing expressions into the public forum.¹¹

⁹In the “Editor’s Letter” to the re-founded issue of *The Liberal* magazine, Ben Ramm explains: “It is our wish to rehabilitate the term ‘liberal’, sullied after a century which deemed liberalism at best unfashionable, at worst unlawful; and to affirm the vision of our predecessors in their first editorial: to see ‘the mind of man exhibiting powers of its own, and at the same time helping to carry on the best interests of human nature’” (*The Liberal* [Independent Preview Edition] IV April/May 2005: 1).

¹⁰McGraw (2003: *passim*).

¹¹I have focused here on the polity itself and not upon the greater concerns of the atmosphere, the oceans and the commons as they are or are not addressed via the Westphalian nation-state system that has come to predominate our planet today. In the terrapolitan focus of Daniel Deudney (1998: 303), “the central basis of political association must be the Earth (terra) and its requirements.” For

Personal

But putting the political dimensions now to the side, let us concentrate on ethical freedom as it concerns the individual herself. As a basic given, I would say that everyone at heart wishes to swim in the pool of freedom. The most important thing about freedom, however, is that it involves compromise. Nevertheless, the compromises that one makes vis-à-vis freedom are those with the other virtues alone: comfort, honor, temperance, justice and so forth. As important and central as liberty is, it is not viable solely on its own. It is mitigated by other concerns and needs and must take into consideration what these might be. At the end, freedom rules over all others, but it is not an absolute rule. It is, rather, a final or end-point target.

Among the freedoms that one seeks are those from care, from illness and incapacity, from restriction as well as those for mobility such as movement and travel, for pleasure and enjoyment, for learning and the advancement of understanding, for the comforts of life and for discovery and dreaming beyond new horizons. A person wishes to be free from the concern of loss. If one does not have anything to begin with, this is relatively easier. If and when someone does indeed have things, possessions, riches, etc., it is much more difficult to be free from care – but it is still possible. Apart from the physical realities of freedom, liberty is largely a state of mind, a mental attitude, an emotional feeling, a psychological and/or intellectual achievement. In fact, ultimate individual liberty is enlightenment. While for the dharmacist, this last is *moksha*, *samadhi* or *nirvana*, for the pagan it is *ataraxia*, *apatheia*, *eudaemonia* or *ecstasia*. In general, in a pagan understanding, it has less to do strictly with release and more to do with joy. Unlike the dharmic orientation, enlightenment is not an escape from life but either a celebration of life or, at least, a coming-to-terms with life – understanding and accepting it for what it is but without denying or repudiating it. To the degree that paganism is encapsulated in and by youth, freedom is the experience of life and all that life involves: both trials and tribulations but especially its wonders and joys. As we grow older, however, that enthusiasm of youthful energy that all paganism celebrates may become tempered with a semi-detached sense of serenity, but the wisdom and enlightenment of age is yet one that continually endorses and rejoices in the glory of youth, newness, discovery and wondrousness. For pagans of all ages, the freedom of enlightenment is a freedom from envy, jealousy and resentment. What a pagan individual might not have, she/he still takes a thrill and contentment in the very possession by others of what one's self itself may be missing.

the deep ecology of social philosophy, see further Bron Taylor's "Deep Ecology and its Social Philosophy: A Critique" in Katz et al. (2000: 269–299).

Pagan

Freedom, then, is among the most complicated of issues, but for all people who value the aliveness of life and respect the intrinsic dignity of the human *sui generis* – and this includes the pagan, it is the parameter within which all other aspirations are ultimately set. Freedom in whatever form and in all forms is the central goal and wish.¹²

In today's world, we find the Statue of Liberty that adorns the New York harbor as one of the largest of contemporary idols. The Goddess of Liberty, as the Unabridged Webster's Dictionary of 1934, the Second Edition, lists this icon, is *Libertas* – the Roman personification of liberty. At the same time, the existence of this iconographic figure suggests a possible reason for the reaction against idolatry. The idol as an object of veneration serves as a mirror of its devotees and virtually elicits if not commands appropriate behavior that is commensurate with what is being honored. The extreme reaction against idolatry is of course a biblical inheritance but in the present-day American case perhaps one that is exacerbated by the steady falling short by the American people of the ideal that the nation was originally meant to enshrine. Liberty is precarious and possibly the most vulnerable of all the virtue-values, and even if and when it becomes symbolized by a physical idol, there is no guarantee that freedom itself will remain intact. For both our personal and political liberties, the onus of the burden remains upon each and every one of us in terms of responsibility. The idol of liberty is one that merits the deepest of our respects and every effort to preserve the sanctity that it involves. This responsibility and freedom is one that rests on vigilance and wakefulness – the essence of enlightenment.

¹²If we look at the etymologies behind our various terms for freedom, we gain some further insight into the dynamics that are involved. For 'liberty' itself, from the Latin *liber*, there is little new that is forthcoming; the Latin term derives from a root that has always signified being free. 'Autonomy', by contrast, places the emphasis squarely on the self, on 'self-rule' and the freedom to make one's own decisions. 'Independence', likewise, suggests 'not dependent' – self-sufficiency. 'Freedom', however, derives from a root that betokens 'love, desire' (**prâi-*). Cognate are such terms as 'Priapus', 'Freya', 'Freyr' and 'Frigg'/'Frija' and German *Friede* 'peace': Watkins (1969: 1536), Pokorny (1959: 844), York (1995: 539, 588). Watkins (ibid. See also York 1995: 588) derives the word 'free' from the Germanic **frijaz* that denotes 'beloved' – more widely, 'belonging to the loved ones', that is, either the gods or one's family. The ultimate suggestion is that one who is **frijaz* is one who is 'not in bondage', i.e., 'free'. In other words, freedom is understood as being safely among one's loved ones, at home, not in prison, and/or under the happy protection of the gods (*eudaimonia*).

Among the Romans, the personification of *liber* occurs as both a male Liber and a female Libera. Cicero (*De natura deorum* 2.62.24) refers to Liber and Libera as the children (*liberi*) of the earth-mother. The term *liber* may have been originally an epithet belonging to Jupiter in his capacity as creative force. See York (1986: 77). For *Iovi Libero et Iunoni Reginae in Aventino*, see the *Fasti Fratres Arvales* under 1 September. On the festival of the Liberalia (17 March), adolescent boys were given the *toga* of manhood – signifying freedom from childhood and the emancipation of adulthood. The identification of Liber with the Greek Dionysus suggests further the freedom that comes with intoxication.

Consequently, freedom is always contextual. There is no absolute or objective autonomy. Liberty is subjective and to be measured by the immediate situation at hand. One can be free *from* poverty, *from* disease, *from* injustice, *from* conformity, etc., and one might be free *to* move and travel, *to* enjoy various pleasures, *to* make decisions that affect one's situation in terms of economy, community and environment, *to* be the non-conformist who disdains the critical opinions of others, etc. A person who is free is one who is also free *for* laughter. The morbidly somber pessimist, the person who is paranoid and always afraid of the negatives that might possibly happen, the one who is burdened by envy and desires for revenge is *not* free. In fact, freedom is intimately connected with all the other heptatheonic virtue-values as well as the cardinal virtues that infuse them.¹³ In other words, liberty is not the sole virtue and aspiration. Freedom interconnects with all the other virtue-values, and its centrality simply underscores its foundational status for both the good life and a good planet. The underpinning quality of liberty and independence and its relation to honor, virtue and value reveals the interdependence of morals. While we might focus on one in order to elucidate and understand it further, morality is a composite of focus in which one virtue immediately and always suggests another. The person who is free is the person who is honorable, productive, generous, healthy, comfortably strong and able to appreciate the joys and pleasures of relationship, sensuality, learning and both the natural and cultural worlds in which we live.

Comfort

Among its many disparagers, the desire for comfort is frequently dismissed as a proclivity toward weakness. The person who seeks the creaturely comforts of life is denounced as a slave to frailty. And while I shall argue here to the contrary, in some respects comfort serves as the check to wanton and unlimited freedom. The rugged adventurer who endures hardship and difficulties and even life-threatening danger is a person who celebrates individual freedom perhaps to the fullest, but few of us are so inclined to live life on such a basis as a full-time pursuit. We want our comforts, and so we sacrifice some of our quest for all-encompassing liberty for them. By contrast, if we pursue the comforts of life to excess, freedom itself becomes the check and balance to any tendency toward the slavery of over self-indulgence.

Apart from the needs on the part of some for macho ostentation, the effort to make one's situation comfortable is the norm for the human being. We all seek to

¹³ A person may be free to be comfortable or, vice versa, free from discomfort. A person may enjoy the freedom of health, that is, to be free from illness and disability. One might be free to indulge in the pursuit of pleasure, to be productive or to be generous. In other words, one might be free from pain and meaningless boredom, from waste and stagnation, and from miserly stinginess and the greed of hoarding.

improve upon the necessities of life. While we can endure the barest minimum, it is natural for us to endeavor to improve the conditions upon which these needs are met – making them more pleasant and enjoyable.¹⁴

When I was in my earliest twenties, having just graduated from college, I spent over a year vagabonding my way through Europe. Even in those days, though the dollar was worth substantially more vis-à-vis the European currencies, to live on approximately 70 dollars a month was an accomplishment in and of itself. I managed to travel wherever I wished (Scandinavia, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Greece, Turkey and Morocco) – first by hitchhiking, later by a Eurail Pass, and finally by a VW bug. Living almost at times literally off the land, I slept in train stations, under a bush in a Parisian park, in the homes of generous people I met along the way, occasionally in a hotel or youth hostel, once unwittingly in bed-bug-ridden brothel in Marseilles and often in the car. I still managed to visit every museum and special site I could, went to operas and concerts and remember to this day a splendid performance of Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony* by the Romanian Symphony Orchestra in the Odeon of Herodes Atticus at the foot of the Athenian Acropolis as well as a concert with Ravel's *Piano Concerto* in the Fenice Theater of Venice.

Living as I was, I became aware of what were at that time the barest necessities that I had to confront virtually each day. Apart from breathing and drinking water, the five essential needs were eating, excreting, sleeping, washing and being protected from the elemental extremes, i.e., finding shelter or having sufficient clothing. If it were winter, this last was more important on a more immediate scale, but like all these basic necessities, there was a variable duration of time before each had to be met in one manner or another. Finding somewhere to urinate or defecate was a daily necessity. By contrast, one could if necessary go a day or more between meals or even sleeping. By and large, however, these five necessities – along with for me a sixth necessity, namely, that of dreaming – were concerns that I had to fulfill on a daily basis.

