

**Public Administration Revealed: A Trinitarian Approach**

by

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## Abstract

This is an attempt to offer a window into the good that government can do through new possibilities beyond the practical and economical. Public administration theory has been moving away from its original narrow, scientific, technocratic orientation, but has yet to develop a solid grounding for a more humanistic, participatory model. This situation can be understood better by placing it within the context of contemporary political theory, which addresses the crisis of modernity, making us aware of our inability to make moral and political sense of our human capacities because of the limited materialistic ontology and positivistic epistemology that developed in the modern age. Recent debates within political theory point toward developments within theology as providing possible alternatives to the modern worldview, and this dissertation will examine and apply the systematic theology of Colin E. Gunton to this end. Gunton revises classical Christian theology, specifically with regard to the Trinity, to develop a model of harmonious particularity, which can be used to work out a new, broader, epistemology and ontology. This richer epistemology and ontology can be used to develop a more humanistic, participatory model of public administration, independently of the specific theological aspects of Gunton's thought. More specifically, this model can break down the sharp distinction between politics and administration that has characterized public administration theory to allow a harmonious particularity of theory and practice.

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## **Introduction**

In attempting to develop a topic for this dissertation, I have placed one demand upon myself: to offer a window into the good government can do through new possibilities that go beyond the practical and economical. My inquiry then starts where most brainstorming starts: what do I want to address; what is my purpose; and how do I want to accomplish it? Political theory is a good starting point because it allows us to not only develop an understanding beyond the practical that may reveal immediate faults and strengths in current understandings and/or approaches, but also allows us to deliberate over issues that may be better understood in different dimensions. In other words, discussions about society can include the purpose of government, the nature of man, and even what may ultimately allow man to achieve or be driven towards perfectibility. It is through political theory that one may find, or at times destroy or distort one's understanding of reality or oneself in relation to action and/or structures of society.

Contemporary political theory addresses the crisis of modernity, the denial of any possibility of truth, and the apparent disintegration into nihilism. Modernity is generally accepted to have started around the year 1500. This period has been characterized by scientific and technological advancements resulting in significant material improvement of human life. The ability of modern science to control and even change nature eventually resulted in a moral and epistemological crisis. Older natural law theories, which assumed that humans have a limited capacity to change nature, seemed to become obsolete when it became clear that humans can change nature to a considerable extent, and this discovery in turn raised the question of the extent to which nature itself is just a human interpretation. This is a total assault to reality, where everything is nothing but our own interpretation, our own creation, and the real world, or truth

non-existent (see **Table 2-1**). This moral and epistemological crisis is what has been known as nihilism.

A brief note on methodology, this is an ontological and epistemological analysis of public administration theory, political theory, and theology. When it comes to theoretical analysis that is not attempting a comparison, there is no evident explicit systematic approach. In working with theoretical analysis, one addresses certain questions and issues that may not have an obvious proscribed process to reach a solution or answer. However, in attempting to meet the requirements of the established academic basis, which should not necessarily violate the aim of this particular dissertation, I have attempted to design a loose and open process. This analysis will start with inductive reasoning exercised in all three intellectual branches. This type of approach should allow for the identification of corresponding or concurrent issues that should result in the revelation of a root, a starting point, from which each intellectual branch can form part of a constituted reality that offers a solution in union. It is the analysis itself that is expected to reveal the ability for each intellectual branch to uniquely and with its own authority, reveal a new ground where new discussions can emerge that can help in the concurrent issue identified. This loose open analysis will allow for the integration of the literature, the historical approaches, and identification of new approaches to projected outcomes.

My purpose in this dissertation is to look into the solutions presented in political theory to the perceived crisis and extract from political theory the approaches presented and apply them to public administration theory. I attempt to do this by examining public administration theory in light of recent developments in political theory. My assumption is that public administration theory is explicitly and implicitly derived from perspectives in political theory and that both have developed from the same philosophies. This development will be established with the first two

chapters. Chapter 1 presents the public administration schools of thought that have developed over the past century or so, and will argue that although recent public administration theory has been moving away from its original narrow, scientific/technocratic orientation, it has yet to develop a more fully humanistic, participatory model. Chapter 2 places issues in recent public administration theory in a broader context, and points toward possible solutions, by presenting an overview of the history of political theory. It will show how the modern crisis developed and discuss the alternatives to modernity that have emerged in recent political theory, particularly new theology as alternatives to modernity.

Chapter 3 examines Colin Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory. Gunton's revision of classical Christian theology presents a model of harmonious particularity that broadens our ontology and epistemology. The fourth and final chapter applies Gunton's model of harmonious particularity to public administration, revealing the possibility for a more humanistic, participatory model by breaking down the sharp distinction between politics and administration.

The Enlightenment assumed that science could bring about improvement of the human condition, because it was believed that through science one could achieve true knowledge. However, instead the Enlightenment's attempt to understand science resulted in positivism, with the upholding and promotions of a sharp distinction between facts and opinions. This distinction has been pervasive in all aspects of understanding and knowledge which has resulted in a tremendous moral and political confusion in society (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Herbert Simon, Leonard White, Robert Dahl, Eric Voegelin, Alasdair McIntyre, Colin E. Gunton and more).

Contemporary political theory questions this epistemology. It questions the fact-value distinction and addresses through philosophy and theology the moral dimension in political society. Recent philosophy of science has demonstrated that empiricism/positivism is an

inadequate epistemology, or, put differently, an inadequate attempt to explain how science works (like those of Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper).

There was an established assumption during the Enlightenment that science revealed a mechanistic universe. But more recently the Enlightenment's mechanistic ontology has been shown to be not the outcome of scientific investigation but rather a general picture of reality that began to develop during the theological debates of the late Middle Ages. Recent political theorists such as Eric Voegelin and Alasdair McIntyre, and theologians like Paul Tillich and Colin Gunton, have been concerned with developing an alternative epistemology and ontology that addresses issues of morality, political order, and political reality as a whole. Gunton offers, through a reevaluation of the doctrine of creation a new ontology and the Trinity, a new reality through harmonious particularity.

Gunton, although not the only theorist to present a valid argument, seems to provide a compelling and pivotal alternative to the Enlightenment's rigid and mechanistic worldview. His insights allow for a different understanding of people, society and the role of government. He traces the origins of the modern mechanistic worldview to the failure of Christianity in developing a truly Trinitarian theology. He then argues that a Trinitarian theology can offer an alternative ontology and epistemology that can be applied to issues in political theory, and I believe, ultimately to public administration transforming not only the political, but reality itself. I argue that although contemporary approaches revealed the complexities of people, government, and society, they also failed to accept the interrelation between all three that ultimately allows them to be particulars and one at the same time, a harmonious particularity. In other words, through an ontological and epistemological analysis a revelation of the need for the Three (the Trinitarian approach) will be established.

It may be assumed then – and will be discussed in this dissertation – that public administration theory has suffered from the same limitation as modern political theory in understanding and approaching people and government. I will use Gunton’s Trinitarian theological theory to show how public administration theory could be transformed.

## Chapter 1

### Public Administration: A Question of Ideology and Practice

#### Introduction

This chapter traces the development of public administration theory and reveals its attempt to move from a scientific, technocratic approach to a more humanistic approach. It has been quite difficult to find resources on the link between political theory and public administration. This has been expected because since the beginning, when Woodrow Wilson called for the professionalization of the administration of government, for the purpose of reforming the civil service, the two appear to have separated as if by decree. He noted in his essay “The Study of Administration,” that “it [was] getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one” (1887, 200) and made a call to understand politics and administration in different realms in order to facilitate the administration’s professionalization. This has been known as the politics-administration dichotomy, the separation of politics (as what sets the task) and administration (as government in action). Wilson argued that “administrative questions are not political questions,” that the “practical detail” of application has been left unanswered by all thinkers and writers of political theory and/or political philosophy (1887 210, 199). He explained that this was not an accident, but a result of the simple society that was under analysis and discussion by thinkers and philosophers in the past. He noted that complex government calls for the systematic and methodological study of its administration.

Frank Goodnow in *Politics and Administration* elaborated more on the dichotomy and noted that bureaucracy should be apolitical, that administrative operation is possible without the interference of politics (1900). He further described politics to be the will of the people and administration the execution of that will remarking that politics ranked superior to

administration. He viewed administration as a tool and explained that politics can be what ensures political accountability of the bureaucracy. In other words, he supported and upheld administration as a function where expertise should be in place in order to carry out “the will of the people,” the politics through the bureaucracy in order to facilitate accountability. Leonard White in his 1926 *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration* further noted that this dichotomy was made an “article of faith” (Guy 2003, 643). Although this has been considered by some scholars to be a concept or issue of the past, it can be agreed that is the origin or basis of public administration and it is said to have severed or created a split between the ideology and the practice, the public and the administration.

Mary E. Guy in the article, “Ties That Bind: The Link Between Public Administration and Political Science,” describes the importance of this concept as follows: “this [the dichotomy] is emblematic of a turn public administration made at its inception, a decision parallel by political science as it embraced the ‘god’ of science and it ignored the truth of context, history, values, and messiest of all, unforeseen, unpredictable exigencies” (2003, 643). In other words, effectiveness, efficiency and professionalization were established as the basis of public administration, as the perimeters of public administration thought and conduits of action. This conceptualization, origin, and understanding of public administration, established in order to free the practice or government action from corruption for its professional development, has at the same time established from the beginning a dislocation which has consequently blinded professionals to other possible and necessary dimensions and other elements of truth that may reveal better suitable governmental action or expression of the “will of the people.”

This chapter is a brief look into public administration epistemology; it is not an attempt to reinterpretation, but is a possible reencounter of the minds that would be beneficial and offer a



fertile ground for what is to challenge the application of public administration theory in a new age. It is a window into the presentation that public administration theory has attempted to move from its original narrow scientific orientation only resulting in the same orientation of western political theory. Public administration has emphasized a materialistic ontology and positivist epistemology failing to develop a solid grounding from a more humanistic, participatory model. New technology and advances in science will present public administration with more complex challenges into the application of theory that may further hinder these limitations of public administration.

Broadly, public administration is the study and implementation of policy. More specifically, our profession's title itself encircles in it the paradoxes and complexities that have accompanied public administration's growth and development. Its challenges are part of its established struggle between public and administration; equity and efficiency, theory and methodology, experience and technique. This means that public administration is both a moral endeavor through the creation of a public good and social justice, and a technological, practical, procedural *terra firma*. "Public administration is both an art and a science. It is *not* a single set of principles and concepts due to its socio-cultural context, its evolving intellectual content, and its tacit values" (Dobuzinskis 1997, 298). The term "public" is also often related to government. The different levels of government makes it a complex entity that now includes, non-profit organizations, and at times even contractors. In other words, public administration is both complexity in the ideological/ theoretical and complexity in the material/ practical.

Public administration epistemology has developed or been presented mainly through paradigms or schools of thought. Although these can sometimes overlap or had a delay between the time they emerged and the time they are practiced, they offer a window into the development

of conceptualization in public administration and the professionalization of its practitioners. Paradigms are defined and described by Thomas S. Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). These are periods of normal science, where what is taught and practice seems parallel. It is a period of time where there is certain stability in knowledge that allows for the development of certain systematized rationalization that frames thought, knowledge and consequently practice. This means that knowledge discovered not only follows a certain pattern established by prior knowledge, but also restricts and homogenizes action as well as future knowledge.

When new patterns of understandings are established, which are normally created by anomalies, these are called revolutions. Revolutions in social sciences are understood as changes in the established structure of society. These also include knowledge, language, and patterns of behavior. New revolutions, as explained by Kuhn, have to take hold and be promoted by new generations going against established understandings and assumptions, which become at the same time practices and behavior within a society (1962). This means that paradigms and schools of thought take time to develop, but once accepted, revolutions form part of real world experience which then shape and help maintain a reality until a new revolution occurs. This is why schools of thought allow possible conceptual options, alternatives to one another, and challenges to the unstated conventional wisdom of our cultural context. This includes the revelation of progression or change not just in thought but practice within our professionalization. These conceptual paradigms offer rational models, general conceptual guidelines to make sense of existing social structure, as well as rationally ideal relationships and circumstances.

This chapter offers a description of these conceptualizations, of these schools of thought, and attempt to reveal that the moral dimension perceived to be missing can be found in the response to modernity from theological thinkers in political theory. More specifically, this chapter develops an understanding of the underdeveloped, underinvestigated, or completely ignored roots within public administration that a new approach found in Colin Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory could recover.

### **Orthodoxy or the Classical (Rational-Legal and Scientific) School of Thought**

The first of these schools of thought is the rational-legal school of thought, also known as the classical school of thought. In it we encounter the rational-legal and the rational scientific epistemological roots. This school of thought reveals the ontology, the origin and bases of public administration. It describes its creation and establishes its value, parameters, structure, and purpose.

#### **The Rational-Legal School of Thought**

The first school of thought normally discussed in the public administration canon is the rational-legal approach. Under this school one can find the father of public administration, Woodrow Wilson. Wilson called for the development of a science of public administration (1887). He notes in his essay, "The Study of Administration," that effectiveness, efficiency and professionalization are needed as the bases of public administration. He explains that these values should form part of the whole management of government. This means that the steps to professionalize governmental action should not just deal with personnel reform, as this process was intended for an immediate response to the spread of corruption in government at that time, but should enact, support, and uphold the organization and the methods of governmental action. He noted that administrative tasks have to be "studious and systematic," and laid out the

importance of a hierarchical structure (1887 200). This “machinery,” with unity of command and top-down flow of decision making, will enhance and provide the arena for decentralization in order to supply the “best possible life to a federal organization,” while promoting accountability through clear-cut responsibilities (1887 210, 221). At the same time, this reform to “running the constitution” will advocate broad discretionary responsibility to perform efficiently and be transparent in the process (1887, 200).

In *Mastering Public Administration*, Brian R. Fry notes that it is this call to professionalization by Woodrow Wilson, that establishes the objective of this profession to be the “discover[y of] general principles to guide administrators in the efficient performance of the duties... based on systematic and empirical investigations... [determining] the applicability of those techniques to the practice of public administration in the United States” (1998a, 2). Furthermore, Fry notes that Wilson claims that administration is the same in the private or public sector and this sets up business techniques as what can and should be used to manage government in order to promote the feasibility of the application of management techniques. This was further promoted by Frank Goodnow.

Goodnow, in his book *Politics and Administration*, approached the study of public administration from a functional point of view, and although he promotes the idea of the separation of politics and administration, he also acknowledges that they are forever intertwined (1900). This means that for the administrative part of government to run efficiently, control measures need to be developed to avoid too much entanglement. He recommends greater administrative centralization and more autonomy for local legislative bodies, which should result in a more efficient bureaucracy and greater expression of the “will of the people.” This results in

the creation of regulatory measures and structures not just for control but procedural action. It is the ground or arena in which ultimately the rational-legal authority will be exercised.

The concept of the rational-legal can be traced to Max Weber. He presented three types of social legitimate authority: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Traditional legitimate authority is that which is understood as an inherited and or passed on. Charismatic legitimate authority is understood as that authority given to an individual because of their likability, their personality or talent of persuasion. Rational-Legal authority refers to authority that derives consent or legitimacy from law and established regulations. This is promoted as technically superior. Consequently, one may ask what gives a bureaucracy authority to action. Before answering this question, it is important to discuss the concept “bureaucracy.” Max Weber in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (The Theory of social and Economic Organizations) presented the concept of bureaucracy (1922; Stillman 2005; Shafritz 2004). This is not to say that he created this concept, but through a study Weber noted the rationalization of the West and presented this structure or form of organization not only as the ideal form of organization in a rational society, but also as a great expression of this rationalization. It is this structure that not only allows the legitimization, promotion, and systematization of legal-rational authority but also the spirit or desire to legitimize authority to be exercised.