What I learned in this process was that I could sleep rough when there was no alternative but that a comfortable bed was more preferable. I could wash in the sink of a public toilet or virtually any water source but that a hot shower or bath was more enjoyable. I could eat lemons from an orchard in Amalfi but a full meal was always more satisfying – especially in a nice restaurant or someone's home. One could shelter behind trees for purposes of defecation, or resort to the hole in the floor that was available throughout Germany, France and Italy at the time, but a regular enclosed and private toilet was always better. And the same applied against the vagaries of cold and rain and the need for protection from them.

¹⁴Grayling (2003: 54), in discussing the general contempt by the Cynics for conventional goods, contrasts this with the attitude of the Stoics who treat the 'indifferents' as "dispensable adjuncts to the good life" but ones that conform to our natural instincts toward "the comfort or happiness that health and a measure of material comfort bring."

The factor between meeting the necessity in its barest form and satisfying it in a more acceptable one is that of comfort. People can survive in some of the most appalling conditions, but few of us in our 'right mind' would choose to do such – all other factors being equal. Seeking the contentment of ease and avoiding misery, wretchedness and discomfort result from the natural impulse of what it means to be a human being. Our instinct is to make life easier, and on this basis, I argue that comfort is a value and/or virtue that we must consider and include in understanding the good life and any formulation of human happiness.

Further to this, if the desire for ease is to be found even among the young with their non-trepidation and flexibility, how much more is this the case for those of us in our autumn years. The comfort quota increases as we grow older. Overall, however, apart from certain sports and the thrill of facing a challenge, regardless of age, we seek as part of the normal course of life to reduce hardship and increase the material comforts that delineate our world. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish comfort from pleasure. They are not necessarily the same. Pleasure as a rule signifies more extreme forms of enjoyment and melds more directly into feelings of ecstasy and transcendence of the ordinary, everyday and mundane. Comfort, by contrast, while referring to states of both physical and mental ease and well-being, is accompanied in general by quiet enjoyment and/or consolation. Over pleasure, comfort has the more colloquial connotation of sufficiency and pertains more to the usual flows of life and interaction that everyone faces. It is altogether gentler and without the payments that pleasure indulgence frequently demands. The person who is comfortable is a person who is at ease, a person who is contented and free from care. We see in this last, that comfort, although often enough a check or balance to unbridled independence, is still foundationally supported by liberty or emancipation, in this case, the freedom from care and concern.

But as with all the virtue-values, there are multiple facets to the very notion of comfort that stretch beyond simply egocentric orientation and any desire for material comfort and conventional goods. On the one hand, there is the ethical impetus for one to endeavor to be comfortable for others. This is an aspiration if not already an accomplished condition, but an ethically oriented person is one who tries to be pleasing to his or her loved ones, to family, to friends, to colleagues, to business associates, to community members and to people in general. The non-comfortable person might easily indulge in nastiness, meanness, spite, jealousy and such qualities that inspire general dislike from others. The comfortable person, by contrast, is one who is friendly, relaxed, balanced in overall inclinations and, in general, virtuous.

On the other hand, there is also an ethical impetus in the efforts of those who strive to make the lives of others more comfortable. In other words, comfort is not just something that pertains to the self. It is instead a condition that those who are equity-minded struggle to ensure and establish for others as well but beyond the immediate 'me and mine' of family, friends and loved ones. The truly free individual is the person who undertakes the well-being of other people in general. This is the person who is not confined to self-interest alone but one who understands that a more comfortable world is a world in which more and more people overall enjoy the

basic comforts of life and the contentment that comes with them. We are reminded once again of Indra's Net in which each nexus jewel reflects the infinite number of jewels in the net as a whole. Each virtue reflects the others, and, in this case, the virtue-value of comfort is one that is not only interdependent with that of liberty but also with those of honor, generosity, worship, pleasure and, ultimately, health.

One way to understand this interdependence of the fundamental virtue-values is to think of the comfort of freedom, the comfort of health, the comfort of honor and so forth. Likewise, there is a freedom that comes with comfort, the understanding that a comfortable person is a healthy person, or that there is a freedom that is involved with good health and the absence of infirmity. In fact, the virtue-values may be readily paired into numerous combinations. Overall, however, the heptatheonic, eudaimonic or natural values provide us with gauges, so to speak, by which we can measure or assess any given situation. We are permitted to evaluate present conditions in the natural terms of freedom, comfort, health, honor, pleasure, productivity and generosity.

If we had to single out one of the seven virtue-values as happiness per se, it would be comfort. It is here that we can discern the nuance between comfort and pleasure. The latter, in both its sensual and intellectual forms, partakes in essence of indulgence and, to the degree that it approaches the ecstatic, may also include pain. Comfort, however, refers more to the conditions within which we operate in general. Rather than the enjoyment of ecstasy as we might find with pleasure, comfort refers instead to the enjoyment of contentment. In other words, comfort is the state of *eudaimonia*. The comfortable person is a happy person.

Understanding comfort as *eudaimonia* – being under the protection or influence of a benign being, however, allows us to recognize the externality of the conditions that produce happiness, contentment or comfort. These conditions may be produced by one's parents, friends, loved ones, the state or the gods. We do not make comfort ourselves. We make ourselves *more comfortable* with the conditions and opportunities that have been provided to us. Comfort, therefore, refers to the external situation and our attitude and reaction to it.

By recognizing happiness or eudemonia as one of the virtue-values, we encourage a more fluid and flexible pagan position that accepts happiness as a teleological end but not necessarily the *only* end or goal – apart from the fundamental interchangeability of the virtue-values as an intrinsic whole. For some pagans, pleasure may be the supreme achievement. For others, it is happiness. For others still, it might be freedom, while some opt for honor. Consequently, while paganism produced the great schools of Aristotelian, Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean, Cynic and Skeptical thought – each with their own understanding of the final *raison d'être*, the pluralism of paganism as a non-sectarian but integrated accomplishment allows a range of choice and balance for its adherents individually. Paganism may be inspired by its deities and its ethical behavior may be modeled by them, but there is no final authority that mandates what must be sought, let alone what must be done. Responsibility in such decisions devolves to the community and individual in and of themselves.

Consequently, paganism embraces both egoistic and altruistic behaviors as personally decided pathways toward the good life. At the end of the day, some might choose the freedom of a transcendental liberation or enlightenment; others might pursue pleasure as the ultimate goal; some may choose honor and worship as the exclusive pursuit. However, given the overriding nature of the human being, I would suspect that comfort is and will remain to be the chief form of happiness for the many. Some may lament this reality – both within the pagan community and within the other major world religions, some might adopt a Nietzschean position and condemn the prevailing ‘herd mentality’, but the fact is: This is the way it is. A grounded pagan can accept this reality, live with it and work with it. The option of comfort need not be a source for spiritual discomfiture.

We have already seen that comfort itself has self-oriented and other-oriented possibilities. And though distinguishable, comfort easily blends into pleasure. Our efforts to make ourselves comfortable may directly lead to pursuit of unabashed joy and delight. If ethical behavior is contingent upon inclusion of at least some non-egoistic action, however, the question then becomes one of addressing how the quest for increased material and other comforts does not become an exercise in pure and unadulterated selfishness. Where, when and how does the pursuit of comfort – or, for that matter, any particular value – not become excessive and exclusively confined to the individual pursuant himself/herself? Moreover, when and how do our needs and desires as humans become incommensurate consumerist luxuries that desecrate the notion of a sacred earth?

To answer these questions, we need to turn to the cardinal virtues. While the heptatheonic or natural virtues may be used to self-assess one’s state of progress or navigation through life at any given point, the cardinal virtues do not lend themselves readily to this sort of evaluation on a personal basis. We do not determine for ourselves whether we are wise, moderate, courageous or just. For the most part, prudence, temperance, strength and justice are measures that others apply to our behavior. But by the same token, these cardinal virtues provide us with rules or standards by which we can evaluate any of the natural virtue-values. This will be easier to see when we come to discuss pleasure, but even with comfort we are permitted to ask in our quest of it whether we are being prudent or wise in the pursuit at hand, whether we are being moderate or immoderate, whether we are being brave or cowardly in seeking the comforts that we seek, and, especially, whether we are being just or unjust in our own pursuits. In other words, when we attempt to evaluate in terms of justice, at whose expense is our endeavor being undertaken? Who is being hurt, harmed or reduced in the process? When does our personal pursuit open up to the consideration of others and their well-being let alone the sustainability and well-being of our host planet? Consequently, the classical cardinal virtues may be seen as tools by which to evaluate each of the virtue-values in ethical terms.

It is through comfort, however, that the cardinal virtues and the natural virtue-values most directly connect. I have already alluded to comfort as the more widespread and general goal of most people. Its centrality has less to do with its universality, though, as it does with its underlying meaning. For this last, we must

turn to the etymology of the term.¹⁵ The word *comfort* is a development of the Latin intensive *com-* applied to the word *fortis* denoting ‘strong’.¹⁶ We can see at once the integral link of comfort as strength to the root-notions encapsulated in the ideas of ‘virtue’ and ‘value’: strength, ability, confidence.

To be comfortable is to be at home in one’s conditions, to have the courage afforded by one’s present situation. The brave hero is comfortable with his or her abilities. Perhaps even more to the point, the hero is confident enough with her value priorities to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to achieve them. Consequently, in its more colloquial understanding, comfort is the strength of confidence in one’s position and well-being – a self-assurance that at heart is that of the hero or brave contender whose strength is power, vigor, vim, valor and virtue. As the hero races forth fearlessly or at least unwaveringly against the obstacles to forward movement, so too shall a pagan humanity embrace the pursuit of personal comfort and world comfort bravely and with the strength of conviction and self-responsibility. Rather than being a softness, comfort is an intensified strength that allows one to accept normal human pursuits without intimidation while at the same time reaching to the foundational basis of what it means to be a strong, ethical agent.