According to Weber the ideal bureaucracy has six characteristics: fixed and official jurisdictions; hierarchy; expertise in management; written rules and documentation (record keeping); full capacity of the official (appointment, seniority); and general rules. Fixed and official jurisdictions can be said to be the first step toward an effective rational organization. This first characteristic establishes not just the limits and structure of authority but also results in the institutionalization of responsibility. In other words, it establishes limits and expected action

according to the rank and position held by the member of the organization. Position and rank, or hierarchy, will not only emphasize and ground fixed official jurisdiction but also establish an effective channel of communication exercised according to authority, which will facilitate direction and clear expression of expectations, goals, and commands while establishing the necessary level of expertise in the position held. It is this level of expertise that most highly supports the professionalization of public administration because it establishes the requirement of certain skills for the duties performed according to the position held within the organization. The level of expertise needed for every position in the organization will be supported and find expression in written documentation. Written documentation will ensure not just accountability and some level of transparency, but also ascertain the level of depersonalization that allows equal treatment in the allocation of goods and services. At the same time, the level of expertise will also find certain reliance on the concept of full capacity and seniority. If one is to establish a professional public service, certain training is needed in certain areas, and other training for other areas, because of the different levels of expertise and responsibility that the position held may require. This means not only expertise is needed but also vocation. Vocation is what will mediate not only the ills of politics but also the ills inherent in the rationalization of the process (see Robert Merton 1957, "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality"). Vocation is like a natural tendency or inclination to a position, a job, or a profession held, and is going to be required more of senior employees. This natural tendency towards the job will not only emphasize professionalization but also carry within certain values needed for the exercise of politics and discretionary authority. This is presumed because a natural tendency towards a job will inherently contain a respect for the job, and in the case of public administrators, and inherent spirit of service. In a bureaucracy, all of these characteristics are encircled under the direction and

structure created by written rules. These, like the law, have to be known, understood, and equally applied to all employees to facilitate action and decision making within the organization, while ensuring procedural equity, legal accountability, and effective execution.

Bureaucracy is then the epitome of rationalization. It is what offers the necessary ground and/or structure for the development, establishment, and continuation of the rational effective execution of public administration as profession. Accepting Weber's ideal bureaucracy as the structure of our government, as noted by Brian R. Fry, in "Max Weber the Process of Rationalizations," supported not only the equal and impersonal application of the law, but also emphasized the legal-rational approach to the "will of the people in action" (1998b, 22-23). In other words, bureaucracy became the arena for the apolitical rational administration of government. Bureaucracy is then the perfect place where action can be guided by law and regulation while limiting power and promoting the exercise of discretion.

It is Norton Long and John Rohr who further ground public administration as a rational profession through the U.S. Constitution. Norton in "Bureaucracy and Constitution" argued that bureaucracy was a legitimate element of the state and that it deserved an official role in government. He went as far as insisting that it should be recognized as the fourth branch of the government (1952). This is because it is not only the direct connection between the will of the people and governmental action, but argued that bureaucracy is a more ethical and professional entity than the U.S. Congress that should not be under the control of one branch or segment of the population.

This is further expanded or emphasized by John Rohr in *To Run a Constitution: The Legitimacy of the Administrative State* (1986). Rohr notes that administration is governing, that the United States Constitution validates the administrative state, and that the administrative state

has struggled to establish its validity because of its intentional distancing from the United States Constitution itself by the founders of the administrative state. He attempts to legitimize bureaucratic authority through the U.S. Constitution giving origin, basis, and strengthening the rational-legal approach. In other words, it makes the U.S. Constitution the ultimate rationality, the authority of public administration and the ultimate schemata through where the rational-legal is exercised.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century empirical observations and logical deductions came to be seen as the only legitimate sources of knowledge which can be said to also be as a result of the age of positivism. This means that science and technology served as the ground for the establishment of a new social, political and moral order. Wilson emphasized this fact and values dichotomy and bureaucracies as instruments concerned with the implementation of policies (Dobuzinskis 1997). One can see the structure given to the profession of public administration since the beginning. The call for professionalization was also rooted in the momentum started by the Enlightenment establishing a very effective, machine-like, rigid, rational organization that supports and upholds, enhances, and promotes rational processes for the expression of the public will. It was the bureaucracy and inherent rational-legal exercise of authority that also allowed for the fast rise of positivism and scientism in the practices of public administration.

### **The Rational-Scientific School of Thought**

The essence of scientism in public administration can be traced to Frederick W. Taylor. He presented in *The Principles of Scientific Management*, a business oriented approach, using scientific analysis as the only means to derive facts that will shape decision making (1911). Taylor thought that scientific analysis like time and motion studies of work would yield the “one best way.” He developed this under the assumption that workers operated below their capacity.



In other words, full capacity of the employee in the held position needed to be understood, clearly stated, and evaluated. It is through his ideas that management is placed as the key factor for efficiency in the workplace. Furthermore, he argued that these methods could be employed in the government to ensure governmental efficiency. This has been known as scientific management. The principles presented are the following: scientifically study each part of a task and develop the one best way of performing it; select the best person to do the job; train, teach and develop the worker; provide financial incentives; divide work and responsibility so that managers are responsible for executing the work accordingly. As one can see, these principles not only uphold science as the revealer of truth and knowledge but are allowed to be exercised and promoted within the bureaucratic structure, within governmental decision making, and according to scientific and economic values.

Leonard White wrote the first textbook on public administration, *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration* (1926). He is responsible for the establishment of the first epistemological step in this profession. While one can say that Wilson established the purpose of the profession, it is White who set the bases for the knowledge to build upon. He established a generic theory based on research (the scientific method) and from a business perspective. He believed that in public administration a scholar needed to be a practitioner and emphasized that administration is a unitary process that can be studied uniformly at any level. In other words, White called for epistemology to be based primarily on science and secondly supported by practice (neither without). He also noted that management should be the focus of the organization and not the law. He challenged the focus on legal-rational authority and in a way upheld science even above the governmental constitution.

White, like any other thinker of public administration, embraced the paradoxical nature of this profession advocating the scientific base in epistemology while challenging the developing faith in the scientific approach. He did this by acknowledging and promoting that administration is primarily an art, while advocating its transformation into science. He defined public administration as the management of men and materials in the accomplishment of the purpose of the state. He noted that the work of administration incorporated all three governmental activities: legislative, executive, and judicial (1955, 2).

These calls, for the professionalization, the structuralization, and scientification of public administration and government itself, were answered. The result was a further systematization of public administration. Luther Gulick in *Papers on the Science of Administration* (1937), introduced the concept of **POSDCORB**, now an acronym imprinted in every public administrator's mind. In his paper "Notes on the Theory of Organization," **POSDCORB** is the main prescription given in its attempt to develop a "best way" for the practice of public administration. This acronym stands for **P**lanning, which is identifying goals and methods to accomplish those identified goals; **O**rganizing, which is establishing a formal structure of authority; **S**taffing, which has to do with personnel functions like recruitment (picking the right person for the right job), training (ensuring that the right training is given to the right person for the job), maintaining morale (by designing the right compensation for the right job according to its level in the organization); **D**irecting, which is making decisions and relaying them via specific general orders, and the right channels; **C**oordinating, which is the correlation of the various parts of the organization to work towards the specified goal; **R**eporting, which is informing and/or information keeping through records, research, reports, and inspections; and **B**udgeting, which is

fiscal planning, accounting, and control. These prescriptions broke down even further the recommendations and observations of Weber regarding bureaucracy.

In addition, Gulick noted that politics and administration are interrelated, and that in periods of change and/or evolution government must strengthen those agencies that deal with administrative management focusing on leadership, planning and coordination. Coordination, Gulick stressed, must be done by organization of authority or organization of mind. He explains, “there must be leadership with increased scope for action, but every step toward increased power must be matched with a step towards increased accountability” (1937, 45). This focus on leadership increased the power of the executive at every level and trickled down the importance of scientification and rational decision-making. It is like Gulick embraced the idealization presented by Weber and espoused research under the now dogmatic accepted value of “one best way” placing sole responsibility onto leadership. Presenting two divisions within this new understanding of organization, staff (those members within the organization that are about knowing, thinking, and planning) and line workers (those members within the organization that do), Gulick attempted to modify the “one best way” approach, promoting not a generic approach to management in organization, which could be difficult after presenting **POSCORB**, but by managing organization by major purpose. The focus is on leadership to coordinate, and on the purpose of mind, that which drives the actions of the organization. However, either by line employees (those doing), or by staff (those planning), further promotes scientism and a mechanistic worldview.

This conceptualization or attempt at scientization came from the collective work in Gulick’s *Papers on the Science of Administration* where Lyndall F. Urwick, James D. Mooney, Henri Fayol, Elton Mayo and others presented ideas focusing on management, administration

and organization hoping to spark the development of accepted theories of administration (1937). The word “accepted” in this case means scientifically developed, reliable, and valid. Lyndall F. Urwick in “Organization as a Technical Problem” analyzes the methods of division of labor, allocation of duties, and delegation of authority (Gulick 1937). He states that subdivision and allocation results in efficiency; that delegation is a necessary part of leadership and management and it is not divorced from authority. In other words, the breaking down of authority and responsibility results in efficient and responsible exercise of authority. James D. Mooney in “The Principles of Organization” presents organizational principles, coordination, leadership/command, and division of employees between line and staff, emphasizing that organization should be like a graded series of steps in terms of level of authority and responsibility (Gulick 1937). In this organization the top command is also the top coordinator bringing together all the individual jobs. These papers not only support the established rational structure of bureaucracy and chain of command but also further imbed scientification as public administration reality.

Henri Fayol, in “The Administrative Theory in the State,” and Elton Mayo, Henderson and Whitehead in “The Effects of Social Environment” noted that public administration agreed and promoted this idea of top-down command and explained that the top administrator should have coordinating ability, professional competence in the area of control, general notions on all essential functions of the organization, stability and good staff keeping in mind that the social environment of the workplace affects productivity (Gulick 1937). Mary Parker Follet expanded this insight in “The Process of Control” and noted that organizations have four fundamental principles of coordination: coordination as the nature of unity, coordination by direct control, coordination in the early stages of the process, and coordination as a continuous process (1937).

In other words, Follet revealed coordination as a process of interaction at all levels of the organizations and one that is continuous. Furthermore, she notes that coordination, the responsibility of the top person in command, requires observation and experience that needs to be exercised at all levels of the organization. It is Follet who started forging the path for human relations.

Luther Gulick summarized all these papers, in the **POSCORB** concept. In “Science, Values, and Public Administration,” he noted that the basic good in public administration is efficiency which is accomplishing the work at hand with the least expenditure of man power and materials (1937). This then is the main responsibility of the coordinator. This concept took shape, with the help of Gulick, in the highest coordinating position of them all, the executive branch. On 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt called for an evaluation of the executive branch and formed a committee, The President’s Committee on Administrative Management, headed by Louis Brownlow. The other members of the committee were Charles Merriam and, as mentioned above, Luther Gulick. The purpose of this committee was to identify the resources needed for an efficient executive branch, which included a more specific description of the responsibilities and possible responsibilities of the executive branch. The Brownlow Commission, as it became known, expressed the same concepts that were espoused in the *Papers on the Science of Administration*. The recommendations in general advocated the expansion of the executive branch (the top coordinator), and the creation of the staff that would help the execution of the responsibilities of the executive branch. It was noted that new principles were not needed, but a modernization of the managerial equipment that is an expansion of the White House Staff. This has allowed the president, the executive, to have the necessary knowledge to make decisions, delegate, and most importantly coordinate. However, the commission noted, the staff should

remain small in number, remain in the background, issue no orders, make no decisions, make no public statements, and should have a passion for anonymity. The commission also recommended strengthening managerial agencies as arms of the chief executive, extending the merit system, reorganize the 100+ agencies into a few large departments, and revising fiscal systems in light of private practices, particularly records, audits and accountability to Congress. This was like the rational-scientific mind establishing a brain in which it would exercise its power where everything and everyone is viewed as a tool.

This classic school of thought establishes clearly the bases, the ontology and epistemology of public administration. These are not just efficiency, and effectiveness, but also rational, scientific and economical epistemological schemas. Business roots cannot only be traced to the capitalist base of our society, but mainly the business practices webbed from the beginning as the solution to better government practices. In addition, this can be emphasized by what Richard Stillman II call an antistatist ontology.

In “The Study of Public Administration in the United States: The Eminently Practical Science,” Stillman notes that the ontology of public administration is mainly antistatist. Antistatism is the tradition, “ideas, and doctrines expressively hostile to [the] central governing institutions in society, which argue for reducing, limiting, even eliminating their role(s) and activities” (Stillman 2000, 16). In other words, Mary E. Guy, notes that it is our public administration nature not only to embrace science but at the same time approach governing with a rational and economical approach (2003), which as Stillman notes, paradoxically works against the existence of the state itself (2000). Government is viewed as a tool, a machine, where instruction is given and execution follows, where effectiveness is expected to result in more professional execution of the “will of the people,” and where structure, chain of command, and

rational, economical, and legal bases are established as the parameters of epistemology and practice of public administration. At the same time, there seemed to be a connection of politics, or the public with not only corruption but the inefficient, the ineffective. This negative correlation results in a simultaneous rejection of public administration, of the state. It is then noted that the mechanistic worldview, is our inheritance, our departure ground, and with it a simultaneous apprehension and rejection of our nature, the public administration ontology.

### **Challenges to the Scientific Approach**

Before we move to the human relations school of thought, there is a kind of overlap period that becomes influential later, which is discussed in this section. It is in this period that a paradigm revolution brews giving birth later to a new paradigm. It challenges the scientific and rational approach to public management by including the human element in the efficiency process. More specifically, it attempts to bring to light human socialization. One of the first to question the common approach to management was Mary Parker Follet. She challenged the executive, authoritative, impersonal approach in organizations by introducing the idea of participatory management. She challenged the idea that position, rank, and/ or authority determines the role of the members of an organization. She introduces human relations and human psychology into organizational management. This is a challenge to the mechanistic worldview where leadership and humans themselves are viewed as cogs in the machine. Follet was an advocate of employee empowerment, constructive use of conflict, and flatter organizations. She defined leadership outside formal authority and within “the law of the situation,” dictated by knowledge and experience, not position (Fry 1998a, 112). She noted that organizations function on the principle of power. However, to be efficient, organizations need to exercise “power with” (participative decision-making) not “power over” (coercion) (Fry 1998a,

116). She advocates power sharing, integration, and the need for conflict resolution noting that conflict should not be feared but faced, acted upon, to allow a solution to emerge (Fry 1998a, 106).