As with pleasure, comfort is among the most ambivalent of ethical idols. In other words, though I have been addressing idolatry throughout this book primarily as something positive and not simply to be condemned through biblical prejudice, there is still the occasion that an idol might become the proverbial ‘false idol’. We can see this from today’s increasingly cosmopolitan and ecological perspectives in the development of chauvinistic nationalism. An idol becomes a ‘false idol’ when it undermines and invalidates the other idols. The bogus security of jingoistic patriotism represents comfort in its worst manifestation. Following in the wake of its Patriot Act, the United States Congress passed a bill to ban flag burning. In a cogent appeal, Mike Whitney described this action as a violation of the nation’s fundamental First Amendment that is intended to guarantee free speech.¹⁷ In the ethical terms of the heptatheonic formulation, the supposed comfort that is used as a refuge in times of political uncertainty and social fear becomes a travesty of liberty, health and honor. It is a comfort that makes a weakness rather than the comfort of strength and the freedom to operate virtuously even when under duress. We can see, therefore, that the idol of comfort as a useful virtue-value presents a range of

¹⁵Our English word, *comfort*, is traced through the Middle English *comforten* to the Old French *comforter* – itself a derivative of the Late Latin *confortare* with the meaning ‘to strengthen’.

¹⁶See Morris (1969: 266). Watkins (1969: 1509 & 1513) considers the possibility of the Latin *fortis* deriving from either **bhergh-* ‘high’ with derivatives referring to hills and hill-forts, or **dher-*, extended form **dhergh-*, with the meaning ‘to hold firmly, support’ and such other cognate derivatives as ‘firmament’, ‘farm’, ‘affirm’ and ‘dharma’. See further, Pokorny (1959: 140 & 252f) who supports the **bhergh-lbheregh-* etymology.

¹⁷Whitney’s article, “Show your Independence on the 4th; Burn a Flag,” was forwarded to me on the 6th of July 2005 by a Canadian friend. Living in Washington state, Whitney can be reached at fergiewhitney@msn.com. Indirectly alluding to Nietzsche, he cites Albert Einstein as saying, “The flag is proof than man is still a herd animal.”

varying possibility and nuance that can fluctuate from denial of personal freedom, on the one hand, in which ‘free speech’ is permitted so long as it is *not* politically or emotionally ‘offensive’, to, on the other hand, the courage to express dissent in the public forum. As a weakness, comfort is like a cancer that destroys the host on which it feeds. As a strength, it is an asset by which we feel comfortable and confident enough to do and say what we want. The material comforts we desire for the happy life are only good and useful if and when we use them to assist us in being morally courageous and strong, that is, in being of ethical comfort. When such comforts become handicaps and prevent us from the fortitude that is necessary for right living, we can dispense with them regardless of the cost.

As an overall disposition, the comfortable situation is like that of a healthy body. When the body is balanced and operating correctly, our attention is not drawn inwardly. There is no aching shoulder, no sprained back, no anxious and troublesome mind. Comfort is an inclusive totality – the general condition of happiness or *eudaimonia*. We are uncomfortable when and if our circumstances are incomplete or unbalanced. Comfort as a potency rather than a masking refuge from terror depends ultimately on both a healthy physical and mental existence. It becomes a measure of who we are and what we can do.

Though comfort at root pertains to strength and the power of confidence in one’s surroundings, assets and/or abilities, nevertheless in its more ordinary, colloquial usage it is understood as chiefly material comforts – e.g., a good bed, a secure home, a fine automobile, clothes that fit, look stylish and are suitable to the current weather conditions, and the like. For the pagan, these comforts begin with the material realm, but all the same, a pagan can recognize comfort additionally as something that might be mental, emotional and/or spiritual. Comfort may have a hidden core that concerns energy, strength, courage or power, but for most of us it is associated with ease and non-hardship. For pagans, comfort in this sense is a worthy and desirable goal. And though within the multiplicity of pagan possibilities there are counter-exceptions such as the Amerindian Sun Dance ritual, Santería apprenticeship and other shamanic initiatory rites, by and large paganism eschews the kind of austerities characteristic of Christian and Hindu fasting, of Christian and Shiite self-flagellation, of Zen rigor and the piercing of flesh ceremonies for the god Kataragama as witnessed in Tamil Hindu communities of southern India and northern Sri Lanka. Bodily mutilation and self-torture are not the general pagan way toward achieving the good life let alone religious ecstasy. For the middle-of-the-road pagan, the search for comfort is a legitimate pursuit in and of itself. In all this, we are permitted to understand comfort simply as happiness in its least complicated forms.¹⁸ For the heroically-minded, the cardinal virtue of strength is a

¹⁸As a personification, the deity that perhaps most encapsulates plain comfort per se is the Roman abstraction of Felicitas. [For Felicitas, according to the Fasti Antiates Ministrorum, a Capitoline temple to the goddess was founded on the Kalends of July (York 1986: 137). The reconstruction of a fragment from the Fasti Antiates Maiores suggests the temple might have been dedicated to ‘Juno in Felicitas’. Other calendars mention a temple to Felicitas being consecrated on 12 August (ibid. p. 150).] If, however, we become concerned with the deification of the essence of comfort, namely,

direct path to godhood. For the rest of us who simply seek a proper way to navigate our way through life, living gently upon the earth, the natural virtue of comfort offers a pathway to the good life and happiness that is available or at least a possibility for the greater number of us.

Health

Certainly, health is a natural virtue-value that has long been honored by humanity, pagan and otherwise.¹⁹ Like strength or courage, it is exalted as a conduit to immortality itself. The Taoists of China have perhaps more than most centered on healthful longevity as the precursor to an immortal existence. If freedom and comfort are vitally important for human happiness, health is no less a centrally crucial factor to our overall well-being. We see this recognition in the extreme popularity of Aesculapius' cult in late imperial Roman times as well as in the preoccupation with body-work, physio-therapy, nutrition and exercise that is increasingly characteristic of Western life in general.²⁰

If we consider the fundamental notion of 'wholeness' to health, there can be no denying its importance to the human being.²¹ The etymology of the term clearly indicates the basic connection between health, holiness and wholeness. This same essential idea is also to be seen in the Latin word *salus* that denotes 'health; a

strength or force, the appropriate deity is the Greco-Roman Heracles/Hercules. Hercules typifies a pagan route to deification par excellence. As a representation of the human individual with his various sins of excess (e.g., lust, gluttony, short-temper, etc.), it is through his sheer strength and perseverance that the profoundly human Heracles/Hercules attains apotheosis and a place among the gods. As an expression of comfort, Hercules conveys the very complexity that underlies the concept. [Temples to Hercules receive dedication dates of 12 August (York 1986: 150) as well as the Ides of August (ibid. pp 35, 154). Sulla dedicated a temple to Hercules on 4 June (York 1986: 255). The Roman Hercules' major shrine was the *ara maxima* in the Forum Boarium. See further Hercules' association with the winter solstice (ibid. 198).]

¹⁹Another Greco-Roman figure who achieves apotheosis besides Heracles/Hercules is the divine physician Asclepius/Aesculapius. Son of Apollo, he is slain by Zeus for transgressing the boundaries between mortal and immortal when he restores the deceased to life. However, his own capabilities as healer are such that his father is able to persuade Zeus to turn his son into the god of medicine. Among the Greeks, the direct personification of health per se is Asclepius' daughter, Hygeia. The Epidaurian Aesculapius was established in Rome in 239 bce as a result of the Sibylline oracle. According to the *Fasti Antiates Maiores* and *Fasti Praenestini*, the temple of Aesculapius was founded 2 years later on the Tiber island (*in insula Tiberina*). See York (1986: 203, 257).

²⁰Note Kris Dierickx in Burggraeve et al. (2003: 180): "By the beginning of the twenty-first century, health has become one of humanity's highest priorities. Sociological research has shown that happiness turns out to be primarily a result of good health." Nevertheless, Dierickx distinguishes health as virtue from health as a value and norm (pp. 182f).

²¹Our word for health derives from an Indo-European root, **kailo-*, signifying 'whole, uninjured, of good omen'. Beside 'health', cognate terms that derive from the same radical stem include 'whole', 'hale', 'wholesome', 'heal', 'holy' and 'hallow': Watkins (1969: 1520).

whole or sound condition'.²² We are accordingly permitted to understand through the combinations of ideas that the complete person, the whole person, that is, the person who is whole and completed, is to be understood as a healthy person.

In our efforts to regain health, there are two fundamental and often rival approaches. Allopathic medicine operates under the premise that disease results by-and-large from an invading organism – bacteria, virus, poison – and that the remedy is to expel and eradicate the noxious or debilitating agent. Homeopathic medicine, by contrast, concentrates on balancing the full organism and rendering it more impervious to infection. In general, the latter approach is more consistent with the natural integration of a complete organic system as akin to health-as-wholeness, but in our super-advanced technological world and the concomitant pollutions it involves, health and the restoration of health for today are more likely to be a combination or negotiation between these two primary approaches. All the same, for pagans increasingly there appears to be a noticeably growing emphasis on proper and balanced diet – including a preference for organic and non-genetically modified foods, on physical fitness – including not only exercise if not sport, but also body work, meditation, tai chi-type body movement, and moderate use of recreational drugs and alcohol if any. In this respect, contemporary pagans differ little from a growing inclination found throughout the West toward the pursuit of health through marketable techniques and greater awareness of effort and consequences concerning one's physical well-being.

But as the notion of health itself mandates, well-being is not physical alone. For it to be complete, it also entails the psychological. In other words, mental and spiritual dimensions are important in achieving the state of totality that we are permitted to designate as health. A complete person, i.e., a healthy one, is someone who is balanced physically, mentally, emotionally as well as spiritually. Perhaps one of the difficulties we face in our present-day world is the compartmentalizing of issues – the attempt to treat an issue, any issue, in isolation rather than as simply one aspect of the overall whole. We tend to focus on the problem rather than on the why and reasons behind the problem. Some of these explanations, the causes of an illness or accident, are beyond our control, but to the degree that we are incomplete and unbalanced, we are more vulnerable and open to the possibility of malady. This is why, in understanding the virtue-value of health, we need to appreciate the full person and not just that area of our lives in which we experience pain, discomfort, fever or disease. Health in its very conception aims for, and is founded upon, our very wholeness, ourselves as complete people physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The specializations that have developed in our modern world are

²²*Salus* derives from the root **sol-* 'whole' that has also given rise to Greek *holos* 'whole', Latin *sollus* 'whole, entire, unbroken', *sollemnis* 'celebrated at fixed dates, established, religious, solemn' and *salvus* 'whole, safe, healthy, uninjured', and English *solid*: Watkins (1992: 2125); Pokorny (1959: 979). The Romans personified health as the goddess *Salus*: York (1986: 149, 251). *Salus*, originally a personification of prosperity in general, became identified with the Greek *Hygeia*. She is the equivalent of the Sabine goddess *Strenia*, patroness of the new year wishes for prosperity and happiness.

fascinating and often marvelous breakthroughs in scientific and medical advance, but a pagan in particular is mindful of being able to see both forest and tree – letting neither preclude the appreciation of the other.