Follet presented four means of conflict resolution: voluntary submission of one party, struggle and victory of one party over another, compromise, and integration. Integration is the solution without compromise. In the compromise approach to management both parties lose. It is inherent in the understanding that compromise is reached by each party giving up a part or some of the desired outcome. A better option, according to Follet, is integration. Follet explains that this can be possible through the “law of the situation” (Fry 1998a, 112). This is the idea of conflict resolution according to the facts, the demands of the situation, not according to the relative superiority or authority of any party and/or the concept of manipulation (making a decision their idea). In other words, she notes that contract, law and ballot democracy are all win-lose situations and not a synthesis of ideas. She was calling not only for a different approach of decision-making, and exercise of authority, but a different arena where this can take place. This new approach redefines leadership as a role to transform (help the group to release energy) and to anticipate and provide conditions for constructive change (unite and help in creating new purposes). These transforming assumptions should be existent not just in management, but the structure where management is practiced, and even more important where communication is exercised. This establishes social interactions as reciprocal not linear. These social interactions are relationships at all levels: relationship between those working together, and between those members of the organization providing services and those receiving services outside the organization. These transformed organizations allow for what Follet calls a “circular response” that includes social responsibility (Fry 1998a, 103, 105 & 114). This, in turn, will make the



interaction symbiotic, organic, and mutual. In this environment or new reality, new conceptualization of leadership would be needed, and new understandings of role of government and citizens.

Follet was not the only scholar to attempt or promote a move away from the focus of a rational structure to create efficient management. Chester I. Barnard in “Functions of the Executive” viewed organizations as cooperative systems, socialization as a contract between employee and the employer (1947). This interactive and tacit agreement revealed what is referred as Acceptance Theory of Authority. This means that the amount of authority or “power over” (as referred by Follet) equals to what the employee or follower allows the leader or employer to have. In other words, Barnard is also challenging the accepted approach to efficient management based authority (as position) and authoritativeness (as coercion). Acceptance Theory of Authority depends on four conditions: clear understanding of expectations, the existent ability for the employee to comply, the perception that the directive is in compliance with organizational objectives, and that directives cannot oppose personal goals.

While Barnard was moving away from the idea of a central control, he was enhancing the needed focus and importance of the executive (the top coordinator). Barnard noted that the “functions of the executive” were to maintain balance between the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual through effective communication. Instructions, directions, and expectations need to be clear, known, accessible and within short and direct lines. According to Barnard, this can be accomplished by understanding “zones of indifference” (1947, 169). These zones are noted by Barnard to be the range in which each individual willingly accepts orders without consciously questioning authority. According to Barnard, this can be expanded with incentives that meet the needs of the members of an organization, which are not only monetary

but may be or include status, prestige, and personal power. Barnard also presented the existence of informal groups in the organization that may include outsiders. These informal groups are aggregates of personal contact and interactions, and associating groups of people that may impact the process of the organization, communication, interaction, maintenance of balance and power exchanges (forerunner for Mayo). Barnard's conceptualization not only supports certain epistemological bases about management and efficiency but also brings attention to a new understanding of efficiency to include its members and their motives. At the same time, it attempts to transform understandings or assumptions of power as Follet, to where power is shared and at times held by the members of the organization and not necessarily the leadership of the same. However, the mechanistic approach, which is inherent in the epistemology, seems to have kept this from a full-blown transformation of public administration.

The attempt to focus away from rational organization as the answer to efficiency could have not taken place without Robert K. Merton. Merton is known to be the greatest critique of Max Weber's concept of Bureaucracy. In *Bureaucratic Structure and Personality*, Merton states, against Weber's original argument, that bureaucracy prevents efficiency (1957). He noted that the bureaucratic structure creates what he calls "displacement of goals" (1957, 198). This means that the formal role of a member of an organization becomes more important than the substantive one. This takes place when following the rules and regulations replace the goal of the organization. In other words, following the rules and regulations or obeying the rationality of the structure becomes the goal itself displacing the organizational goals. Furthermore, bureaucracy turns means into ends. The rigid structure prevents adjustment to new situations and results in over-conformity that stagnates and prevents the organization from further growth.

At the same time, Merton noted that depersonalization and adherence to rules makes bureaucrats impersonal and warns against trained incapacity – or trained incompetence (the incapacity to adapt to new condition) or occupational psychosis (where people develop day to day routines around preferences, discriminations, and aversions that are the result of demands put on individuals through their particular occupational role in the organization) (1957). Merton challenges the effectiveness of bureaucracy by challenging the definition of efficiency itself while not only emphasizing the bureaucratic shortcomings noted by Weber, but also incorporating the call for the integration of psychology into coordination (1957).

This transitional period was still connected to the traditional school of thought through efficiency but attempted to re-define it outside its rigid structure. However, the profession is still moving towards the goal of effective management and still within scientification while trying to place emphasis in the importance of the individual within the rational structure. This new emphasis on the individual opened the door for what has been known as the Humans Relations School, or Social Sciences paradigm.

### **The Social Science Paradigm**

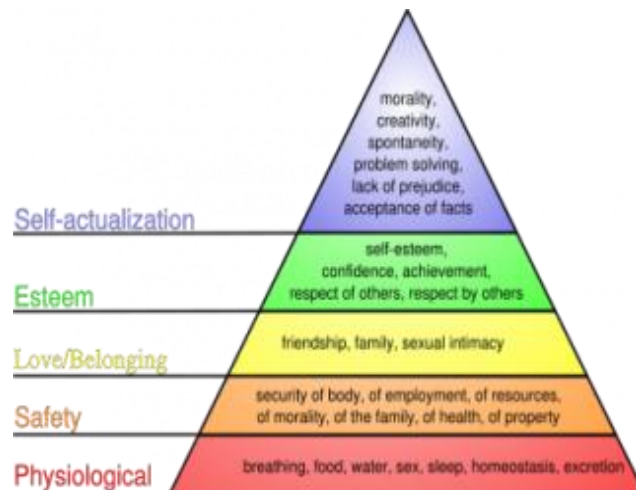
The Social Science Paradigm includes the human relations model school and behavioral approaches. This paradigm transforms public administration by focusing more on individual's, their motivation, and response to different styles of leadership. However, this response took place within the rigidity of the structured arena. Some attempted to answer questions about relationship patterns, individual behavior, individual power and influence, and more. This section will briefly note the most significant influences in the public administration epistemology.

## **The Human Relations Model**

The Human Relations School of thought builds on Follet's and Barnard's work focusing at a greater extent on the needs of the individual, on human behaviors, on their desires and needs. These elements then become important for the organization's effectiveness and efficiency. They become just another part in the rational process. One of the most influential scientists in this school of thought is Elton Mayo. During a period from 1924 to 1927, Mayo performed an experiment on work environment and its effect on productivity. This study is referred to as the Study of Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company and is discussed in *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (1933). Accepting the desired and ideal form of organization in rational approaches, he wanted to find out why in an era of efficiency there was no efficiency. Creating changes in the lighting of a factory, he intended to discover that changes in the environment could bring about more efficiency but the results revealed much more of what was expected and changed the focus of the study giving birth to social sciences. He observed that changes in productivity came about because of the attention given to the workers, not the type of changes introduced to the environment. This is now known as the Hawthorne Effect. This discovery is a great contribution in human relations and motivation, as well as the approach to scientific studies in the social sciences. Mayo revealed that work places are social environments that contain informal groups which are not formally acknowledged in the structure or organizational chart but greatly influence the power structure. He presented scientific evidence that supported Follet's argument that attention to human relationships was needed. In addition, Mayo also noted, as Follet and Barnard previously theorized that power was not necessarily all derived from a position, but in relation to how much the worker is willing to allow that power to

be exerted supporting the understanding of power relations as not just individualistic or within a formal structure, but also within the informal groups in the organization (Mayo 1933).

Abraham H. Maslow in “A Theory of Human Motivation” further expanded the understanding of human motivation by introducing a human motivation theory in which men and women moved up or down a “Hierarchy of Needs” (1943). The assumption is that once a need is met, that need is no longer an incentive or motivator. The “Hierarchy of Needs” from bottom to top is presented as follows: **Physiological Needs**, which are essential needs like air, water, food, sleep, and sex; **Safety Needs**, which have to do with safety from harm, and job stability; **Love/Belonging Needs**, such as love, affection and the need to belong to a group; **Esteem Needs**, which have to do with self-respect, recognition, attention, appreciation, and importance; and **Self-Actualization/ Self Fulfillment Needs**, which involve doing for what one is best fitted for; the maximization of one’s potential (see **Illustration 1-1**).



**Illustration 1-1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

On a different approach, but not away from the focus on the individual, Douglas McGregor in *The Human Side of Enterprise* presented a different argument (1957). He placed emphasis on social psychology and research in human relations in achieving a better fit between

the personality of a mature adult and the requirements of a modern organization. He popularized a humanistic managerial philosophy, Theory X and Theory Y. He explained that theory X represents scientific management, something that is no longer useful. Theory Y represents human relations. They both assume that management's role is to organize resources, which include organization members who were chosen to best benefit the company. In other words, the attempted escape from scientific rational rigidity was still within the established scientification where humans were once again viewed as an extra element in the rationalization process, cogs that needed to be chosen according to the needed shape and form for the machinery to work effectively. Beyond this, they are quite dissimilar.

Theory X assumes that work is inherently distasteful to most people and therefore people attempt to avoid it. This means that most people are not ambitious, have little desire for responsibility, and prefer to be directed. Under theory X, most people are assumed to have little aptitude for creativity in solving organizational problems, resist change, are gullible, and unintelligent. This establishes motivation to occur only at the physiological and security levels of the hierarchy of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. McGregor argues that these are no longer a motivator in modern society, since basic needs are mostly met. Furthermore, he notes that with Theory X it is assumed that most people are self-centered and must be closely controlled and coerced to achieve organizational objectives. This means that organizations need to foster an environment of command and control. This results in a leadership style of hostility, low output, and/or demand for higher reward.

McGregor then recommends Theory Y. Theory Y accepts that work is something as natural as play. This occurs if conditions are favorable. This means that people will be committed to their quality and productivity objectives if rewards are in a place that addresses

higher needs. This means that people will be self-directed and creative to meet their work and organizational goals and committed to them. Theory Y assumes that people are responsible, creative, and will demonstrate ingenuity. He also notes that this kind of attitude spreads and that is under these conditions that people will seek, accept, and embrace responsibility. This leadership style will result in decentralization, deregulation, job enlargement (as in broadening of the scope of an employee's job), participatory management, and performance appraisal that may include self-assessments. This theory is based on higher needs that are assumed to be never completely satisfied and therefore are good motivators. McGregor acknowledges that not all people may have the level of maturity assumed by Theory Y and therefore may need tighter control that can be relaxed as the employee matures. It is McGregor that creates a kind of transition into the actual focus on behavior through his inclusion of social psychology in human relations.

### **Behavioral Approaches**

However, one of the most important and most influential epistemological steps in public administration was the questioning of the conceptualization of "the rational man" itself (Dahl 1947). Robert Dahl in "The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems," presented three problems that need to be addressed in public administration which seemed to have been rooted in the rigid rational assumptions of the classical school of thought (1947). These three problems were about a different approach to the politics-administration dichotomy, to human behavior (outside the rational man), and to look at context outside systematizations. In other words, Dahl's call for public administrators to look beyond, outside the rational schemata set in the classical school of thought which no longer seemed to fit reality.

The first and most influential person to have answered this call is Herbert A. Simon (1957). He is said to be the basis for the behavioral approaches that further grounds all activities

of management in scientification. This school of thought seems to be a kind of culmination of rationalization, scientific approach, and human relations where human behavior takes center stage but in a mechanistic and scientific arena. Simon's main contribution to public administration is his argument that it is necessary to understand the principles developed in theory as being more like proverbs (Simon 1957). This means that **POSCORB** is more like a guide where values oppose each other and/or are mutually incompatible (Simon 1957). This resulted in a new call for a more realistic administrative theory based or rooted in practice but most importantly challenging the accepted "rationality." At the same time, Simon called for the inclusion of individual values as part of the decision making process. This was exposed in *Administrative Behavior* where, following the called by Wilson, he sought to construct a more realistic science of administration (1957).

Simon adopts a procedure that emphasizes systematic and empirical investigations, going beyond observation, pure science into practical science. He studies decision premises, the process of decision-making and/or the act of choice. Through this study, he challenges the "Rational Comprehensive Method of Decision-Making." This method of decision making is a linear limited thinking where one defines the perceived problem or issue, establishes a goal or objective, identifies all alternatives and/or means to resolve the identified problem, selects the best alternative using cost-benefit analysis, implements best alternative, and measures results.

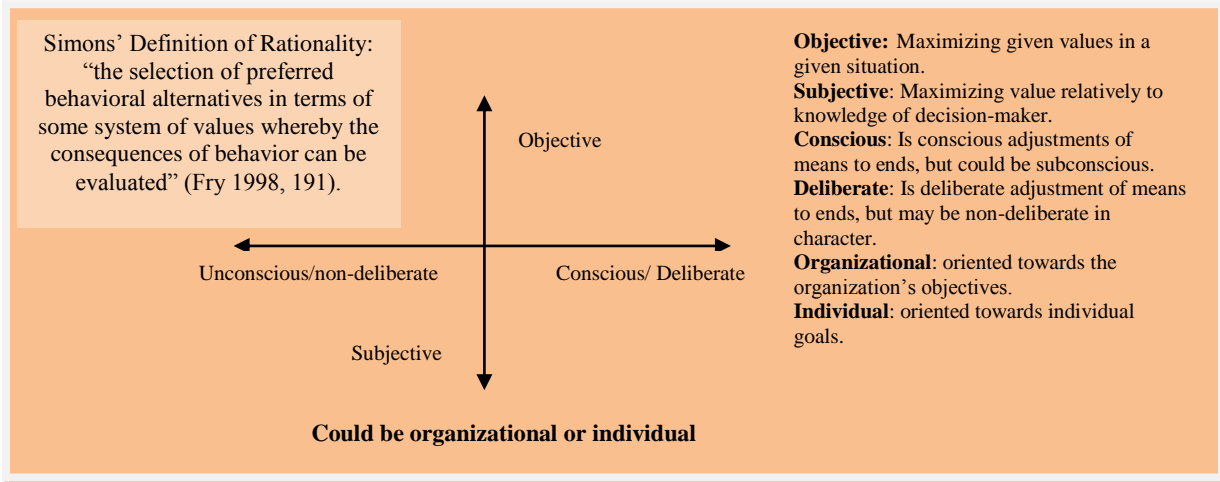
Simon's challenge took place with the concept, "bounded rationality." He noted that normally men make decisions within a structured and limited universe where the process of decision making follows established axioms, assumptions, beliefs, and/or patterns of thinking and where information and ability of exposure of the information is limited which limits itself the process of reason; limited rationality. In addition, he challenged the rational approach by



questioning the politics-administration dichotomy noting that the dichotomy cannot take place because there was no possibility for a value-free environment to achieve efficiency (descriptively) and that facts can no longer be controlled because of the growing complexity of issues and science (normatively). Simon then replaced this dichotomy with the fact-value dichotomy (1957). According to Simon, this presents a better basis for a science of administration and administrative conduct because it divides decisions into two: fact premised (these are about the observable world that can be true or false) and value premised (these are should or ought to statements, good or bad, but not factual) (1957). This distinction would help identified scientific processes and if or when their truth or falsity can be assessed.