Consequently, the complete person in a pagan understanding is one who does not denigrate the bodily appetites but incorporates them as part of emotional and sacred well-being. Physical fitness, robustness, healthiness and vigor are aspects, fundamental aspects, of what it means to be a complete and wholesome individual – a wholesomeness that extends to using, appreciating and even on occasion indulging in our physical and bodily passions. When we are moderate in such pursuits, we are able to lead balanced and healthy lives – recognizing at the same time that the material dimension, as important as it is, is not the whole of the picture. Real health, full health, lasting health depends as well on our emotional needs and satisfactions, our mental activities and pursuits, and our encounters and exchanges with the divine. Fitness is a product of our completeness, and being complete by definition entails not excluding any aspect of our being.

In a pagan consciousness, health might well be considered among the greatest of gifts – something to be honored and encouraged through regime, exercise, consciousness and awareness of what one is doing. Health and freedom are often understood as integrally linked – especially as health itself is to be approached as a well-functioning system. Moreover, if in the fast-paced and overly stressed life of the modern world, we require a modicum of leisure in order to find time and space for worship, there is no less a necessity of leisure for the maintenance of health. Once again we can see the interrelation and interdependence between the virtue-values. The ritual demands of a festal calendar punctuate our otherwise dog-eat-dog and rat-race lifestyles of today, and the enforced leisure that thereby mitigates stressful existence can be seen by a pagan as something that is good for our health.

Whenever we wish, we are able to see the interrelated links between ethical-axial disposition. We speak of the freedom of health as well as the healthiness of freedom; the comfort of health as well as the healthiness of comfort. The implicit holism of fitness understands the healthy as bodily, mentally and spiritually, but the balance between these domains will shift when and as we grow older and the body's natural infirmities and decline reduce the stamina and resistances we knew in youth. For the elderly, the mental and emotional importance of well-being and completeness may become more dominant, but even in advancing states of physical weakening a modicum of fitness remains an aspiration and possibility for those of us who endeavor to stay attuned to our bodies and their needs. A pagan is well aware that the laws of matter involve eventual pain and loss, and as the incumbent processes take their toll, the fullness of health for the elderly may often need to swing more toward an overall attitude of mental and emotional serenity, even detachment, when our physical resources diminish. Health, therefore, as a totality, is not just the state or condition we happen to achieve at any given moment – as important as this may be – but a duration and quality that persists throughout the changes that occur for each and everyone of us. Consequently, as a virtue-value, health is not simply physical

fitness but rather the overall state of mind and body as an integrated and viably working organism that is able to deal with circumstances as they arise.

Once again, the cardinal virtues may be used as gauges against which to assess our behavior in terms of health. We may ask if a particular course of action is prudent or wise. Is it detrimental to our health? Recreational drug and alcohol use is one such instance for which this question is pertinent. If we might decide that it is not harmful, how much ought we to engage in such activities? How moderate or temperate ought we to be in this or just about anything in order to maintain the balance of a healthy equilibrium? Then too, is the pursuit of a pleasure or comfort strengthening or weakening? When does something we might choose to do undermine our vitality; when does it augment it?

The justice measure is the most difficult and initially seemingly inappropriate to ask. Is an action just or unjust for our health? What does putting the issue like this mean? For pagans, there are several avenues through which to reach an answer. If health is understood as a gift of the gods, then to abuse that gift is in itself to act unjustly. From a different perspective, excessive body-building or fanatical diet is a means of losing the balance and may be assessed as unjust or incommensurate to the goal of practical health let alone the demands and infringement such pursuits might place on others. This last opens the justice and health question into a third and less self-centered arena, namely, how much does our individual concern with our physical well-being in terms of health violate or deprive others from an equitable existence? For instance, how much does my insistence on eating special foods prevent some people elsewhere from sustainable lifestyles?

There are no easy answers to the justice question concerning health, but phrasing the issue in this way opens the ethical aspect to extra-personal levels. If health is about completeness and holism, we are also talking about the health of the family, of the community, of the state and of the world. Ultimately, the virtue-value of health leads into political dimensions as well. For instance, and permit me to select the most obvious example that exists at the time of my writing, ought we pursue a foreign policy that considers the enemy simply something to be eradicated regardless of cost, the allopathic approach, or do we set about more holistically and seek to understand the deepest causes behind the problem and to change the global state of affairs in ways that might redress religio-cultural grievances to eliminate the problem by eliminating its source? Pursuit of political health requires not only imagination, hopefully an imagination based on wisdom, but also the courage to try the innovative and be capable of transcending the traditional petty response. Likewise, it depends on remaining temperate in both response and pursuit as well as on a profound sense of just justice. Government by deceit can never be a healthy situation. The polity so ruled is an unhealthy and incomplete political unit. Most of all, however, a pagan joins with a secularist in her/his opposition to castigating the political enemy as an incarnation of evil. Rather than reducing reality to a black-and-white only situation, the unhealthy approach, a more holistic tactic is to recognize terrorism for what it is: a disease – something to be cured judiciously and without the fire-branding exaggerations of a religious crusade.

Therefore, the heptatheonic virtue of health has ramifications beyond the immediately personal. Encapsulating the quest for, and condition of, totality or wholeness, health may start with physical fitness but extends to where we are at additionally in our mental-emotional equilibrium. This last, for a pagan if not others as well, includes our spiritual perspective and practice. But the healthy person needs for completeness a holistic environment as well. This includes comfortable familial relationships, a sense of community, pride in one's political state and a world that is both inter-rationally sane and environmentally cohesive. We want, need and should demand health in all these arenas. To do less whenever we have options for otherwise is to accede to a debilitating and diseased existence. Such is not a pagan way.

Worship

With worship we reach the last of the basic quadrivium of pagan virtues. If we think of an intersection of roads in which the person at the center has four choices, between the alternatives of freedom, comfort, health and worship, in a sense, whichever direction the agent chooses, with the link and interchange of the virtue-values, each choice will lead finally to the same place. Each virtue ultimately encapsulates the rest. However, the virtue-value of worship is the most complicated. It includes three sub-categories or informal aspects, namely, pleasure, productivity and generosity, and each of these will be discussed separately to some extent. What I have had in mind with worship itself, at least in its more formal aspect, is ritual, and I have considered designating this particular virtue-value as beauty. In a purely semantic sense, 'worship' is best used for the aspect of production, that is, the making or creating of worth/value.²³ Consequently, I wish to approach the present virtue-value under discussion, especially as ritual signifies something that is correctly done, as virtue or honor itself. The Greek *arête*, Latin *virtus*, English *virtue* may be thought of as the supreme thing that is done correctly – that is, something put together validly and as it *should* be. The word I wish to employ for the most part here is *honor*, and, while honoring covers the *act* of worship – the paying of homage or respect to someone or something, in the central sense that I wish to consider here, honor is the quality that belongs to the virtuous person and/or revered thing – a quality that approximates the intrinsic regardless of whether it is recognized by

²³Please note that I am not employing worship simply in the sense of religious devotion and especially not in the sense of beseeching the gods for favors. While this last might be considered by some as what religions are about, it is at best only what *some* religions are about. Worship for many denotes the formal expression of reverence, and while I acknowledge ritual as embodying its ceremonial aspect, I conceive worship informally as the pursuits of pleasure, productivity and generosity. Honor or honoring is the underlying distinction of all worship – both formal and informal. Consequently, one may apprehend pleasure as honoring the gift of life, production as honoring the earth process itself, and generosity as honoring the other.

others or not. In other words, honor is a natural characteristic or disposition of an honorable individual. What he or she does will be principled – whether known to others and acknowledged by them or otherwise.²⁴

Our question now is: what is honor for the pagan? The virtues of freedom, health and comfort are fairly straightforward as far as apprehending their meaning and significance. Honor, however, is not as clear but certainly central – perhaps even the most central of all pagan concerns. It is through honor – or honor and virtue – that a pagan most connects to humanity, to nature and to his/her godhead. If freedom, comfort, health and worship are the principle virtues, it is honor as virtue that is the foundation to all these.

Honor has several different areas of significance: the notion of respect, admiration and/or reputation; the verbal idea of revering, expressing reverence, venerating or paying homage or tribute to someone or something; and finally the quality of being intrinsically admirable, splendid, worthy, marvelous or excellent. Being commendable suggests external recognition of one's honorability. Being without shame or disgrace might refer more to one's actual and internal condition. The nuance between being honorable and being recognized as honorable and honoring something beyond oneself is such that we have here a dynamic that comes the closest to furnishing an overall purpose to life. Freedom, comfort and health are joys; honor may also be a joy but it is even more the *raison d'être* of our existence.

If and when we try to ascertain who we might deem to be or have been an honorable person, our answers might vary according to the number of people asked. Among pagans, whether one agrees with his philosophy or not, Epicurus appears to have lived a quiet life of intrinsic dignity. He was moderate, prudent and presumably courageous in his own way. We may also assume that he was just. Another example of a person that pagans might accept as a person of honor is Spinoza who allowed his sister his share of the family inheritance that he had been legally awarded. Spinoza was once again a person who lived a modest life of diligence and perseverance.

²⁴For the Romans, honor and virtue go together as the proverbial horse and carriage. As deities, Honos and Virtus were invariably linked and received a temple dedicated on 17 July: York (1986: 142f). Other temples or shrines were dedicated to the pair on the 12th of August (150). Fowler (1971: 446) lists Honos and Virtus among the public virtues of Rome – along with Fides, Pax and Pudor. He attributes the temple to Honos as the consequence of either the battle of Clastidium or the taking of Syracuse. As we have already seen, Virtus is originally the personification of valor and manly strength, while Honos is one of those rare concepts that simply appears without the benefit of etymological pedigree or possibility of analysis. With Virtus understood as a goddess and Honos as a god – in fact, a rare masculine personification among the more usual register of female abstractions, we have a female-male coupling that echoes the festival reflections for the month of July as a whole. July, like every month, comprises the Kalends sacred to Juno and the Ides sacred to Jupiter, but there are also the Poplifugia (5 July to Jupiter) and the Nonae Caprotina (7 July to Juno of the wild fig tree) and the double Lucaria (19 and 21 July) conjecturally sacred to Jupiter and Juno. The month concludes with the Neptunalia (23 July to the god Neptune) and the Furrinalia (25 July to the goddess Furrina). See York (1986 *passim*). Consequently, we are permitted to conclude that, for the Romans at least, honor and virtue are understood as male-female equivalents.

More contemporary people to be considered as possibly honorable persons might include the current Dalai Lama (Tensin Gyatso), Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan and certainly Jimmy Carter.

In trying to gain a further understanding of honor-virtue, I have asked several friends and colleagues for suggestions on whom they would consider to be honorable people.²⁵ For many, the question was difficult to answer. Some people could think of no one. But those whose names were put forth are interesting and merit consideration in our attempt to delineate what we mean by honor. Stefanie Freydonk (Extasia) suggests Oprah Winfrey who, despite extraordinary wealth, is compassionate and steadily concerned with humanitarian issues.

Out of nearly four dozen pagan, quasi-pagan and/or pagan-friendly respondents I asked for suggestions of honorable people, Mahatma Gandhi was mentioned the most (approximately one-fifth), followed by Jimmy Carter nominated seven times and then Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa – both receiving six mentions each. Some people could not presume to judge anyone that they did not know personally and decided against including these more public illustrious and/or the ‘obvious’.²⁶ The others who received more than one nomination include Abraham Lincoln (3), the Dalai Lama (3), Jesus Christ (3), Martin Luther King Jr. (2), Bob Geldorf (2) and Bono (2). Four people named their spouse, five nominated friends, five suggested a parent and three included themselves.²⁷ Wendy Griffin, professor emerita in Women’s Studies at the California State University in Long Beach and current Academic Dean of Cherry Hill Seminary, countered people like Gandhi who reputedly insisted on sleeping with young girls to keep himself warm.²⁸ I have long had my own difficulties with what I feel is the over-adulation of Mother Teresa

²⁵The question was phrased as follows: “I am working on a chapter about virtue and honour. Richard has been asking for examples of honourable people. So if you can, could you name for me some people you might classify as virtuous and/or honourable however you conceive this quality to be? You need not put much thought into this; just list those who first pop into your thoughts. Please no more than ten per person. One is sufficient as well. I would appreciate your input. It would help me a lot.”

²⁶One person named instead such colleagues familiar to her as Brian Bocking, Peggy Morgan and Robert Samuel. Another friend named her niece who is bravely battling cancer and has a family of three young children to raise.

²⁷Don Hill, a friend living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and who has been recognized by the CDC in Atlanta as one of the longest HIV/Aids survivors, considered only himself since his experience has led him to trust no one: “I trust no one I meet now, see and hear the hurt being done each other due to gay self hate. Because I refuse to play the sick game feel disassociated from them. Outside of the gay (ha ha) scene I trust and believe [sic.] no one either -self centered greed and corruption everywhere which leads to hurtful actions which leads to hate.” (personal communication 30.7.5).

²⁸Personal communication (31.7.5). Prof. Griffin also mentions to me that the theologian Paul Tillich kept a large collection of pornography. She concludes that a virtuous or honorable person is one (1) who does her or his utmost to live in accordance with her or his principles, (2) who keeps her or his word to the extent that this is humanly possible, and (3) whose principles include wanting for others the greatest possible good without defining it for them. Meanwhile, Dr. Anthony Thorley elucidates: “One certainly thinks of people like Mandela, or Gandhi, but both earlier in their careers, before the idealisation began, were real shits” (personal communication 1.8.5).

whose primary goal was the agenda-driven concern with advancing the institution she represented and certainly not the cure of people under her care. She is reputed to have said, ‘We are here to help people die’ – even when relatively low-cost medicines were available that might have prevented the death of some of those who were in her custody. Germane Greer is the first person I know who publicly dissociated herself from and denied the hype surrounding Mother Teresa.²⁹ Overall, however, the responses were varied and reflect the concerns and backgrounds of the individual assessors.³⁰

One thing that is clear among these suggestions is that the disposition of honor necessitates an active doing.³¹ As a virtue it is not a static quality such as the color of our eyes or the gender in which we are born. An honorable person is one who

²⁹Penny Jarvis says, “Overtly pious people like Ruskin and Mother Teresa are distinctly dodgy” (personal communication 1.8.5). However, Kirstine Munk finds Mother Teresa “too boring (forgive me!) in the sense that she is too perfect” (personal communication 10.8.5).

³⁰William Bloom (Holistic Partnerships) names David Spangler, Thich Nhat Hahn, Cicely Saunders and Dorothy Maclean. Other names I received include the Buddha, Ma Jaya Bhagavati (Kashi Ashram), Oscar Schindler, the family that helped the family of Anne Frank, all those who had the courage to hide refugees from the Nazis, Doctors Without Borders (Medicins Sans Frontiers), Horatio Nelson, Albert Schweitzer, Florence Nightengale, Adam Smith, David Hume, Basil Hume, Molly Ivins, Catholic Social Activist Dorothy Day, John Peel, David Attenborough, Des Kennedy (former Jesuit priest, now Gestalt therapist), novelist/journalist Jeannette Winterson, law professor Anita Hill, Berkeley lawyer Henry Elson, Scott Ritter, Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis (Austro-Hungarian physician), Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Subcommandante Marcos (of the Chiapas Indian struggle with the Mexican government), Mohammed Ali, Archbishop Tutu, Walter Cronkite, Kenyan Pulitzer Prize winner Wangari Maathai, Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva, Elizabeth Taylor, Doris Day, Marlene Dietrich, Starhawk and Aleister Crowley. Maureen Sharma (Mullaly International Inc.) includes Bill Gates in her list for both his local and global generosity. Dr. Kenneth Jay Wilson gives among the names he furnishes those of Thomas Moore, Susan B. Anthony, Colonel Claus von Staffenberg, holocaust survivor Elie Wiessel and Afghan resistance fighter Ahmad Shah Massoud (communication 30.7.5). Friends Stephan Michaud and Koen Peters in The Netherlands pass on Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama for Queen Beatrix, her late husband Claus Von Amsberg, choreographer Hans van Maanen, and Maarten Toonder (from the ‘Bommel Strip’) (communication 31.7.5). Elisabeth Arweck (*Journal of Contemporary Religion*) was unable to name a person living or dead and suggested instead the fictional hero from Robert Goddard’s novel *Past Caring*. Other fictional examples that I received were some of the characters in Jane Austen’s novels (Irene Earis) and, suggested by Rosalind Newton, Charles Darnay (*Tale of Two Cities*), the Jimmy Stewart character in *It’s a Wonderful Life*, and the President in *Dave*. Politicians that were suggested include the late Senator Barbara Jordan (Texas), Senator Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island), Senator Robert Byrd, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, Tony Benn, Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell (“before Bush ruined him”). The following Catholic saints were also put forth: Francis of Assisi, Martin, Agnes of Rome, Vincent de Paul and Santiago Hernandez Doa Slieva. Anne Hecate Gould, mother of Trinlay Tulku Rinpoche, mentioned “All the Karmapas and the Tibetan Saints . . . Everyone else’s Saints . . .” along with Alfred Einstein, Joseph Campbell, Buckminster Fuller, Gandhi, Lao Tzu, Martin Luther King Jr. and Herodotus (“yet a bit of a gossip”) (personal communication 2.8.5). And finally, among the classicists, I received the names of Socrates, Diogenes, Solon, Herodotus and Cicero.

³¹Cinema and television editor Toni Morgan called this being *engagé* with the world: “I think it’s a quality that only applies to a person who is active in this very screwed up world we live in which is why I think I didn’t include Gandhi and others like him” (personal communication 30.7.5).

acts accordingly, who *makes* honor through how she or he behaves, and, if honor is a value or worth, being honorable is therefore a form of worship. In the examples of virtuous people, what they tend to have in common is stature, a quality of standing. If we consider standing-stature-honor-worship as the base of a pyramid of human ethical aspiration, we are entitled to see pleasure-happiness as what leads from the foundation to the pinnacle understood as beauty. Cognate with ‘stature’ and ‘standing’ is ‘statue’ – another name for the idol. What this might suggest is that the ethical idols and worship as ethical idolatry are the support for the beauty that is paganism, a paganism that is finally understood as both humanism and naturism.

Our evaluation of honor allows us also to understand that there are two notions to keep in mind in its consideration. Many of the people either named or at least considered as honorable are illustrious or renowned. In this sense, honor connects with reputation – the consideration by others. But if and when I acknowledge that my parents, despite their peccadillo and short-comings, are basically honorable people, I am referring to an intrinsic quality to their respective natures and not to their fame or public reputation. In general, however, honor for most of us – at least as an ethical virtue – is less about the overall condition or sum of our lives as it is about the quality of our individual acts. In its overall sense, honor, like freedom, comfort and health, is an aspiration, and while we may assess specific instances as free, healthy, comfortable or virtuous, the virtue-values are goals toward which we aim as we course our ways through life more than they are evaluative appraisals of our lives as we live them. Honor and the rest are more what we seek rather than what we may have.

One thing that comes across through the responses I received is the contrast between those who think of honor in terms of reputation and those who refuse to judge someone as honorable if they do not know the person personally.³² Considering honor in terms of standing brings it closest to the traditional or standard understanding of worship. Public figures who are accepted as honorable become models, idols or vehicles through which we appraise the ethical good. In reality, of course, such people may be little what we consider them to be. For example, if a person who at heart is a bigot and miser but gives to charity out of calculated reasons for his or her personal advance but nevertheless appears to be generous and good, is such a person honorable? In the instance I have just described, the answer is no. We see instead that virtuous honor belongs to the fundamental nature that stands behind the acts of honor we perform. The kind of honor I wish to emphasize here

³²In this connection, singer Mary Alterator (6.8.5) has the following train of thought in response to my question: “I have been thinking about it and in the fame game world we drown ourselves in I think it is really hard to move [beyond] virtual honour cause I assume for your list you need only think about people we read and write about. Not close and personal friends, who for the most part I would volunteer all their names. I hereby suggest Bob Geldorf. He really wants change and the attempt he is making to raise awareness and the voice that he uses to try and the will to really make a difference is more than honorable in this ravaged and sad time of man and woman kind we find ourselves distractedly living amongst.”

is the honor that fits with trust and friendship. It is a quality, character, disposition or general demeanor that we can picture as the most golden in its worth – whether recognized or not.