Simon made this distinction through models of decision-making. He noted first the economic man. This model promotes value maximization. He noted that although this is an appropriate normative model of decision-making, it ignores uncertainty which pervades the decision making process. He then exposed the satisficing man. In this model, limits in the cognitive and analytical abilities allows for the acceptance of only those alternatives that are satisfactory, sufficient in an area of “bounded rationality.” The third model is called the physiological man. This decision making model is self-explanatory and focuses on affective considerations. The last model presented by Simon is the sociological man. This model emphasizes role-playing. In other words, the focus is on social roles, rationality, and leaves little room for choice. This model establishes rationality no longer as value maximizing but in a continuum (1957). In this continuum you have bounded rationality in one end, and complete knowledge on the other (see **Illustration 1-2**). According to Fry, this means that most decision-making would fall somewhere in between and “even madness has its methods” (Fry 1998a, 192).

This is consistent with one of Simon's greatest contributions: the understanding or assumption that all human behavior has a rational dimension.



### Illustration 1-2 Simon's Rationality

Simon viewed organizations, as Barnard and Follet, as a system of exchanges and even though he agreed that authority lay in the relationship not the position, he emphasized that a hierarchy was necessary. In other words, it is in this exchange where members of the organization enter into a contract and accept the relationship that will be in place where authority is recognized establishing direction of communication and authority, making obedience to that authority less of a challenge. Simon notes the importance of how an order (given by the authority) is presented to how much merit may come from following the order. In other words, Simon expands on Follet's logic of the situation. It is this that will establish, by defining the situation, a construct -the reality or universe- in which the order and issue are being addressed. This takes place through the decision-maker's perception of future events, possible alternatives and possible outcomes. Simon seems to support some of the conceptualizations from the classical school of thought while including ideas from the human relations school. Most importantly, Simon brought about a focus on human behavior, the role of the unpredictable

member of the organization in the rational organization, an acceptance of every member as rational, and the importance of leadership and authority beyond and within traditional power structures.

This new understanding did not leave informal groups or the newfound understanding of influences outside a formal organization without further discussion. Phillip Selznick conducted a study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) where he found an example of cooptation. He describes this in “Cooptive Mechanism” as the “process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability and or existence” (2004, 153). This concept reflects the conflict between formal authority and social power outside of an organization. Selznick noted that TVA absorbed local elements into its policy, which determined its structure. TVA ceded its agricultural policy goals to powerful local interests in exchange for political support in order to survive. According to Selznick, this revealed two forms of cooptation: formal and informal. A formal cooptation is when an organization publicly absorbs new elements into its structure and it takes place when authority is questioned or self-government needs to be established in a large organization. An informal cooptation occurs in response to community pressure. According to Selznick, this can be a good idea gone badly because new elements change decisions and values within the organization. This understanding of cooptation does not only accept the nature of socialization, but expanded it to organizations and opens them to the influence of their environment for coexistence. Rigid structure where communication is a top down process is no more. However, this accepted openness of organizations resulted in an analysis of how this can help efficiency. This means that we discover that human relations are complex, that men’s motivation is complex, and that there is evidence of interdependence and interconnectedness, and somehow,

we force these complex ideas into a systematized rationality with the same question: “how can these new factors formulate efficiency.” As mentioned at the beginning the idea of “one best way” with roots in economy and science is an epistemological base and some would say the principle still present that manipulates even new understandings within our profession.

New approaches in public administration paved the way that reaches the highest levels of management. The Hoover Commission, established under the chairmanship of former President Herbert Hoover in 1947, was created to study once again shortcomings in the delivery of government services. This commission delivered its first reports and recommendations to then President Harry S. Truman and Congress in 1949. The recommendations included the reduction in number of agencies; the need to flatten organizations; the need to address staff support, the shortage of highly qualified, vested administrators, and coordination and organization of general administrative services across organizations. More importantly, the commission challenged the detailed and rigid statutes and regulations shaping the process of governmental action, calling for the humanization of organization and the reduction of impersonalization and red tape.

At the same time, there was a call for improvements in budgetary processes and standardization and simplification of accounting. These recommendations resulted in a reorganization of the executive branch, the establishment of performance budgeting, and replacement of efficiency and effectiveness with accountability and control. Why is this important? This commission showed that the development of administration epistemology (whether public or private) is applied to the government process and deliverance of services but not without a certain level of politicizing of the application itself. In other words, public administration has developed along the lines of scientification, efficiency, effectiveness, and control, which is in essence political control. While the influence of human relations and human

behavior schools of thought can be clearly highlighted, the assumptions that so far have been presented by these schools are now forming part of the management practices within the rational reality, within the arena and purpose of efficiency and effectiveness. In other words, human relations and human behavior was analyzed within economic man rationality. It is this bounded knowledge that has limited public administration epistemology.

One great example of this is the *The Forest Ranger* (1960). In this book, Herbert Kaufman notes the U.S. Forest Services success in producing individual agent behavior that is consistent with headquarters directives. The organization is constructed within the rigidity of a rational bureaucracy, where unity of command and hierarchy allows clear directions and well developed training, promotions, decreed diaries, and constant reminders of status of agents or representatives. This also required that higher-level authority be informed of all ranger activities, prohibitions and/or penalties or transfers. Communication was then taking place top-down and bottom up. This can be said to have also come about as a result of Simon's influence through his challenge to the rational comprehensive method of decision-making and systematizing rationality and individual values accepting a hierarchical structure because of the accepted contract which is formalized through common values and goals. Kaufman noted that decision-making takes place within established directives, and within each person's value system. In this case, large organizations fostered lower level decision making when voluntary conformity has been accepted because it allows for consistency between individual behavior and headquarters' directives. This is done through the internalization of mode of behavior which takes place through manipulation of intellect where the members of organization input their needs shaping organizational needs which results in the member meeting those needs and feeling proud about it. The integration of the different schools of thought into the analysis of the forest rangers

revealed not only bounded rationality in action where the public administration universe is still a rational, rigid, scientification of knowledge and practice but also where the goal or aim for public administration is still effectiveness and defined by efficiency within economic values. This reveals to some practitioners and scholars that certain values are absent from the inception of public administration epistemology that need to be addressed.

### **The New Public Administration**

It is obvious to practitioners and scholars that, however vast and complex, our epistemology is, something is missing. Some of the responses will note a lack of an ethical dimension and others will focus on efficient accountability, which will result in the need to produce systematized decision-making, data, objective, and difficult-to-contest basis for governmental action. This feeling for the backing of administration with facts (data) has accompanied public administration till the present time, epistemologically and ontologically it has been the constant request and it will culminate in a union with economics where this becomes our common language. This section will briefly note major influences of this aspect of public administration epistemology.

### **Public Administration and Values**

Noticing that certain values were absent from public administration epistemology can be said to have created a reaction that resulted in a school of thought that centers on questions of public administration values. This school of thought questions the politics-administration dichotomy; rational bureaucracy; the role of the administrator in politics, policy, and administration; and the idea of administrative discretion. Carl J. Friedrich in “Public Policy and the Nature of Administrative Responsibility” and Herman Finer in “Administrative

Responsibility in Democratic Government,” exemplify this debate which centered on public administration and democracy (1940).

How can one ensure that public officials will act responsibly? Friedrich can be said to have taken the Theory Y approach and advocates internal mechanisms of self-control (ethics) guided and at times supported by “inner-checks” (internal mechanism within the organization of profession). This personal ethics would limit or control ones actions while the organization promotes and fosters loyalty and a sense of responsibility through developed administrative environment and guided by professional standards (from colleagues, professional organizations, and/or scientific evidence). Ethics could be developed based on professionalism and moral standards. Accepting that some irresponsible conduct is inevitable and nothing can be done about it, good policy can help. Policies are like decision guides, manuals about what to do or not to do in a given situation. These should offer effective actions and stimulate initiative. This should be done in terms of actualities and technical knowledge elicited from the administrator with sound work rules and effective morale.

On the other hand, Finer can be said to have argued from a Theory X approach. He argued that external punitive controls are both essential and the only effective means to assure the right behavior. Finer puts emphasis on the external control. This can be like a system of checks and balances, politics, and/or the organizational structure itself. He calls for a strict legal and administrative accountability in public administration. He calls for control, sanctions, and putting the executive as the top authority. He argues for strict administrative subservience to elected officials (classical approach to public administrators).

It has been argued that Finer won the argument because of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) of 1946. This act passed to ensure uniformity and openness in the procedures used by

the federal agencies through governing regulation, adjudications, and rule-making in general terms. This is the major source of federal administrative agency law and even state agencies' administration and regulation are governed by comparable state acts. However, it can also be argued that both approaches in attempting to bring about the inclusion of ethics in public administration failed to see the strict establishment and further expansion of the rational-legal mechanistic worldview rooted in public administration epistemology. In other words, the attempt was to assure action, not promote better public administrators. Within the value of efficiency the discussion turned to accountability, not an inclusion of an ethical dimension in decision-making. Simon had noted that a public agent cannot act only within the external parameters established, but will also be influenced by personal mores, so values would be distorted. This is not a rhetorical question, or naïve, but an attempt to ask whether the possibility can exist for more, for a bridge. Some answers have been given by looking into management directly, and mainly leadership, where an ideological and material approach to public administration can be found. However, this could not have taken place without shedding light on the importance of the public employee. Only this way can the public employee move away from the perception of just acting within the parameters prescribed in the law, away from "trained incompetence."

### **The New Public Administration**

Although the attempt of the prior school was to include ethics as a value in public administration, it seems only to have mechanized decision-making by focusing the argument and therefore solutions on internal and/or external structures of control. However, by focusing on the important role that public administrators play in social interaction and construction of social values, the New Public Administration helps to further the discussion of decision-making and ethics even if this still took place within the prescribed parameters of supporting and enhancing



the scientification of truth. The New Public Administration school of thought critiqued the state of public administration, its disregard for values and social equity, and its unconditional acceptance of the status quo. This happened in conjunction with the questions of value that were presented above which seemed to have brought to light new approaches.

Charles A. Lindblom in “The Science of Muddling Through” was the first to question the understanding of reality from which knowledge and understanding for the purpose of action was derived. He exposes the rational comprehensive model of decision-making in government as a false explanation of how decisions take place (this is the root model, similar to Simon’s rational decision making model). Then he presented the successive limited comparison model as the reality of the decision-making process, the incremental model (1959). This is a model of little steps at a time, muddling through. His analysis pits economic man v. satisficing man.

In the Rational Comprehensive model (root), based on a model of economic man, values and objectives are clear, so that empirical analysis can be used to determine best policies. With this model, policy formulation comes through means-end analysis. This means that the final goal or desired outcome is determined first and then a plan is made to achieve that goal or outcome. The test of a “good” policy is that it can be shown to be the most appropriate means to the desired ends and its analysis is comprehensive. In this model, all important facts are assumed to be taken into consideration and theory is often heavily relied upon. In the Successive Limited Comparison (branch), based on a model of satisficing man, values, goals, and the empirical analysis needed of alternatives are closely intertwined (Lindblom 1959). This just means that instead of a linear reasoning, there is a presumption of a more complex analysis. Since means and ends are not easily distinguished, means-end analysis is often inappropriate. In this model, the test of a “good” policy is that various analysts agree on that policy (Lindblom 1959). The

analysis itself is drastically limited where important possible outcomes, potential alternatives, and values are neglected. This means that any comparative analysis is reduced or eliminated and there is no reliance on theory.

This new light shed onto decision-making in the government called for new approaches, and brought new understandings of policy construction and implementation allowing for the possibility of better policy. In this spirit, Dwight Waldo in *The Administrative State* notes that the field of public administration needs to develop further and differently from where it has been (1968). He denies that a science of politics is possible and emphasizes that public administration cannot be value-free, and argues that the politics-administration dichotomy is no longer meaningful. Instead, he insists on new approaches to organizational theory. This needs to be developed and does not necessarily originate in the private sector. Waldo pushed for new grounds to be explored in public administration where a possible separation of Western history and culture may be possible in order to understand problems in communication, cooperation, and industry. In other words, the shortcomings in the public administration epistemology are not just disciplinary, but rooted in origin. He argues that the roots of public administration are not in political science but in psychology and sociology.

This challenge found expression in a group of young (under thirty) political science academics in the 1968 Minnbrook Conference on New Public Administration, which was facilitated by Waldo who got involved in a deliberate attempt into helping transform public administration. They were driven by the spirit of finding not only a new public administration, but also fresh perspectives, based on “ideas of participation, consensus building, sharing, mutual trust, and even love of mankind” (Stillman 2005, 22). H. George Frederickson in “Towards a New Public Administration” presents the synthesis and his interpretation of what emerged of the

Minnowbrook Conference (1971). Frederickson called for adding social equity to efficient, economical, and coordinated management through the “New Public Administration.” New Public Administration should not be value neutral and the champion of causes. He noted that this could be accomplished by dividing organizations in four ways: distributive process (concern with the external distribution of goods and services which became the precursor to a customer oriented approach to public administration); integrative process (group decision making); boundary-exchange process (relations with clientele and government); and the social-emotional process (human relations). Alice M. Rivlin further expands on this in “Systematic Thinking for Social Action” (1971).

Rivlin discusses in a little more focus approach models to improve effectiveness of social services. She promotes decentralization of discretion or decision-making where federal government should provide the funding while allowing lower level governmental authority to make decisions on service management and rewarding those that are efficient. The localized discretionary authority would establish organizations that are controlled and accountable to the community and promote effectiveness through sensitivity to the communities they serve. This, however, promoted following the market model arguing that it would give power to the individual to make choices according to their preferences. One important aspect of the NPA is that the success of the model will depend on the development and use of better measures of effectiveness, and an aggressive attempts to find new methods, test and publicize results. This includes an evaluation of origin of power relations where decentralization would allow for the effectiveness of the new understood permeability of organizations where coexistence and interdependence could generate effectiveness in rational classic form but include new principles, like equity. The NPA is not completely challenging the epistemology, but hoping to add to its

systematization more values like equity and ethics. However, within this call for the exercise of social equity in organizational or governmental action, there was a mutual argument for democratization through the market model by acknowledging and supporting the power of individual's choice through competition. This can be seen to be developing in Rivlin and further emphasized by Vincent Ostrom and public choice theory.

### **Public Choice or the Rational Economic Approach**

While the development of public administration epistemology has had periods where thinkers call for a reevaluation of efficiency, of rationality, and of scientification, these seemed to have found a heaven on earth in the public choice school of thought. It is as if public administration epistemology had achieved its perfection in the arrival of this school of thought. Public choice theory is a branch of microeconomics that developed from the study of taxation and public spending. It emerged in the fifties and received attention in 1986, when James Buchanan received the Nobel Prize in economics. He was only one of the architects. The other was Gordon Tullock. This theory takes economic principles to analyze people's actions in the market place and applies them into people's actions in collective/ social decision-making. Just like in the market, this theory inherently implies self-interest as the driving force.

It was Vincent Ostrom who introduced these economic principles and consequently inherent values into public administration. In *The Intellectual Crisis In American Public Administration*, Ostrom notes that in a world of public administration where nothing makes sense anymore, the tools of economists can offer new grounds to explore administrative behavior (1973). He promotes the application of economic principles to make bureaucracy respond to public demand for effective government. Ostrom acknowledge the transcendence, overlapping of jurisdiction, and the fragmentation of authority through multiplicity and/or diversity of

organizations. However, he notes that this complexity could facilitate production in the public-service economy, which is possible through the analysis of individual preferences and collective decision-making. Criticizing centralization and concentration of power in the executive, he revealed the need to pay attention to the demand side of politics. He noted that executive centralization is only interested in the “supply side.” In other words, the focus becomes power in the executive at the expense and ignorance of the “demand side,” the public preferences. Public choice could help the “demand side” by revealing to the “supply side” the public preferences. It is then followed that collective interest cannot be pursued unless the individual interest is known and met.