Another way to approach the question of honor is to appreciate that all the virtue-values have physical as well as intangible aspects. Freedom pertains equally to one's physical ability to move about – not being confined by jail cell or poverty – and to a state of mind that is not burdened by fears and feelings of inadequacy and the like. Comfort also concerns one's physical condition as well as the mental confidence one has. Health certainly relates to the body but additionally to one's mental equilibrium. Like all these, honor is also both material and mental. The former is encapsulated in the *acts* of honor we perform: being brave in a situation that calls for it, being just, being wise or being in self-control. From the physical end, honor is understood through the actions we do that are expressive of the cardinal virtues in particular and of any virtuous behavior in general. The more elusive and intangible aspect of honor might be understood instead in the thoughts and motives we have that exist behind our actions. Why do we help another, why do we assist someone who is in a difficulty, why do we restrain ourselves from simply pursuing our own personal interests? It is in the answer to questions like these that we are most apt to locate what is honor as a quality that is to be revered.

It is always difficult to separate honor from reputation – especially public reputation. But this last can never be the whole of being honorable. Among the responses to my question concerning virtuous people that was put to friends and colleagues, as already mentioned, some people simply refused to countenance anyone with whom they were not familiar on a personal level. Others only thought of the illustrious. Like beauty – especially as I tend to equate honor and beauty, the perception of honor is colored by one's personal perspective – by how we have been nurtured into seeing things as we do.³³ The variety of responses was for me perhaps the most interesting. But reputation alone is fleeting. For instance, Cicero speaks of various illustrious persons of his time as among the most virtuous and well-known for their honorable characters – people such as Tiberius Gracchus the elder, Publius Rutilius Rufus, Lucius Lucinius Crassus, Quintus Mucius Scaevola the Priest, Scipio Africanus the younger, Gaius Laelius Sapiens and so forth,³⁴ but few of us today apart from historians of the Roman Republic and a small group of interested people know much if anything at all about them. In time, the same might be said about such people of today – Jimmy Carter, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King. A pagan might conceive of a time in which the Roman Catholic Church is no longer the largest religious organization but simply a remnant comprising a marginal presence and someone like Mother Teresa becomes known by few if anyone beyond the Church's limited confines.

³³As Dr. Anthony Thorley expresses this subjectivity, “honour and virtue depend on your position or perspective of the person, whole or part, then or now” (personal communication 1.8.5).

³⁴Cicero. 45 bce: *passim*.

Consequently, an honorable reputation is perhaps ephemeral at best, and it is the honor that is to be found before the reputation or even when there is no reputation at all that is what interests us in the pursuit of virtue and the good life. And, for a pagan, honor, like liberty, strength of character and completeness, is nevertheless a route toward immortality and the understanding of being among the gods. The general exchange between deities, in fact, as we read especially in Homer, is the mutual expression of respect. And we can glean from the dialogue and contacts of god with god that honor is the recognition of specialness in the other. Consequently, people we tend to accept as honorable, such as Jimmy Carter or Nelson Mandela, are those whose behavior and efforts are motivated by a respect for the intrinsic dignity of those they seek to serve.

At root, an honorable person is decent, trustworthy, friendly and pleasant. On the popular level where honor is understood chiefly in terms of reputation, Cicero tells us that it is connected with one's name for generosity, beneficence, fair dealing and loyalty.³⁵ Along with goodwill, the Roman statesman includes confidence inspired by intelligence and being just as well as general admiration. Nevertheless, he also considers that public office and fame are among the meaningless things with which most of us allow ourselves to be pleased. But if respect in the public eye is not particularly important, "Remove respect from friendship, and you have taken away the most splendid ornament it possesses."³⁶ For Cicero, respect is based on one's goodness of character which, in turn, is the foundation upon which the harmony, permanence and fidelity of intimate friendship is formed. Beyond one's personal relationships, true glory is the product of virtue alone. The quality that Cicero elucidates concerning honor as virtue or virtue as honor is that which is formed by its intersection with trust and friendship.

Despite the reluctance by some of my respondents to ascribe honor to anyone that they did not know personally,³⁷ my own reluctance is almost the opposite. I

³⁵Cicero, *On Duties* 2.8.31 (Grant 1971: 136).

³⁶Cicero, *Laelius: On Friendship* 21.81 (Grant 1971: 217).

³⁷For instance, Celia Gunn (31.7.5): "As far as I'm concerned, I don't know how anyone can deem any public icon, such as Gandhi, as virtuous or honourable, without the personal knowing." Likewise, Rowan Fairgrove (2.8.5) claims: "I still don't have enough personal information to speak about 'world leaders' but I could believe that the Dalai Lama is virtuous and honourable. Amongst politicians I could say I think Dennis Kucinich is virtuous and honourable. But it is hard to know for sure without personal experience." She wishes in general to nominate "many amongst family, friends, covenmates and trad-mates" but then continues: "Then the lives of the people I intersect with in the interfaith movement intruded and I realized that I know many virtuous and honourable people." In this important area, Fairgrove proceeds to name "The Rev. Canon Charles Gibbs who is the Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative. Deborah Moldow of the World Peace Prayer Society. Dr. Dave Randle of Utah URI and Global Healing. Dr. Yehuda Stolov of the Interfaith Encounter Association in Jerusalem. Rev. Dr. Bill Rankin of the Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance. Elana Rozenman of the Women's Interfaith Encounter CC in Jerusalem. Yoland Trevino of the Indigenous MCC who recently became chair of the URI Global Council. Helen Spector of the Parliament of the World's Religions. Elder Don Frew, National Interfaith Representative of Covenant of the Goddess and emeritus member of the URI Global Council."

feel that my love for my friends disallows me the objectivity to judge them in that category – at least those who are still living. I do, however, feel privileged to say that the late actor Alan Bates was a good friend, and here I will now allow that he was an honorable person. Yes, he had foibles as we all do, but he was also generous, trustworthy, modest, and his loyalty to friends and loved ones was exemplary. He also possessed the marvelous insight to be able to laugh at himself. So, in my list, I would include Alan.

The honor question is indeed a baffling one – as many people expressed to me in one manner or another.³⁸ Part of this uncertainty stems from the role of publicity in the recognition of an honorable person.³⁹ But I want to stress here that as a virtue-value, the honor that is important to a pagan is precisely the quality that someone cultivates as part of his or her self-development regardless if that quality is acknowledged by others or not.⁴⁰ Certainly a pagan champions those who champion political, social and/or religious causes, and he/she will honor such activists to the degree that the person's efforts coincide with cultural and religious values concerning the earth and humanity that pagans themselves support. But pagans also aim for a world in which activist causes are no longer necessary – a world in which

³⁸Drama teacher and author, Phoebe Wray, writes to me on 31.7.5 the following: “If by ‘honorable’ you mean people who seem to strive for honesty in their public utterances and back that up with the way they live their lives, then I would add Maya Angelou. . . . [Integrity] must be a part of the label, too, and the above-mentioned [Mandela, Tutu, Walter Cronkite] have that. If we’re speaking of dead people, I nominate the early twentieth century actress Minnie Maddern Fiske. I am defeated trying to find a Virtuous Person. I looked up ‘virtue’ in my Oxford American Dictionary and discover it means ‘Behavior showing high moral standards.’ I thought of two [people] who fit BOTH categories. One is our mutual acquaintance Alice O Howell, the other is my dear friend and surrogate son Harry Hart-Browne who lives on a hillside in Southern California.” This distinction between virtue and honor was expressed by others as well. For instance, Toni Morgan believed that “for me, honour is the quality I admire the most. I also think it’s innate. I know people who have no interest in being honorable and, consequently, could never be even if they decided to change. I think if you are honorable you are, by definition, virtuous. I’m not crazy about the ‘v’ word” (30.7.5). She added later: “Virtue or being virtuous . . . oddly enough, and probably as a consequence of the world we live in, has a rather negative connotation for me. As I said, if you are honorable you are by definition virtuous. But if you are simply virtuous you are probably just a bit self-righteous and smug. This is simply semantics . . . the world changes and the definitions of words begin to change as well” (31.7.5).

³⁹Mika Lassander (University of Finland, Open University) makes the following observations: “But in [people like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Ken Saro-Wiwa] virtue and honour are linked with political activism and publicity. Could this lead to confusion in the measure of virtue and honour? Would Ken Saro-Wiwa be on the list had he been known only for his poems? Is honour equal to social activism/idealism? Is virtue equal to following uncompromisingly those (social/political) ideals? I think that it is difficult to classify any widely recognized people as honourable and/or virtuous because in order to be recognized they must be known for something i.e. political/religious/social activism – or are there people who are REALLY recognized just for their virtue/honour? The cynic in me says that [is] not likely.” (personal communication 1.8.5).

⁴⁰In his reply to my question, writer Tom Badyna prefaces his response with his belief that “the most honorable among us, like the greatest forgers, are necessarily unknown” (personal communication 31.7.5).

a person could be honored for her honorable and virtuous qualities alone, a person perhaps like Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome. And, most importantly here, whether honorable people are honored or remain invisible to the public eye – even to the perception of more personal contacts, it is the condition or quality itself as something *sui generis*, as something innate or self-nurtured, that is important for the individual alone in his or her personal pursuit of the good life and the goal of happiness – happiness less as a psychological disposition of contentment and more as the moral quality of one’s entire life.⁴¹

At the end of the day, the honor that a pagan might celebrate is one that is encapsulated by any of the classic cardinal virtues: strength or courage, temperance; moderation or self-control; wisdom or prudence; and justice or fairness. What would appear to underlie all these is behavior in conformity with an assumption of intrinsic dignity belonging to each human being. To be honorable, it is not necessary that people are inherently venerable, but the honorable person is one who acts *as if* this were the case. This consideration to others also extends to oneself as well. The honorable person not only respects others as a basic stance in life but possesses a self-respect that shapes his/her behavior in general. Some of the nuance concerning respect and the cardinal virtues came out in some of the further responses I received to the question who is honorable or virtuous. Two responses suggest a basic respect for the other – one that includes a respect for the earth.⁴²

⁴¹In Mortimer Adler’s words (1985: 135), happiness is part of the quest “to discharge our moral obligation to seek whatever is really good for us and nothing else unless it is something, such as an innocuous apparent good, that does not interfere with our obtaining all the real goods we need . . . life, liberty, . . . the protection of health, a sufficient measure of wealth, and other real goods that individuals cannot obtain solely by their own efforts.”