One can see that rational effectiveness has reached a climax with the help of economic bases. This new economic values embrace takes place regardless of Vincent and Elinor Ostrom’s awareness that individual acting in self-interest does not necessarily result in what is best for the collective, for society. Furthermore, economic rationalization results in high external costs. External costs are costs that someone else bears (usually society) that are imposed by others (1971). This was because in the center of the spirit of democratizing public administration was the antistatist drive against what had so far being established. The struggle seemed to have been between democratic social values and economic values, which seemed to have resulted in the economic social values. This was further emphasized and made more concrete by Anthony Downs.

In “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy,” Downs discusses government in economic theory because he perceives the need of a single general theory that can offer balance (1957). There have been two areas where government has been forced to apply rules on how decisions need to be made based on economic theory: public finance and the

economy itself. Government has the role of maximizing social welfare, but this has not been defined and the motivation may not necessarily need to exist within the process. He then presents a model of rational government decision making that consist of the following agents: political party (men seeking income prestige and power), the winning party (men having control until the next election), and government's economic power (having the power to nationalize or privatize). Using economic theory he notes that political parties formulate policy strictly with the purpose of maximizing votes and not social welfare. As a result, the party will move to the center during a campaign in order to capture voters. Downs also revealed that people are not rational when picking a candidate to vote for in that many vote according to one issue or how the incumbent has performed (retrospective voting). He presents the individual as the basic unit of decision-making accounting for the rationality of democratic politics. He argues that politics can be compared to entrepreneurs in a profit seeking economy. In other words, politicians formulate the policy that will gain them the most votes and the steps taken are not divorced from their personal qualities. This means that political parties and politicians follow economic principles in search of maximization of votes, while individuals are only pursuing self-interest but not collective self-interest maximization.

This economic approach to public administration also establishes the understanding of bureaucrats themselves as something different, away from public values. Anthony Downs in *Inside Bureaucracy* focuses on the behavior of bureaucrats (1966). He noted that bureaucrats inside organizations, defined by public choice principles, are self-interested, maximize utility, are committed and fight for survival. This fight involves externalities, and outputs which are difficult to measure. Within this new established understanding of bureaucrats, Downs presented five types: the statesmen, who are those whose broad general loyalties encourage them to resolve

contentious matters through compromise; the advocates, who are optimistic, energetic, and easily swayed by superiors, equals, and subordinates; the zealots, who equate the public interest with specific goals; the conservers, who seek to maximize their security and personal convenience; and the climbers, who seek the path with least resistance to maximize personal power. All five types act within their organization and at times tend toward actions that maximize the organization's interest. All five types are now interrelated to economics and driven by self-interest that finds communication in economic concepts and assumptions. This theory transformed not only the bureaucrat, and the context or arena where it acts, but organizations themselves. This then becomes the analysis of individual organization, but not as a collection of members.

William A. Niskanen, in "A Reflection on Bureaucracy and Representative Government," presented a bureaucratic behavior theory (1971). He notes that agencies maximize their budget surplus for their own benefit and sustainability and that this results in bureaucracies having a monopoly of buyers and suppliers of their service, which are usually politicians. This at the same time established that bureaucracies do not increase efficiency because the sponsor is not motivated to increase bureau efficiency since they cannot benefit from the improved efficiency. However, surpluses can indirectly benefit bureaus and/or sponsors, which establish the understanding of bureaucrats to be driven by budget maximizing. This is why they vote to increase size of budgets while there is no incentive to be efficient.

Economic theories not only changed the understanding of organizations and bureaucrats, they have changed the approach to collective action. In *The Logic of Collective Action*, Mancur Olson challenged the pluralist idea that common interest would unite to take action (1965). He notes that individuals are rational self-interest beings, motivated by their own private interests.

This means that an individual will only join a group if the individual believes the benefit from belonging to the group will outweigh the cost of being in that group. In other words, self-interest finds expression in cost benefit analysis. Sometimes in this analysis free riders are taken into account. Free riders are those members of the groups that enjoy the benefits of an organization without contributing. This does not mean that an individual will automatically not be interested in the organization because there are large and small group dynamics that can create interests. These are anonymity, contribution, and enforcement. Facilitating understanding of collective action Olson compared group behavior to market structures. For him one actor is a monopoly; few actors, that is, powerful groups that lobby for specific legislation, constitute an oligopoly; an intermediate size group, small groups like neighborhood associations, and active groups with sub-optimal results are examples of monopolistic competition; and very large groups that have many members with little involvement (typically just voting) are cases of perfect competition.

This transformed or displaced democracy can be understood as perfect competition where groups or organizations pursue goods (although not necessarily the same type of goods for each group). Goods can be either rival or non-rival or excludable or non-excludable (see **Table 1-1**). This rational classification of goods allows for understanding the level of interest of the group and consequently the intensity of involvement or operation. Olson explained that non-excludable collective goods do not present interest to a rational person and therefore will provide no or minimum effort to maximize welfare. At the same time, Olson noted that the size of the group alters how the group operates. For example, small groups will be more effective in providing collective goods and large groups will do it with some level of coercion or incentive.

Economic rationalization, or public choice, thus seemed to have allowed the scientification and mechanistic worldview to climax in public administration. Just as Olson



expected, public administration found a common language and displaced values by distorting goals themselves, from the individual level to the organizational level, which could be local or national. Economics became the focus, the end, the means, and the value.

	<b>Excludable</b>	<b>Non-Excludable</b>
<b>Rival</b>	Pizza, Furniture, Socks	Common pooled resources (fish in the sea)
<b>Non-Rival</b>	Toll roads, cable TV	Fresh Air, National Defense, Libraries

**Table 1-1 Olson’s Table of Goods**

**Politics and Values in Public Administration**

Although the bounded rationality within public administration’s epistemology seems to not move far from scientification, and even now embraced the high level of rationality and self-interest from the economic mind, little by little questions have been attempted to bring light to ignored values like equity and ethics. This school of thought, Politics and Values in public administration, will raise some of the most important questions about values outside the efficiency and the rational rigid realm of public administration challenging accepted truths and new embraced economical values. This school of thought will force new approaches and bring about changes in the general understanding of public administration. Politics and Values in public administration rejects the politics-administration dichotomy accepting an interconnectivity and interdependence between politics and administration, between representation and action, and, in addition, considers the study of public administration to be the study of policy. This not only brings together the New Public Administration but also appears to move forward into a public administration that includes ethics in discussions and analysis outside the mechanistic worldview of public administration epistemology.

One of the first questions raised makes a remarkable break between the public realm and the private realm. Is private and public the same arena? Paul Appleby in “Government is Different” sheds light on the fact that private and public realms are not the same (1945). Public administration epistemology is rooted in private management, and has until now accepted a distorted, forced application of private theories and private approaches into public management. Lindblom also addresses this indirectly when he notes that teachings in the public administration profession were not reflecting the reality of public life and that this is a constant that has pervaded public administration from the beginning (1959). If our understanding of reality is misconstrued, then all knowledge and approaches will seem to be irrelevant and useless ensuing in no results. This is where Appleby offers a solution. He argues that public and private organizations have different goals. Public organizations aim at service (non-profit). Private organizations aim at profit making their operation and environment not the same as a private organization. In public organizations decision-making is shaped by the public scope, accountability, and political character making the process more complex and difficult.

Graham T. Allison successfully expands on this subject in *Public and Private Management: Are They Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects?* Allison notes that government is similar to private organizations in the perspective of POSDCORB (1980). However, it is in POSDCORB and everything else that there are major differences. One of the major differences is time perspective. Government managers tend to have short time horizons, making short-term decisions. This is also stressed by duration, the time period elected officials have to make decisions. The length of political appointments is relatively short. In addition there seems to be difficulty establishing clear measurements of performance. It is difficult to develop standards from which to measure good and efficient public managers. Some reasons are the

personnel constraints, no wide latitude for action, high regulation, politics, and high levels of scrutiny. This scrutiny is diversified. It takes place within the public, the legislature, and, at times, the judiciary. This at the same time invites into the universe of public scrutiny, the media. Another factor making a strong case for the differences between the public and the private is direction. In the private sector a goal can be set and direction taken towards that goal. Public managers often mediate decisions to respond to a variety of pressures making goal paths less direct. This essentially makes the bottom line nonexistent. Allison makes us aware that all this emerges from our constitutionality. This is because in the United States government, the functions of general management are constitutionally spread among competing institutions: the executive, two houses of Congress, and the courts. This, as noted by Justice Brandeis, makes public administration even more difficult since the constitutional goal was “not to promote efficiency but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power” (*Myers v. U.S.*, 1926).

The understanding of the differences between the public and the private is and continues to be one of the major elements missing from a better understanding of public administration, because it is this strong embedding of private management epistemology that has helped the warped reality or misconception on the context of public administration, which is in the realm of the political. A good public administrator would have political inclinations, organizational skills, and executive experience. They must have the ability to consider many different interests and try to operate in a fair, uniform manner that can be explained to the public (Appleby, 1945). This means that politics and administration cannot be separated in the public arena because even though the public and the private realm are different, they interrelate, interconnect, and are interdependent (although often only seen this way in economic values). This means that the function of public administration is then to create interaction between public and private

accepting that this position inherently carries with it stricter ethical standards due to the public nature of the institution. This is because the public nature of an organization accepts the inherent role of representation and/or agency to the citizenry.

It is this accepted political dimension in the public administration epistemology that opens new forms of understanding cooptation, interdependence and interrelation. Norton E. Long in “Power and Administration,” supports the political side of government stating that power is the lifeblood of administration (1949). He understands that politics has always been related to power but notes that power flows from the sides of the organizations and up the organization, from the citizenry, the customer, the clientele, to the representative. At the same time and supporting the complexity or interrelation of politics and administration, Long points to the fact that the citizenry is not the only source of responsibility, accountability, and power. This also comes from the legislature and is cultivated with knowledge and expertise. In addition, while the focus on the citizenry inspires analysis of normative values, it is Aaron Wildavsky in “The Political Implications of Budgetary Reform,” who notes that normative theory was not realistic and that descriptive policy could help (*The Budgetary Process*, 1961). Wildavsky explained that the important question addressed should be the “‘who gets what’ of governmental decisions” (1961, 183). In other words, he drew attention to the budget as a representation of political interests, an expression of who prevails in the process. He noted that the budget is an expression of “what the government does or intends to do” making allocation a political not economically governmental action (1961, 184). As a result, one views democracy as the arena responsible for the source of corruption where the citizenry is now an interest group, a client (Lowi 1969). This means that administrative power comes from statutory authority, with customers, the budget, benefits to customers, expertise, and knowledge resulting in different sources of power for

administrators, which makes power a complex and fragmented political entity that has to be negotiated from different directions.

Fragmented power is not necessarily bad. Our governmental structure was designed to control power through fragmentation. However, this complexity further increases the number of those involved in the power structure through access points. The political no longer only involves the citizens, and the diverse groups within the citizenry, but also the legislature, the structure and all the processes within the governmental structure. This has brought attention to public organizations experiencing conflictive values. It is Herbert Kaufman who notes three values that drive administrative institutions and are in constant conflict (“Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrines of Public Administration,” 1969) and the need for these values to be balanced (“Administrative Decentralization and Political Power”, 1969): representativeness, politically neutral competence (expertise, explicit standardization, and politics/administration dichotomy), and executive leadership (control and authority in the top coordinator, results in reduction of organizations). The balance between these conflictive values should not be understood in the form of sheer power, but influence or adjustment. For example, low representation will result in inability to impact governmental decision and weak executive authority. This means that the level of representation of an organization would have to be increased in order to help governmental action. This interaction and interdependence is understood and now obvious in the new political arena.

This understanding of the political can be said to have received a step back with the responses to how to address the new found reality in public administration. This is because even though it was intended to expose the complexity of the public realm, it grounded an understanding of allocation of benefits as a struggle of power between the haves and the have-

nots. At the same time, it made the budget itself a political game where only the players change but the game remains a zero-sum, Hobbesian reality where winners and losers compete. However, more damaging was the bureaucratization, systematization, and structuration of this process, of the political realm as a market democracy.

It is Dwight Waldo who invites new approaches to public administration. Waldo in “A Theory of Public Administration Means in Our Time a Theory,” explains that a theory of public administration should fuse the art of administration and the science (1990). He expose that some of the challenges in public administration are ingrained and that public administration suffers from a kind of low self-esteem, from a very close relation to business. This, according to Waldo, public administration has failed to embrace the behavioral movement, and contains a complex relation with law and the courts that have made public administration’s definition, purpose and/or responsibility more confusing. This is enhanced not just by the political aspect in the public realm, but the boundaries between society and the administrative state, which are unclear, weak, and constantly shifting. He invites public administration epistemology to look to other branches of knowledge for insights, like psychology and sociology. This is the call and legacy left to contemporary theorists.

### **Contemporary Perspectives**

Contemporary thinkers are faced with dealing with the old, the new, and the renewed. Conversely, the issues addressed have not changed, nor has the push and insistence in the systematic empirical analysis format. Public administration seems to be in a stage of continual testing, in a cyclical motion for the establishment of validity in the public administration science, which some would argue is non-existent. Pubic Administration seems to be in a permanent search for the most efficient answer. There are aspects of our epistemology asking whether the

egg (bureaucracy) came first or the chicken (bureaucrat) (Hummel 1977). Others were concentrating on describing what a bureaucrat is and/or should be (Dilulio 1994), whether power should be centralized or diffused (March 1984), whether there should be more regulation or less, whether there should be more incentives or less, economic or intrinsic (Dilulio 1994), and whether we should be conceptualized as citizens or customers (Barzelay & Amajani 1992; Osborne & Gabler 1992). It was a stage that seemed to have accepted the political aspect of the public realm and still tried to fit it once again within the private understanding of management. It is like public administration is locked in a paradigm itself of scientification and efficiency from its conception. It seems that Waldo's invitation for a completely new approach to public administration has failed.

Laurent Dobuzinskis in "Historical and Epistemological trends in Public Administration" notes that public administration is not fully positivistic nor wholeheartedly post-positivistic but is "standing at the brink of the postmodern condition" (1997, 298). The postmodern condition is a clear and positive approach to the paradoxical nature of the public administration. It is where public and administration interrelatedness and interdependence can be linked through efficiency and equity. It is as if the link between the politics and management is public administration itself. Although there is substantial agreement that objective analysis of policy problems and management of complex organizations by unbiased technical experts has failed and that hierarchical structures and top-down approaches no longer constitute adequate responses to problem situations, scientification and positivism is still the arena in which policy formulation and analysis is performed and it needs to be accepted as offering an effective tool on the practice of allocation of services, or exercise of equity.

However, in this sea of scientification and positivism, there are some thinkers attempting to address unnoticed or ignored issues that may help make this link more evident. Camilla Stivers can be said to be one of the most important leaders for the restoration of government, and provides a possible answer to Waldo's invitation. In "Towards a Feminist Perspective in Public Administration," Stivers introduces a feminist approach to public administration (1990). She explains that to be a feminist is "to be critical of existing reality," to shed light into "left out or ignored ideas" that offer or establish a new understanding (1990, 477). Some of these are: the question of administrative knowledge, the model of an ideal public servant, the nature of administrative discretion, and the dimensions of the administrative state. She notes that feminists' perspective on administrative discretion emphasizes power as an enabling capacity; authority as an accountable expertise; and leadership as facilitator. This is different from the hierarchal approaches, which are known to be masculine. In other words, she invites our epistemology to exercise feminism to challenge not only the approach to political roles and dialogue but also the definitions of basic values like freedom.