⁴²In nominating her father, Phyllis Meiners (Meinerworks Consulting & Publications) argues that “at the ripe age of 90 [he] is kind and gentle to his family, looking after their cares and woes, patient in understanding their personal difficulties, and eager to temper hostilities which remain among them” (Personal communication 30.7.5). In this estimation, we see kindness, temperance and understanding as recognizable facets of honor. Toni Morgan (*loc. cit.*) continued on the quality of being *engagé*: “So what do I mean when I call a person honorable . . . I need to think more about this. But for now . . . a belief that man’s inhumanity to man is wrong and a tremendous desire to right that wrong if even on a small level (like Jimmy Carter’s Habitat for Humanity) . . . a recognition of the tremendous wealth that exists in the world and a desire to at least share it in a more equitable manner. A respect for the earth itself and consequently the knowledge that that wealth came from the earth and the intelligence of man . . . I would say that an honorable man would be the man that actually feels a physical pain from seeing others suffer. And not to alleviate his own pain but to alleviate that of others will use his own intelligence and strength in spite of the consequences to himself . . . to right wrong. As he sees it. An honorable man is not a perfect man. Find me one of those if you can. He has to be, as I said, completely engaged with this world. Mistakes will be made. They will be recognized by him but he will continue. Can’t help it.”

Allowing for a lack of perfection is an interesting point.⁴³ In several of the responses I received, there is the recognition that the honorable person is one who fundamentally respects the other – including having a respect for the earth as well. Perhaps even more important, the honorable person is human – perhaps ‘all too human’ in Nietzsche’s phrase – and not some abstract, inhuman ideal. Honor may be an ideal, but a person who has it is real – blemishes and warts and all. For without that quality of being vulnerably human – making mistakes, suffering, having difficulties just like the rest of us, a person is too removed from the human arena where honor lives.⁴⁴

This humanness, this mixing of qualities, is reflected by others as well. For instance, Dr. Anthony Thorley’s thought of Lord Nelson.⁴⁵ On the field, in his professional life, Nelson was peerless. He exhibited the qualities of bravery and justice in the form of compassion, fairness and generosity. But privately, he had his human flaws. But does this last necessarily disqualify him from being admirable? Do we not respect him now all the more because he was true to himself over and above conforming to the social dictate of his times regardless of the concomitant scandal involved? Does not this last reveal strength of character that in itself

⁴³This notion is echoed by Kirstine Munk (*loc. cit.*). While I do not agree with her assessment that Mother Teresa was “too perfect,” she elaborates: “I think that perhaps a person can be too virtuous and honorable. A flawless person is somehow out from the category ‘virtuous human beings’, because as a human being it is difficult to relate to them properly. But Tutu always shares his mistakes with us and besides he is said to be a terrible driver. Blixen sold her soul to the devil and had syphilis and [financial] troubles. They are not perfect. They are virtuous to us *because* of their humanness as much as because they enact particular human ideals.”

⁴⁴However, for Shirley Eastham, the humanness of the honorable person mitigates their position and places them more into an ‘heroic’ category. She puts this as follows: “Did you want the qualities that make them virtuous and honourable in my mind, or is the list enough? There are more who mostly were v and h [virtuous and honorable] but had some sticky life situations that created compromises they struggled with. The reality of those compromises sort of take[s] them out of the v and h category but maybe put[s] them in a ‘heroic’ category. It is also possible I just don’t know enough about everyone. I am presuming you mean people I know, not saints, martyrs, leaders, etc.” She nominated her sister Joan, her father, her aunt Molly and my mother, Myrth Brooks York.

⁴⁵Considering Lord Nelson, Anthony Thorley (*loc. cit.*) makes the following comments: “I’ve been reading a lot lately about Horatio Nelson (as its nearly 200 years since Trafalgar) and he is interesting because as a professional sailor (aged 12–47 in the Royal navy) he was exemplary, and acknowledged by even his post-Trafalgar enemies as being peerless as an ideal sailor, leader, tactician and hero. His concern for his captains, and the ordinary seaman, his concern with fairness and justice and his very real kindness, generosity and compassion both in and out of battle make him a real candidate for a man of honour and virtue – but only as a Vice Admiral.

“As a man in his private life he was publicly dishonourable to his wife (whom he left abandoned in Bath) and unvirtuous as he publicly lived with Lady Emma Hamilton and was the public father of her their child, Horatia. So England was torn between their virtuous and honorable Admiral of their Fleet, the man who gave his life at Trafalgar and ensured 100 years of naval dominance and the foreign trade certainty that ensured the British Empire, and the scandalous and most public dishonour of an affair and a bastard daughter.”

is estimable?⁴⁶ The answers to questions as these are ones that we must leave open to some extent but will nevertheless address in part as we proceed with the full discourse on worship. Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind the changing mores of a time: the dishonorable person of the past may not be thought of as disreputable today; the honorable person of former times might no longer be considered praiseworthy now.

Remaining true to inner standards is an idea that frequently emerges among several of my replies, and this concerns the important perception that honor is something not intrinsically connected with fame, reputation or adulation.⁴⁷ Because of its own genuine value, what pagans wish to recognize as a *golden* value may indeed be appreciated by others on the more public stage of life, but it is the value itself that is important and not any necessary recognition of it by others.⁴⁸ While

⁴⁶Astrologer and cineaste Darrellyn Gunzberg echoes some of my thoughts here. In considering the Dalai Lama, she says: “Honourable people . . . well, the Dalai Lama springs to mind. He is true to himself and his beliefs and in so doing, holds to his honour in the sense of adherence to what is right. So Nelson Mandela falls into this category, also. In doing what they believe is right and true – without impinging upon the rights of others – these people also gain our respect. This is different, of course, from a suicide bomber who is also doing what they think is right and true but in so doing, destroys the lives of others to achieve it. Olympic champions gain honour through winning a race but it is the actions they take afterwards which truly make them honourable. So maybe Kelly Holmes fits this category – using one’s place to help others in need. Bob Geldorf also fits this. Taking yourself out of the picture enough so that ego does not intervene but allowing your name and rank to carry you along a pathway which alleviates the distress of others. Jamie Oliver probably fit this also with his ‘School Dinners’ TV programme which changed government policy” (personal communication 2.8.5).

⁴⁷Irene Earis (University of Lampeter) sifted her thoughts accordingly: “What a curiously difficult question you’ve asked about virtue and honour. At first I thought it would be easy to find examples, but I have come up with only one in the end after a process of elimination according to my own strict rules. I decided that honourable behaviour involved acting by the standards of inner truth even when it would be simpler or at least quite possible to behave with more material self-interest.

“The person who then sprang to mind was Krishnamurti who . . . was groomed by Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater in the Theosophical Society to be a messiah or World Teacher but then in 1929 severed his ties with the organisations they had set up for him. It would have been much easier for him to accept the role they had prepared, but instead he said he did not want followers and that ‘Truth is a pathless land’ and that all religions and spiritual paths just created new cages. As far as I know he kept to this for the rest of his life. One might argue, of course, that his own feelings of being trapped into a false position formed the basis of his later philosophy of freedom, but nevertheless a dishonourable person might simply have continued in the role he had been given and gone on enjoying the adulation, fame and material comfort presented to him” (personal communication 2.8.5).

⁴⁸Caroline Robertson, Westbury Music, defines an honorable person as “someone who follows a plan, like a destiny, resolutely through the years; someone with magnanimity and yet humility” (personal communication 3.8.5). Homeopath and multi-tasker Caroline Pike considers “People who work tirelessly without ego or greed” to be those who are honorable (personal communication 3.8.5). The examples supplied are: Pattie Smith, Nelson Mandela, David Loxley (companion of the druid order), homoeopath Janice Micallef and Susie Shearer. Romuvan elder Jonas Trinkunas (personal communication 5.8.5) nominated two illustrious Lithuanians, namely, Grand Duke Gediminas (1275–1341) and the philosopher Vydunas (1868–1953). The former established the

most of my respondents are not pagan, their answers on honor reflect that, as a virtue-value, principle or nobility is a universal quality that transcends religious sectarianism.⁴⁹

I will argue that the common denominator behind virtually all the responses I have received concerning honorable people is integrity. This integral quality suggests an essential uprightness, decency, probity or what we can quite simply consider as *goodness*. Honorable people are those who maintain or at least aspire toward adhering to a standard of conduct that is beyond the norm. In short, they are people who are worthy of honor – whether they receive such or not. They are the models and at the forefront for what is potentially inherent in all human beings. If we wish to be free, comfortable and healthy, for a meaningful life that conforms to the innate beauty of nature, we must wish also to be ethically principled as well as scrupulous in this aspiration. Moral worth is ultimately an aesthetic worth, and as we endeavor to construct our lives as ongoing accomplishments that are ‘correctly put together’, we are at heart coalescing them as living rituals and works of art. Honor is beauty.

It is hopefully obvious that by equating honor with beauty I am not referring to the simply comely or attractive. While an appreciation of the striking and appealingly pleasant last is a part of worship – something we shall discuss in the next chapter, the beauty I have presently in mind is the beauty of moral goodness. Another example of an honorable person is that of Wangari Maathai

tradition of the Lithuanian capital Vilnius as a universal city in which all religions have equal rights. He was a magnificent example of tolerance and enlightenment – declaring that “Pagans, Catholics and Orthodox Christians worship essentially the same divinity, albeit in different forms.” Although Gediminas guaranteed religious freedom to all his subjects, he tenaciously defended Lithuania against the Christian crusaders who sought to convert his nation by force. Trinkunas added, “His example showed that paganism could be a tolerant religious system,” while Vyduenas, in his turn, declared morality to be the highest virtue in a culture – seeing Baltic culture in particular as belonging to a “universal ethics and morality.”