Similarly, in *Government is Us*, King, Stivers, and Box were inspired to write after the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma in 1995 (1998). This event has been seen by some as a symbol of the extent to which government trust had fallen and at the same time reminded people of the close involvement of government in their lives. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, a few days after the bombing, published an advertisement in newspapers around the US, showing pictures of the police, firefighters, physicians, nurses, counselors, and other workers who joined in the emergency rescue. Accompanying the photos was the proud message: "This is our government" (1998, Preface). This is very significant because this exposition of the government took place in the 90's while government discontent



was at its highest and represents the paradox that is government itself. Stivers and King give three reasons for high levels of discontent with government: strong control, inefficiency, and disconnection between government and the citizens (1998). Offering examples of active citizenry, Stivers and King represent the transformation that is perceived to be needed in public administration epistemology. They present a philosophy of citizen power through political involvement in administration, where the role of the administrator would be to find ways or establish processes to facilitate political activity (1998). This is what has become to be known as “democratic public administration.” This is a kind of wing in public administration epistemology struggling against the rigid mechanistic rationality established and embraced by the scientification of public administration.

This can be further noted by the introduction of the New Public Service. Janet and Robert Denhart in *The New Public Service: Serving not Steering*, note some of the shortcomings in public administration that have been noted in this chapter and called for public management to become Public Service. This means that values based on rational and economical efficiency need to be transformed and understood in different realms. They call for the total transformation of the role of the public administrator: “Public Servants do not deliver customer service, they deliver democracy” (2007, xi). They point out the similarity between the Old Public Administration and the New Public Administration. This means that although different issues were highlighted and different foci were presented, the recommendations to address those issues have been pretty much the same, all within the essential values of efficiency, rationality, and economics. This does not mean the public administration epistemology has not grown or evolved, but it has been kept from evolving into something more encompassing of the values in the public. Those values to uphold and enhance the necessary processes in the political.

More recently, Camilla Stivers examines the concept of the political, addressed philosophically by Hannah Arendt, and noted by Appleby and Allison as mentioned in this chapter, in *Governance in Dark Times: Practical Philosophy for Public Service* (2008). Stivers notes that after 9-11, there was a belief that everything, as we have known it, was forever changed. She not only criticizes this perspective, but also invites to take this period as a time of renovation or restoration of the understanding of ourselves as public administrators and citizens. This essentially will transform the role of public administrator to a kind of citizen agent where public administrators are not just managers, or boat helmsman, but as Denhart and Denhart appeal, servants of the public. Stivers notes that the conceptualization of public administrators has shrank to dealmaker, contract monitor, and overseer, while governance has expanded to statecraft (according to duty, justice and reason). This means that somewhere in public administration epistemology there is a basic disconnection between the role and purpose of public administrators, government, and the citizenry. Stivers recommends public administrators to find solutions in philosophy (2008). Stivers brings the discussion into further focus noting that the important aspect of the public, in which the real action takes place, the political, is what is threatened in “dark times” and it needs to be not only safeguarded but upheld as an important, if not the most important, aspect of the public realm in which public administrators act and help in the action. This transforms public administrator’s responsibility to safeguarding societal structure, forming part of transforming it, and protecting its most important aspects that allow for this transformation, the political (2008).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to open a window into the canon and epistemology of public administration. It is the establishment of the context and argument of this dissertation, the

presentation that public administration theory has attempted to move from its original narrow scientific orientation, with its materialistic ontology and positivist epistemology, attempting to develop a solid grounding for a more humanistic, participatory model, but has ultimately failed to do so. This is not an attempt to reinvent, or reconstruct public administration but is a possible reencounter of the mind that would be beneficial and offer a fertile ground for what is to challenge the application of public administration theory in a new age. This can be possible by looking into public administration theorists that have already noted shortcomings or flaws, or incomplete epistemology within public administration theory and who offer a possible solution to a lack of certain values in governance which would transform from the bottom up, or inside out (Allison, Appleby, Denhart and Denhart, Waldo, Stivers and King, and Stivers). It is in the acknowledgement of the internal, and interconnectivity amongst individuals that through the inclusion of certain values could transform public administration into a more humanistic, participatory public administration. All of these recommendations, in my opinion have fallen short of any integration, transformation, or recapitulation of public administration epistemology where what has been ignored, like values of the political and the public realm, public participation, deliberation, and justice, can also co-exist with reliability, efficiency, and rationality. We are in need of new approaches or a re-encounter of the old, new, and renewed. We need something that will truly nourish and maintain what Denhart and Denhart called the “public spirit” (2007, 30). Something that, as Stivers recommended, will not only bring together fact, deliberation and knowledge, but allow for its true deliberation, accumulation, and practice.

I believe we can find such resources in Colin E. Gunton’s Trinitarian theology. In *The One, The Three, and The Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Gunton argues that there is a relation between the way creation was formulated in the West and the shape of modern

culture (2005). This formulation has led to contradictions and paradoxes in the modern worldview. A revision of three main features of creation is needed that will unify the intellectual and material while establishing a better understanding of humans relation to each other and to a higher power offering a better understanding of harmonious particularity. This is what he calls and presents as a Trinitarian theological theory and it can help to the current state of public administration that is disengage, apart from the public, other public administrators, and reality.

Before considering Gunton, however, I will briefly examine the history of Western political theory. This will accomplish two important goals: first, it will place the issues involved in the history of public administration theory in a broader context, and indeed show how debates within public administration theory are related to issues within political theory and Western politics generally; second, it will explain the issues that Gunton's theology attempts to respond to. My next chapter, then, simultaneously expands the scope of the discussion while narrowing its focus.

## Chapter 2

### Political Theory: A Question of Ontology and Epistemology

#### Introduction

From the first chapter one can see the evolution of public administration theory, revealing its attempt to move away from its early scientific/technocratic structure to a more humanistic and participatory approach. Chapter 2 will place this evolution in a broader context and reveal the basis that public administration inherited. We will examine Western political theory, showing how it developed a narrow empiricist epistemology, mechanistic ontology, and utilitarian individualistic social model. We will perceive the disintegration of this model into nihilism. The chapter will also note the philosophical and theological responses to this crisis. The chapter will conclude with the introduction of Colin E. Gunton, whose Trinitarian theology, can, in my opinion, form the basis for a transformation of public administration theory and practice.

What is political theory? It has been defined as a qualified activity of theorizing or understanding about the state and its relation to other states, in relation to public life and affairs, which may include questions about authority and government (Boucher and Kelly 2008; Freedman 2004; McKinnon 2008; Spragens 1976). In other words, the study of how we should live together in society. Consequently, since human society is part of a larger universe, political theory involves the question of reality, the state of the now, the understanding or production of a worldview. This means that political theory strives for the whole picture, “a full-scale way of understanding” (Spragens 1976, 1). Political theory presents arguments that may criticize or support existing political arrangements or alternatives to these. These arguments reveal the possibilities of and limits to political action.

Thomas Spragens describes the role of political theory in his book *Understanding Political Theory* (1976). He refers to political theory as the master science. The term “master science” does not imply the greatest precision or certitude. This description comes from the comprehension of the scope and relevance of political theory. In other words, political theory demands a comprehension (or understanding) of reality, from which it derives an understanding of the purpose of political society, which in turn reveals the relationship between society and individual humans. This means that the term “master science” has nothing to do with precision but simply analyzes society’s complex function. Political theory aims at encompassing the understanding of all other sciences into the construction of a worldview, into the understanding of society itself, its reality “as a comprehensive vision of politics” (135). In other words, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, theology, physics, metaphysics, and other sciences coming together to form a conception, a picture of political reality. “Far from being an arcane, esoteric or cocooned practice, it is the preliminary to, accompaniment of, and consequence of all political activity and processes. We should not regard political thought as a separate area of political study, or as a rarefied, even luxurious, form of political self-indulgence- as some hard-nosed and pragmatic detractors would have it- but should recognize it as a normal and necessary aspect of the political that requires careful analysis both for what it is and for what it does,” political theory as a theory of reality (Freeden 2004, 3).

This in itself, the way political theory has been described and explained, can be said to be or form part of scientific epistemology; however, at the same time, it introduces and reveals everything that is not concrete and measurable, everything that goes beyond the empirical conception of knowledge. Michael Freeden notes that one of the great strengths of political theory is its ethical framework or its normative dimension, “the possibility of the convergence of

individual judgment in a reasonable equilibrium, as well as the question of the objectivity or subjectivity of values” (2004, 6). This means that political theory is not a systematic amalgamation of knowledge but a natural unification of the concrete and the abstract, the scientific and the unscientific, the empirical and the unempirical. Political theory is then the historical which looks at the time, the author’s intentions, and focuses on the author’s immediate social or political environment, *and* the philosophical which allows for the development of social implications, of a moral truth.

Spragens argues that political theories generally are responses to the perception of crisis in the political system. He explains that theorizing about politics seems to have four stages, and these four stages can help us to understand political theory. The first is the perception of crisis, as mentioned above; the second is diagnosis, that is, understanding the cause of the crisis; the third is imaginative reconstruction, or imaging what the political system would look like with the source of the crisis, resolved; and the fourth is prescription, that is, making concrete recommendations to resolve the crisis. In the present day, many political theorists have argued that since the late nineteenth century, Western societies have developed a profound crisis in the form of nihilism (1976).

Nihilism means the loss of any moral or even epistemological standards. As Friedrich Nietzsche first argued, modernity has dramatically expanded our capacities to understand, control and even change our environment (both natural and social) but has left us unable to make moral and political sense of our sense of those capacities (Nietzsche 1966). Ultimately, following numerous recent political theorists (Friedrich Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger, Helmut Thielicke, and Eugene Rose, to mention some), I will argue that this situation

has developed because of the limited materialistic ontology and our positivistic epistemology that have come to characterize modern thought.

## **Crisis**

After postmodernism, we have been living in an era of disengagement and disjunction where individuals have grown comfortable only interested on their immediate needs and disconnected from everyone else's. At the same time, knowledge has been established to belong in different realms and professions have kept to themselves and arguing with other professions to have the answer to the issues perceived in society. There is a great need to unify knowledge, not just for interdisciplinary cooperation, but for a more holistic approach to our epistemology, to the understanding of our canon. The first place to start is the ontological and epistemological crisis.

### **Ontological and Epistemological Crisis**

Very generally speaking, numerous political theorists have argued that nihilism result from the Enlightenment, which upheld science not only as what could bring about improvement of the human condition, but as the only true path to generate truth and/or knowledge (Strauss 1953; MacIntyre 2007; Arendt 1958; Voegelin 1987). In other words, it has been both, the establishment of higher truth as unreachable and incomprehensible to most while at the same time the development and acceptance of science and empiricism as the main, and at times the only, means to knowledge and/or truth that has disregarded other important values and resulted in the breaking down or complete abandonment of moral dimension of truth.

This systematic embrace of a sharp distinction between facts and opinions has gone hand in hand with a mechanistic ontology. Contemporary political theory questions the fact/value distinction, and notes that recent philosophy of science has demonstrated that empiricism/



positivism is an inadequate epistemology, that it inadequately explains how science works and how it relates to society

To get a broader sense of how this happened, I will sketch a rough history of political theory, showing how Western humanity gradually developed a greater sense of human agency by the early modern era and how the Enlightenment failed to make sense of this agency, leading to the nihilism of late modernity. It is then important to start with the earliest mythological attempts to understand the human situation, the human purpose, the root of human agency.

The *Enuma Elish* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* could be described as the earliest articulate ontology and anthropology, respectively. The Babylonian creation epic was written about 3000 B.C, and the story of Gilgamesh about one millennium later. These works can be seen as windows into the values of the society at that time, “a character document for proper social and moral conduct” (Parsons & Cook 2004, 188). Both works are referred to as myths. A myth can be described as an imaginative or poetic representation of perceived cosmic and anthropological truth.

In the *Enuma Elish* the creation of the cosmos is by violent force, through a battle of opposing forces, which ultimately limited order from chaos. These opposing forces were the gods. These gods, or forces, created the world through war: from the skies to the lands, from the animals to the humans. Humans were created last and, in this story, as servants. This established an order, a hierarchy, where the gods are the ones in-charge, in control, and humans are to obey and serve the gods.

When Marduk [one of the gods] heard the word of the gods,

His heart prompted him and he devised a cunning plan.

He opened his mouth and unto Ea he spake

That which he had conceived in his heart he imparted unto him:

"My blood will I take and bone will I fashion

I will make man, that man may

I will create man who shall inhabit the earth,

That the service of the gods may be established,

and that their shrines may be built. (Enuma Elish, 6<sup>th</sup> Tablet)

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes the condition of humankind. It is not so much about how the cosmos were created but more specifically about the purpose of human beings and their relationship to their creator or creators. The main character is Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, two thirds god and one third man. Gilgamesh becomes tyrannical, resulting in the people of Uruk pleading to the gods for some relief. Enkidu, a wild man who lives with the animals, is sent as an answer to their prayers but instead becomes a close friend to Gilgamesh. Being god-like and similar in strength they decide to travel and seek adventure. One of these adventures, in which they kill the Bull of Heaven, leads to the death of Enkidu, something which forces Gilgamesh to face his own mortality. Afraid of his mortality, Gilgamesh sets out to look for immortality. In his journey or quest for immortality he meets Utnapishtim, a person that survived a worldwide flood and is said to have been given everlasting life from the gods. Utnapishtim tries to explain to Gilgamesh that there is no immortality for mortals.

However, eventually, Utnapishtim feels sorry for Gilgamesh and reveals a secret through which Gilgamesh could find everlasting life. The secret to everlasting life is said to have been in a thorny plant that grows underwater in the deepest channel and restores men to their youth. Gilgamesh, following the instructions of Utnapishtim, acquires the plant. Dreaming about restoring the youth of the elders in Uruk and his own immortality, Gilgamesh travels back to

Uruk. Along the way, he stopped to bathe in a well of cool water. In the well, a serpent sensed the sweetness of the thorny plant and snatched it away from Gilgamesh. So Gilgamesh does not achieve immortality. But ultimately he does achieve immortality: he is alive to this very day in the sense that we still hear his story.

In nether-earth the darkness will show him a light: of mankind, all that are known, none will leave a monument for generations to come to compare with his. The heroes the wise man, like the new moon have their waxing and waning. Men will say, "Who has ever ruled with might and with power like him?" As in the dark month, the month of shadows, so without him there is no light. O Gilgamesh, this was the meaning of your dream. You were given kingship, such was your destiny, everlasting life was not your destiny. (The Epic of Gilgamesh 1972, 118)

It is from this story that we can understand not only what is regarded as important and valuable in Babylon, or more generally the ancient pagan societies that told similar stories, but can also see the hierarchy or social structure of those societies. The strongest and bravest warriors, those who engage in great and challenging adventures--who can gain immortality through the stories told of their great deeds--are considered god-like and become the kings who rule society absolutely. This not only establishes a starkly hierarchical social structure but indicates that in the human world, as in the overarching cosmic order, sheer force is the fundamental source of order. And since even these great warrior-rulers cannot change the fate fixed for them by the gods, the Babylonian stories reveal a very limited sense of human agency.

A somewhat different version of the origin of the cosmos is the Mayan account of creation, the *Popl Vuh*. Creation in the Mayan account is peaceful, and although it involves gods, it recognizes one main creator called the "Heart of Heaven." At the same time creation

takes place through the spoken word, “Over a universe wrapped in the gloom of a dense and primeval night passed the god Hurakan, the mighty wind. He called out ‘earth,’ and the solid land appeared” (Nutt 1908). In the case of men, the *Popl Vuh* says that man has been created several times. The story explains that the creator demands acknowledgment, gratefulness, and worship, or there may be consequences. One of these consequences was the flood, which separates man from the creator, “the divine beings resolved to create mannikins carved out of wood – these were the second beings [the first beings were created out of mud]”. But these too, soon incurred the displeasure of the gods, who, irritated by their lack of reverence and blunt abuse of their animals and tools, resolved to destroy them. Then by the will of Hurakan, the Heart of Heaven, the waters were swollen, and a great flood came upon the mannikins of wood. They were drowned and a thick resin fell from heaven” (Nutt 1908). This resulted in monkeys. The true humans were created later, out of corn dough and given life by the main creator, Heart of Heaven, who also blew dust in their eyes. This was done for them to see only what was close, and therefore not desire to be gods. The *Popl Vuh* establishes clearly the social order. God is to be acknowledged, appreciated, and worshiped. If this does not take place, man is destroyed. This of course created a culture of servitude and dependence on the creator where society was viewed as having been established for the sole purpose of pleasing and worshipping the creating force. Only those who could directly communicate with the gods would lead society. It is also important to note that in this story, the transcendental is time, not God himself (Parson & Cook 2004). This indicates the Mayan view of life in terms of cycles.

In *Genesis*, the creation story resembles that of *Popl Vuh* in peacefulness but places the creator above time and above any other heavenly body involved. The creation of the cosmos, the earth and humankind is also through the word, but in *Genesis* the word is God.

And God said, let there be light: and there was light...

And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...

And God said let the waters under the heaven gather together...; let the earth bring forth grass...; let the water bring forth abundantly the moving creatures...; let the earth bring forth the leaving creatures...

And God said, let us make man in our own image...and let them have dominion over [creatures] and all the earth... [He commanded] be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. (*Genesis* 1:3-28)

In *Genesis* 1: 1-2:3 God creates the world, as we know it: the heavens, the earth, the waters and land, living things, and humans. This establishes God as the creator. At the same time, God creates man in his image, and gave him dominion over nature. This represents a critical break with earlier cosmological conceptions of the human condition. Humans, made in God's image, can create, and thus can not only control nature, but have a creative role to play in God's purpose.

On the other hand, humans are also God's creatures; their creative capacity is limited. This ambiguous situation is what establishes the fundamental human dilemma of sin. In *Genesis* 3 humans attempt to overstep their limitations, to create beyond their capacity, and suffer painful consequences:

Then the Lord God said, "Behold the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" – therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken (*Genesis* 3: 23-24).

The critical issue here is that in the biblical picture of reality, humans are much freer than in they are conceived to be in the earlier pagan cultures, but human freedom is still limited, and humans have a tendency to misuse this limited freedom.

What can we learn about these societies and their values from these stories? Hans H. Schmid notes that one concern that creation stories have in common in the ancient world is that they root social order – “justice in the way things have been made by God or the gods” (quoted in Gunton 2005, 19). This means that politics, society, law and nature are all part of the order of creation and defined through or by the gods. One can see that according to *Enuma Elish* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, man was created through violence, and forced into a certain political order where men were servants and are at the mercy of the gods. It was believed and accepted that gods were the ones that dictated the condition of mankind. And on the basis of the order dictated by the gods, society was divided between the aristocracy--the great warriors, like Gilgamesh, and the priests, those in communication with the gods whom would interpret the orders of the gods to the masses—and the rest of the people, the masses, who served the aristocracy.

In *Popl Vuh* and creation is more peaceful but ultimately humans still have very limited capacities. In *Genesis*, however, human capacities are significantly greater—but are still limited. Further, the fact that all humans are created in the image of God has clear democratic implications, although these might take many centuries to become socially effective.

According to M. B. Foster the Bible establishes the conceptual framework of modern science by allowing for the possibility of empirical investigation of nature (1934). The earlier pagan cultures could not have developed empirical science because they saw the world as disorderly, and even the Greek philosophers had only a partial confidence in the world’s orderliness, but in the biblical picture, God always creates faithfully, so all the world we

experience with our senses can be trusted, although, as with the democratic implications discussed above, it could take a very long time for the possibility of empirical science to become manifest.

The Western tradition of abstract, analytical political theory begins with the Greek philosophers. Certainly the two most important Greek philosophers were Plato and Aristotle. Plato presents in his works the concept of the ideal: the ideal form, the ideal type, the ideal society. He notes that ideas are before sensual experience and reality, and emphasizes that ideas are transcendental. These can only be perceived by philosophers and through contemplation of nature. This established ideas as existing beyond the physical. The ideas are the basis of human knowledge and political order.

Aristotle puts forward a static view of the world where nature has a set structure. In other words, he supports Plato's worldview, the idea of an established order of the cosmos and adds that in this well ordered place things move in accordance to a purpose. He notes that in order to understand the nature of anything, it is important to understand its end and function. He explains that there are four facts or causes to understanding something: material cause (what composes the object), formal cause (principles of law through which the materials within the something and its environment are able to combine and grow to realize its potential), efficient cause (whatever brought this things together) and final cause (the mature thing that this something moves to as it develops). This means that objects are defined by their natural potential and that the principles through which they realize their potential are called "Natural Laws." (Portis 2008).

Aristotle develops the idea that humans have purpose and this is happiness--but happiness does mean mere pleasure but rather *eudaimonia*, a kind of moral self-perfection, which comes from practicing the fundamental human virtues. Note that this gives humans significant agency,

since they are, to a certain degree, responsible for their own happiness. Aristotle does not, however, see humans as capable of creation, even in a limited sense.

Plato states that not everyone can understand the ontological basis of the virtues; only philosophers can. In other words, the Greek philosophers do not, unlike the authors of the Bible, see all humans as created equal.

Greek ideas were later incorporated, in modified form, into Christian theology. In Christianity one accepts the omnipotence of the creator while also embracing human freedom. St. Augustine claimed that the ultimate knowledge, regarded by Plato as something that only philosophers could reach or comprehend, was God but argued that no human could know absolute truth, or absolute good (Portis 2008; Elshtain 2008).

Plato first noted the difference between ideas and sensual experience. St. Augustine modifies this idea noting that the body was needed for experience and the mind for reason, but at the same time emphasized their difference as earthly goods and heavenly goods (*Confessions* and *City of God*) (Portis 2008; Elshtain 2008). He established that everything incomplete, imperfect, faulty or even delusional is “earthly” while the opposite could only be found in the heavenly kingdom (through service to God and hope of his grace). No fulfillment, no clear understanding of values, and certainly no worldly ideal can be achieved on earth. This means that, differing from Plato, a creature cannot know the truth or comprehend it unless it is revealed (Tillich 1999; Voegelin 1987) and that no one is or can be self-sufficient. This is why only through faith and the grace of God one can reach heaven.

It is important to note here that St. Augustine’s lower estimate of the capacities of reason actually indicates a greater sense of overall human agency. He thinks that humans have a powerful will that tends to pervert reason to self-serving ends, a concept clearly derived from the



biblical anthropology and nowhere to be found in the comparatively naïve rationalism of Plato or Aristotle. In Augustine we perhaps see the clearest recognition before Nietzsche that greater human capacities do not necessarily lead to greater human happiness.

Another important thinker who modified Greek ideas is St. Thomas Aquinas. He tends to have a more optimistic view of human capacities than Augustine. Aquinas has been credited with introducing Aristotle to Western Christendom. He argues that it is through reason informed by faith that one can understand the magnificence of God (Portis 2008; Canning 2008). He further explains that reason links us to God and allows us to achieve human potential. He describes human potential in terms of our natural inclination to God (Portis 2008; Canning 2008). Just like Aristotle, Aquinas believed that a meaningful life will be worth living again, so that there is no need to choose between this world and the next to enjoy the blessing of God. He notes that earth is an expression of God and therefore worldly experiences are attenuated experiences in paradise. In other words, humans can reason and create something good through our link to God.

As with Aristotle, Aquinas gives humans a role with a significant ability to control the world. Most importantly, he argues that society should embody faith, hope and charity in the political system. In other words, government, society and human law must have a moral purpose and humans a material, cultural, intellectual, spiritual interconnectivity and interdependence (Portis 2008; Canning 2008). Thus human civilization can potentially accomplish great things. Rodney Stark, in *The Victory of Reason*, notes the interconnectivity of reason, progress, western civilization, and Christianity (2006).

This tendency can also be seen in the Protestant reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther started the Protestant reformation by challenging the authority of the Catholic Church through a radical conceptualization of freedom. For Luther there is no limit on what

humans can accomplish if they allow Christ's power to free them, although in practice humans generally tend to resist this power. Similarly, although Calvin at first sight appears to reduce humans to complete impotence in the face of predestination, the idea that virtue is a sign of election, coupled with the Protestant ethic of work, has led to the spectacular degree of human control over nature found in the modern capitalist economy.

Politically, the modern age can be said to begin with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Hobbes and Locke are the founders of liberal political theory. Hobbes attempted to understand human action through laws of nature developed by scientists like Galileo and Newton. If natural phenomena can be explained through axiomatic laws, maybe the same thing can be done in the social sciences (Stokes 2005). Hobbes explains human nature in terms of Newton's first law of motion (Portis 2008). Humans are conceived of as physical objects, matter in motion, driven by physical forces that result in what we call desires. Human social existence can be understood in terms of our attempts to satisfy those desires.

Both Hobbes and Locke, using science as an epistemic guide, establish their understanding of reality through the construction of a hypothetical world where government does not exist, the state of nature. They believe this would reveal the true nature of man, which in essence could bring light into men's purpose and the role of social institutions.

Hobbes interpretation of the "state of nature" establishes men as self-interested and pleasure seeking individuals, as noted above. Government's role then becomes allowing humans freedom to pursue their desires while controlling the conflict that arises from the fact that the resources necessary to meet men's desires are limited. Fortunately, the fundamental human desire is for self-preservation (since one cannot fulfill one's other desires unless one is alive), so

maintaining order simply requires that government threaten with death those who do not peacefully coexist with others.

According to Locke the “state of nature” reveals that men are mostly free, good, and rational, and thus can for the most part coexist peacefully without government. Specifically, Locke thinks humans are subject to what he calls the “Law of Nature,” which is essentially derivative from older natural law conceptions and which commands men to preserve themselves and others. Being rational, humans will know this law exists and follow it. However, there will be a few irrational people who will not obey the moral law, so the rational people must come together and establish a government to protect them from those irrational criminals. But since the state of nature is generally peaceful, government can be limited and people will be freer than in Hobbes’s system.

This worldview makes men creators of society and interpreters of the law of nature. These assumptions resulted in liberal institutions that supported and promulgated the idea of men as their own master. A development has taken place where men are no longer at the mercy of capricious gods; one could say that the Greek philosophers replaced the pagan gods with nature, and Christian theologians attempted to reinterpret nature as God. Hobbes and Locke uphold science as the revealer of truth and the social order, and this development potentially leaves God out of the equation, as he increasingly is conceived in deistic terms, as creating a universe that runs automatically, so to speak, according to fixed mathematical laws. The early liberals establish the progressive, human-centered worldview of modernity.

But there are at least two problems with this worldview. First, Locke is only able to avoid the war of all against all that characterizes Hobbes’s state of nature by retreating, so to speak, by re-introducing premodern natural law notions into his theory. Hobbes’s purely

mechanistic picture of the world results in a conflictive state of nature because it leaves individuals radically dissociated from each other. Locke can only assume a relatively peaceful state of nature, and therefore a limited government and greater freedom, by employing remnants of an older, teleological morality that is incompatible with a mechanistic universe. Second, and more fundamentally, the picture developed by the early liberals of humans as masters of their own fate, as creators, contains the seeds of its own destruction. The instinct to self-preservation that Hobbes sees as an invariant result of mechanical forces may turn out to be just a cultural construct, that is, a human creation, and even the mechanical universe that Hobbes assumes is discovered by science may turn out to be nothing more than a human interpretation. The early liberals establish a human-centered worldview that can lead to progress but may also, because of its narrow, mechanistic basis, logically lead to nihilism.

It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Men* (1755) who begins to see the implications of the early liberals' human-centered worldview. He notes that Locke and Hobbes' understanding of human creation is limited, and therefore establishes a limited reality or worldview (see **Table 2-1**). He explains that human creation should be understood as unlimited because we are natural beings in search of distinction, which ultimately provide the drive "to create, to build, or to subdue [nature] thus setting the stage for progress in science, art, and industry" (Portis 2008). In other words, human creation can be understood as infinitely perfectible. He notes that it "is this unremitting rage of distinguishing ourselves that we owe the best and the worse things we possess" (as quoted in Portis 2008, 119). This however has resulted in a radical vision of human freedom and creativity where humans in effect become the divine.

Karl Marx further advances this point of view with a historical perspective on society. It was in Germany that he became seduced by Hegelian philosophy, historical materialism, and the drive to identify the rationality in history as bases for identifying and criticizing the irrationalities of the present (Portis 2008). Subsequently, he had to leave Germany and he move to France where he met Friedrich Engels who introduced to him socialism and the term “historical materialism” (Thomas 2008). Historical Materialism is Karl Marx’s approach to history, his methodology. He notes that the driving force behind human social development is economics, the relation between forces of production and stages of societal development. He states that it is these forces that determine the consciousness of man, not the other way around. Under this understanding, he establishes his critique of modern society. He notes that “modern state [is] structurally bound to present particular interests rather than universal ones” that favor only those in power (Wilde 2008, 412).

Marx agreed with Hegel in his identification of human freedom with reason and its social nature, but rejected the idea that we must accept the world as rational. Marx noted that the conception of freedom depends on us making the world rational rather than just having faith that it is (Portis 2008). We make this world rational through production, through work, through the ability to domesticate nature and transform it for our purposes: conversion of raw material, of the natural world, into the goods necessary for our survival. This means that economics, essentially production, or what he calls productive creativity, is the primary conditioning factor of life (Portis 2008). Marx believes that humans are essentially radically creative beings (see **Table 2-1**). Although human history begins with humans determined by natural forces, those forces eventually allow humans to control them. This means that for Marx the only political activity that might have an appreciable impact on human history is that which aims at the transformation

of society, and results in social revolution rather than a mere change in regime. He noted that through its structure power could change hands and a new regime could form where property was no longer individual, no longer existent, but collective. It would be this reintegration of the individual to “species beings” (Portis 2008, 149) that would bring back humans to their humanity, create a utopia, a kind of returned to paradise, a heaven on earth.