⁴⁹Nevertheless, I wish to include mention of the nominees suggested off the top of her head by contemporary pagan leader Selena Fox (Circle Sanctuary), namely, Joe Raymond (Colorado) of the Guardians of the Sacred Circle, Deborah Ann Light (New York) of the Covenant of the Goddess and the Crones Cradle Conserve (Florida) and Kerr Cuhulain of Canada. The last, according to Fox, “includes Honor as part of the code for the Officers of Avalon, an international organization of Pagan police officers and those involved in emergency services” (personal communication 2.8.5). Among Fox’s suggestion, I know personally only Deborah Ann Light but can vouchsafe in this case her sterling character in terms of wisdom, courage, perspective, temperance, humility, dedication, perseverance, vitality, generosity and overall dignity. Perhaps from this example alone we have as fine an example of a person of honor as is possible. The Neo-pagan ethos consists of one sole principle that frequently goes by the name of the Wiccan Rede, namely, ‘An ye harm none, do what ye will’. While the ostensible thrust of this ‘credo’ is the libertarianism of freedom, it is couched in the same fundamental respect for others that we can discern behind most people’s understanding of honor. I suspect that Ms. Light has cut few corners in her swathe through life – appreciating all to the kind of fullness that would do any pagan proud, but at the same time – perhaps even as the underlying tenor of her *joie de vivre*, she has pursued all with intelligence, sensitivity and respect that we can only understand as honor.

(1940–2011).⁵⁰ I wish to emphasize Maathai at this juncture because, despite her Christian orientation, her sufferings for her beliefs, her persistent efforts and her recognition of the inherent sanctity of nature are all things that most pagans would acknowledge as worthy and honorable causes. In pagan eyes, she is a person of honor – one who has likewise linked spirituality and environmentalism.

Among the two remaining replies I wish to discuss, I will postpone the one from free-lance writer and editor Freeman Gunter to the next chapter. The other is from writer Tom Badyna who nominates at the start of his list “the three I’ve written about in my weird kind of essays – Gaetano Bresci, the assassin of the King of Italy, whom I find the most outstanding example of honor I know of⁵¹; George Washington, for his character in general, but mostly his historically unique example of walking away from a victorious army at Fraunce’s Tavern; and Sitting Bull, who lacks a dramatic moment of exemplifying honor, but certainly impressed all who came in contact with him as a man who held himself to the highest standards of honor and virtue.”⁵² Badyna mentions liking the scene in which Sitting Bull makes his son surrender his rifle.

⁵⁰While mentioned also to me by parapsychologist, Dr. Serena Roney-Dougal, as well as Professor Wendy Griffin, I am indebted for the information that follows to Dr. Bron Taylor (University of Florida, Gainesville) who forwarded to me a 4.8.5 article by Samwel Rambaya and Makena Memeu on Maathai from the *The Standard* of Nairobi, Kenya. Ranked in 2005 by *Forbes* magazine as number 68 among the world’s 100 most powerful women, Maathai had become the Kenyan Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources as well as Africa’s first woman Nobel laureate. Before this, however, and as the person who launched the tree-planting movement in Kenya, she had been beaten and imprisoned. Maathai was not pagan but a practicing Catholic, though in a personal communication (10.3.14), Taylor informs me that “she came to hold her Christianity more at arms length and was much or more a pagan than a Christian by the time she died.” Nevertheless, she is a fine example of the dedication and courage that often characterizes a person of honor. According to *Beliefnet*, an American religious publication, she proposed that Easter Monday be dedicated to tree planting as part of the celebration of Christ’s conquest of death. Maathai said, “If we could make that Monday a day of regeneration, revival, of being reborn, of finding salvation by restoring the Earth, it would be a great celebration of Christ’s resurrection.” She added, “I always say somebody had to go into the forest, cut a tree, and chop it up for Jesus to be crucified. What a celebration of his conquering [death] it would be if we were to plant trees on Easter Monday thanks giving.”

⁵¹Upon further inquiry on my part, I received the following elucidation from Badyna on 13.8.5: “Assuming that the assassination itself does not exclude the possibility of honor or virtue, I was so taken with G. Bresci’s actions because he acted with the real possibility, even likelihood, that not only would no one ever know that he had done the grand deed, but that the last taste of him had by his friends and family would be one of acrimony and bitterness. Indeed, leaving behind the sore feelings was part of the very honorableness of his actions – so as to incriminate none of them. He had to consider the possibility that he would fail, that the king’s guards would toss him nameless into a dungeon. As it was, well, you know . . . It was, to me, an act of honor untainted by its own glory.”

⁵²Personal communication 31.7.5.

Badya's list is the longest of any I received,⁵³ but he concludes with the following which I find particularly insightful:

But if I were to write about honor, I think I'd have to play it off bullfighters. The code they live by, the stylized flamboyance, the ritual and the danger – all are based on a sense of honor that has no place in real society. So in a way they are absurd characters and their honorableness almost abstract, as in abstracted from, and, of course, they must have a psychology that requires they be known for living and dying up to their atavistic code.

Perhaps we are reminded here of Cervantes' Don Quixote. And perhaps it is true that honor has no place in actual society, though if that were so, a pagan might still adopt a quixotic determination to pursue it anyway. But what I like most in this inclusion and consideration is the link of courage, style and ritual that I wish to argue is the matrix of the quality of honor that we recognize in its various forms along with the human foibles and missing-the-mark misdeeds that can so often accompany them.

In conclusion, I should like to say that honor as something independent of reputation is simply virtue. The connection, interchange or identity of the two is probably to be detected in the Roman pairing of *Virtus* and *Honos*. The implicit suggestion is that *Virtue* is the passive feminine, the thing itself, while *Honos* is the male equivalent, the active outward expression – ultimately the *repute* that goes with virtue as something that does not remain unnoticed. The virtuous person, he or she who lives according to the dictates of ethical norms, will almost by default be recognized by others. *Virtue* does not live in a vacuum, and when it is seen by one's family, friends, peers, community or the larger world, it is understood as intrinsic honor and *is* honored as such.⁵⁴ In a word, virtue retains a transparency, and the resultant visibility involved is what we understand as honor.

Finally, the reluctance by many to consider anyone honorable if the candidate is not known to them personally betrays the fact that honor, like health, is something that relates to the whole person. It is not an aspect of just one part of a person's being but the person in his/her entirety: behavior, attitude, motive, disposition, etc. Once again we are permitted to understand the interchange of the essential virtues. A free person, a person who truly enjoys liberty, is one who walks comfortably with virtue and honor. A healthy person is also someone who has incorporated virtue and honor into his or her very being – however modestly, however preliminarily, however much such incorporation is merely a start in the direction toward goodness. And a person who lives in comfort, is one who knows virtue-honor and is comfortable

⁵³Badya includes Charles Darwin “not only for the famous incident with the letter from Alfred Wallace, but also, again, for his character in general” – pointing out that Robert Wright used Darwin's life as the model for his *The Moral Animal*. Others mentioned by Badya are the baseball player and fighter pilot Ted Williams who once “asked for a pay cut after a season not up to his own standards, . . . Joe Hill and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn . . . Maybe Eugene Debs.” Then, too, there is Lafcadio Hearn (an innate sense of honor) and George Jackson, one of the Soledad brothers (a rigorous sense of honor).

⁵⁴For instance, Albert Hoffman, the Swiss discoverer of lysergic acid-25, is loved by the psychonautic community less for the LSD product as he is for his honesty and integrity. I had the great privilege to tell him this once during a 1998 conference in Amsterdam.

and unthreatened by this. If we are to ascribe honor to anyone – whether family, friends, loved ones, colleagues, even ourselves or those who make impact upon the world stage, it is through our holistic knowing of them that we can do this. And this is worship: the making or creating of value – in this case through the recognition and acknowledging of intrinsic worth.

References

- Adler, Mortimer J. 1985. *Ten philosophical mistakes*. New York: Macmillan.
- Burggraeve, Roger, Johan De Tavernier, Didier Pollefeyt, and Jo. Hanssens (eds.). 2003. *Desirable god? Our fascination with images, idols and new deities*. Leuven: Peters.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. 45 bce. *De natura deorum*. <http://ryanfb.github.io/loebolus-data/L268.pdf>. Accessed 14 June 2015.
- Deudney, Daniel. 1998. Global village sovereignty: Intergenerational sovereign publics, federal-republican Earth constitutions, and planetary identities. In *The greening of sovereignty in world politics*, ed. Karen Liftin. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Fowler, W. Warde. 1971. *The religious experience of the Roman people: From the earliest times to the age of Augustus*. New York: Cooper Square. (Originally published 1911)
- Grant, Michael (trans.). 1971. *Cicero: Selected Works*. London: Penguin.
- Grayling, Anthony C. 2003. *What is good? The search for the best way to live*. London: Phoenix/Orion.
- Katz, Eric, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg (eds.). 2000. *Beneath the surface: Critical essays in the philosophy of deep ecology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Locke, John. 1690. *The second treatise of civil government*. <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr08.txt>. Accessed 20 July 2014.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1998 (first published in 1966). *A short history of ethics: A history of moral philosophy from the homeric age to the twentieth century*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- McGraw, Barbara A. 2003. *Rediscovering America's sacred ground: Public religion and pursuit of the good in a pluralistic America*. Albany: SUNY.
- Morris, William (ed.). 1969. *The American Heritage dictionary of the English language*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Pokorny, Julius. 1959. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag.
- Ramm, Ben. 2005. Editor's letter. *The Liberal* [Independent Preview Edition] IV April/May.
- Taylor, Bron. 2000. 269–299 (see Katz et al. 2000).
- Watkins, Calvert. 1969. Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans. In *The American Heritage dictionary of the English language*, ed. William Morris, 1496–1550. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Watkins, Calvert. 1992. "Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Third edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2049–2134.
- York, Michael. 1986. *The Roman festival calendar of Numa Pompilius*. New York: Lang.
- York, Michael. 1995. *The divine versus the asurian: An interpretation of Indo-European cult and myth*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- York, Michael. 2010. Idolatry, ecology, and the sacred as tangible. *The Pomegranate* 12(1): 74–93.