<b>Human Nature</b>			
<b><u>Aristotle</u></b> <b><u>Limited Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Locke &amp; Hobbes</u></b> <b><u>Limited Creation</u></b>	<b><u>Rousseau</u></b> <b><u>Unlimited Creation</u></b>	<b><u>Marx</u></b> <b><u>Unlimited Creation</u></b>
Nature creates Society Society creates Humans	Nature Creates Humans Humans Create Society	Society creates Humans Humans create Society Humans create Humans	Nature creates Humans Humans transform nature Humans transform Humans

**Table 2-1 Human Nature**

Just like Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche believed that human creativity drove history, but he saw aesthetic creativity, not economic creativity, as central. Nietzsche argued that, precisely because humans are radically creative, there is no real truth. He stated that all that is stated as truth is nothing more than personal confessions. This means that truth is in the eye of the beholder; it is subjective, and comes to each of us in different ways and according to self-interest. Self-interest can be survival, maintenance of lifestyle, or power. This truth is then expressed and distorted through persuasion. This means that the strong rule over the weak and that such rule takes place in the form of persuasion through artistry. Nietzsche thought that the purest form of creation is artistic expression (1966).

He argues that it is through this that moral principles are derived. It is quite ironic that his main critique was against morality, but he critiqued morality as an interpretation of thinkers. He notes, “every great philosophy so far has been...the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir.” In other words, the morality that a philosopher

embraces simply bears “decisive witness to *who he is*,” changing, morphing, according to time and space (*Beyond Good and Evil* 1966, 6). He believed that outside this changing morality is artistic creativity. Nietzsche believed that art could express and reveal what morality is, allowing us to go beyond good and evil; essentially, good is what promotes artistic creativity and bad is what suppresses artistic expression. In other words, art is always capable of “employing irony and parody, mimicking the ascetic ideal in order to undermine it... [where ascetic ideals could] mean either nothing or too many things” revealing the truth (Widder 2008, 448). This is where the phrase “God is dead” comes from. This aphorism created to shock ultimately means that our creative power has become so great that there are simply no limits to it. This allows for the displacement of the creator, and or unlimited acceptance of the power of creation within ourselves, where diverse interpretation destroys knowledge basis and creates a nebulous approach to good and evil.

### **The Breakdown of the Modern Worldview**

Western political theory has gone from contemplation and idealism to materialism and positivism, and some have argued that from there to nihilism. But even if we ignore the disintegration of post-Enlightenment continental thought into nihilism, we can still see a massive epistemological crisis within the Anglo-American liberal materialist framework. Thomas S. Kuhn is the best-known writer on this issue. Kuhn has been promoted as a revolutionary who at times has been criticized and even blamed for the destruction of science itself. But Kuhn’s analysis actually shows that the roots of late modern nihilism lie in the Enlightenment’s misinterpretation of science.

The Enlightenment came to see scientific knowledge as the opposite of religion or philosophy, because these were believed to be based on opinion, unproven subjective personal

deductions, while science achieved unbiased objective knowledge. It was during this time that the sharp distinction between fact and opinion was made by upholding science and rational decision making as superior. At the same time, a challenge to rational bases on religious beliefs was developed and resulted in the rationalism and positivism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this time, valid knowledge was expected to be a result of scientific research, not moral or religious deductions. Kuhn's 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* provides a devastating critique of this interpretation.

Kuhn notes the existence of scientific periods where assumptions and beliefs guide, shape, and set limits to scientific research. These periods set the parameters of knowledge within a given field. He refers to these assumptions as paradigms. Paradigms limit the creation or understanding of knowledge and consequently, in a very real sense, shape results. Kuhn emphasizes the dogmatic aspects of science, which may create knowledge through structuralized rationalization while at the same time limiting its inherent spirit of wonder and possibility. However, it is in periods of revolution, when anomalies discovered in the course of knowledge creation or understanding, that the transformation of the structure, axioms, and parameters of a scientific field takes place (1962).

This standard of knowledge gathering or understanding, the paradigm, although it may guide understanding by uniformity of language and conceptualization, also limits innovation and questioning. In other words, a paradigm allows us to identify agreed upon knowledge but also limit scientific inquiry. This is its paradox. New discoveries take place in its background that will eventually result in change in the accepted understanding and/or conceptualization changing or transforming the paradigm itself. But ultimately the limitations of the paradigm do produce new knowledge.



It is this explanation of scientific paradigms that reveals a potential relativism even in science. This consequently challenges any conception of moral truth because it potentially reduces all moral ideas to opinions. In this sense, Kuhn potentially paves the way to postmodernism where so many truths are perceived to lead to none. One could interpret Kuhn's approach to science as leading to the fragmentation of knowledge, but could also interpret it as demonstrating the limitations and ultimate failure of the Enlightenment's positivistic interpretation of science (Gattei 2003).

This perception of a distorted worldview, or perverse reality has resulted on contemporary thinkers calling for the review of political theory. This review should be on approaches, perceptions of society and its politics but mainly a question of ontology and epistemology - a review of how political theory is created, studied, review, and interpreted. There seems to be two main responses: philosophical and theological.

### **Responses to the Modern Crisis**

The rest of this chapter will discuss the various responses to the crisis of modernity that have developed since World War II, first examining philosophical responses and then theological ones. We will see that all of these responses attempt to uncover the ontological and epistemological roots of our current crisis.

#### **Philosophical Responses.**

##### ***Leo Strauss and the Possibility of Value in Transcendence***

Leo Strauss in *Natural Right and History* urges a recovery of classical philosophy, and in particular the concept of natural right, as a cure for the nihilism of late modernity (1953). He starts by analyzing the original concept of natural right and its (distorted) modern version. Strauss says that the concept of "natural right" originated in classical philosophy, which deals

with moral principles derivable from the eternal natural order that the Greek philosophers discovered. Later “natural right” was distorted by Hobbes and Locke into a materialistic and individualistic doctrine that logically degenerates into nihilism.

In other words, classical thought defines natural right as teleological. All things, including humans, have a natural end. The natural goal or end for humans is rational activity. Therefore the best political system is the one that allows humans to achieve that natural end, and that system would be one ruled by philosophers, since they are the humans with the greatest capacity for rational activity. Modern natural right is not teleological, it exists outside society, and it is excessively individualistic. This new conceptualization, derived from the mechanistic universe of Thomas Hobbes, embraces self-preservation and has been redefined as freedom. The mechanistic nature of humans means that they have a natural right to self-preservation and therefore the freedom to bring this about. But, as we discussed above, if the mechanistic picture of the universe is pushed to its logical conclusion, then the desire for self-preservation is not a natural consequence of the structure of reality but merely a cultural construct, and even the mechanistic universe is just a human interpretation. Taken to its logical conclusion, modern natural right results in nihilism.

Strauss recommends a return to Socrates’ classical approach, because it was then that reason above instinct was established and that there was a valuable insight into values through politics and ethics. It is known that contemplation and the abstract were the greatest values and that is reason, which separates us from animals, what can help us achieve excellence through the acceptance and understanding of those “first things:” those things that “are always... more truly beings than the things which are not always” (Strauss 1953, 89).

### *Postmodernism: a Revelation Through Deconstruction*

It is Nietzsche who is related to the beginning of the school of thought known as postmodernism. It is said that one can trace all the postmodern ancestry to Nietzsche (Robinson 1995). He is known as the grandfather of postmodernism. This is important to mention, because it is this school of thought that presents and makes us aware -but at the same time in a sense promotes and embraces- the crisis of nihilism. This is because through doubt of it all, one supposed to reach understanding and freedom. However, it is this doubt that destroys epistemological bases and absolutes in morality.

This approach or school of thought has influenced virtually all humanistic disciplines. The term “postmodernism” implies three elements (it is said that political theory participates in all three but is more concentrated on the third element): a structural shift in the way collective life is organized from a centralized and hierarchical structures towards more networked structures, an anti-classical aesthetic orientation (where for example literature experiments with non-linear narration, an architecture of playfully mixed styles, and an appreciation of popular culture that complicates the distinction between high and low brow), and as a set of philosophical critiques of teleological and/or rationalist conceptions of nature, history, power, freedom, and subjectivity (Ball 2004).

In political theory, postmodernism represents the rejection of the quest for an objective truth behind subjective experiences. Postmodernism believes or argues that a positive ethic does not need a universal God, reason, or some surrogate but can be grounded in the cultivation of existential attachment rather than on an internal or external authority.

Martin Heidegger, generally regarded as the father of postmodernism, articulating its major themes, notes that humans can react in two ways to the concealing and unconcealing of

beings in the world: openness and domination. An open reaction is poetic, aesthetic, and free, without restriction. A dominant reaction is closed and controlling. This kind of dominating approach to reality is what Heidegger saw as the essence of technology. In other words, Heidegger attempted to establish poetic truth as a kind of revealing dimension. It could be said that he attempted to reveal some kind of artistic ontological truth through language (as discussed further by Jacques Derrida). He traces subjectivism to Plato's understanding of truth as a projection of the self. Heidegger noted that in order to recover our humanity, we need to become more poetic, more aware of our surroundings and how these make us feel. This is a kind of call to go back to focusing on nature with an aesthetic approach. Any other form of understanding, which includes the creation, acceptance, and routine utilization of technology, is dominating. This includes Western philosophy, which under its influences of Plato and Aristotle has resulted in the objectification of beings, treating them as means. Ironically, however, Heidegger's emphasis on self-expression ultimately intensifies the late modern tendency toward subjective nihilism, as seen perhaps most strikingly in his own (admittedly brief) embrace of Nazism.

One of the most important figures in postmodernism is Jacques Derrida. Derrida challenges the assumption that language has the same meaning in different contexts. He notes that the aim of interpretation of language is to expose and criticize arbitrary or constructed claims to truth or knowledge, particularly by examining subjective dichotomies. In other words, Derrida notes that all attempts to represent reality do not produce knowledge but only different interpretations; there is no stable meaning (Bennett 2004; Ball 2004). This position is an example of the loss of transcendental values or truth feared by Strauss. Derrida noted, just as Heidegger, that language could reveal some kind of truth not only by pointing out differences in the use of language itself, but the inherent normalization and loss of interpretation by usage. In other

words, Derrida notes the influence of culture, interaction of convention, and environment in change or concerted meaning in language. It is a type of deconstruction that reveals truth. This type of deconstruction for the purpose of creating or revealing knowledge not only took place in language but was further related to human action by Michael Foucault.

The Foucauldian school of thought seeks to expose and criticize the myriad ways in which humans beings are normalized or made into subjects, willing participants in their own subjugation (Ball 2004). Foucault critiques systems, explores patterns of power and how they relate to the self, and brings to light the systematization of knowledge. He looks at truth as a form of power and control. This is the main theme of his best-known work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). He notes that punishment used to involve the body (torture) but it then evolved into control of the soul, to a process involving structure, morality, and scientific steps to search for a cure (what we call socialization or rehabilitation).

Foucault traces modern understandings of justice and their resulting structures of control. The process of rehabilitation and re-socialization construct humans as docile bodies, as shapeable and trainable. Foucault sees this process as characterizing all of modern societies; the modern quest for freedom has ironically resulted in intense control.

### ***Counter – Enlightenment and The Challenge to Positivism***

Foucault brought light onto hidden or rarely perceived mechanisms that affect human and their socialization including the creation of knowledge. He showed that even scientific knowledge promotes and supports power structures. Jürgen Habermas also challenges the idea that facts or objective truths are independent of human interest, but draws very different conclusions than Foucault.

Habermas notes that no knowledge is independent of human interest and that this does not necessarily lead to nihilism or the impossibility of consensual agreement on values (a conclusion also supported by Kuhn). Habermas presents three interests: technical or control, meaning or hermeneutic, and emancipatory or moral. These have been described as follows: technical/ control interest involve empirical/analytical knowledge that “represents the world in terms of objects, processes, and laws – which describe the transformation of objects and processes” (Streibel 1991, 6); meaning/hermeneutic interests represent the physical, social, and cultural world as “texts,” narratives, - which have to be interpreted and are not in the platonic sense encrypted to be discovered but understood or perceived differently according to different social and cultural interactions; emancipatory/moral interests are about the understanding of certain axioms, maxims, dogmas, theorems that have been brought together by a kind of collective reflection on social and cultural practices and are used for the purpose of restructuring the future (Streibel 1991, 7).

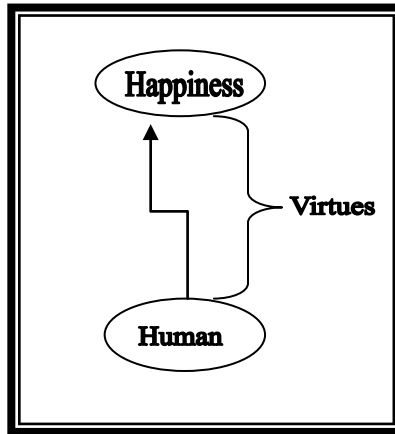
These interests can still be objective and can be pursued by natural sciences, historical or interpretative analysis, and critical or social and political science or philosophical. According to Habermas, this can take place because they all derived from the capacity to speak or communicate. For Habermas, it is through communication that objective knowledge, morality, and political values can be developed. He notes that “the achievements of the transcendental subject have their basis in the natural history of human species” (1972, 312); that “knowledge equally serves as an instrument and transcends mere self-preservation” (1972, 313); that “knowledge-constitutive interests take form in the medium of work, language, and power” (1972, 313); that “in the power of self-reflection, knowledge and interest are one” (1972, 314); finally that “the unity of knowledge and interests proves itself in a dialectic that takes the

historical traces of suppressed dialogue and reconstructs what has been suppressed” (1972, 315). This means that there is a possibility of finding order in a changing world and of finding truth through certain types of community. Habermas envisions a republican type of community where debate of the common good could bring about a type of egalitarian morality.

One of the most influential recent reactions to a distorted reality and the possibility of reconstructing reality as a remedy for nihilism has been that of Alasdair MacIntyre. In *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, he argues that morality can only be understood teleologically, but that the teleological approach of Aristotle (and premodern moral reasoning generally) must be recast to take into account the realization of a significantly greater human agency in the modern era.

Aristotle describes virtues in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999). A virtue can be intellectual or moral. Intellectual virtues are formed through education and experience while moral virtues through habit, *ethos*. Virtues, according to Aristotle, are learned and developed (of character); furthermore, it is the practice what will give a virtue excellence or destroy it. In other words, virtues are exercised, practiced, concerned with pleasure and pain, and they involve choice, the exercise of reason. Virtues themselves are the median found in the relation of emotion, action and scarcity or excess (which are the vices) and can be found through practical wisdom. This is simply the ability to be able to identify the mean of extreme characteristics or emotions and is done through contemplation. Aristotle, explains that the exercise of virtues, *ethos*, are the path to happiness where happiness is a kind of a moral perfection and the highest human aim. This, however, is not something that is individualistic, but in relation to others. Because virtues develop through practice, they are activities, actions, and involve others and our environment. At the same time, this highest good – happiness, is not and should not be thought of as a natural

state but something one does, something practiced through a long period of time (See **Illustration 2-1**).



**Illustration 2-1 Aristotelian Ethics**

MacIntyre noted that the modern conception of reality is missing *telos*, a highest aim, an objective like happiness and a conceptualization of virtues. This is not to be understood as an individual external goal, but as an internal aspiration that defines life’s path and focuses decision-making. He then updates Aristotelian ethics. Virtues in modern society can be acquired human qualities, which “the possession and exercise ... tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving such goods” (2007, 191). With this redefinition, virtues are not just the expression of contemplation, the median found in extreme emotions, or practical wisdom. Virtues are understood to be all three and more: an already acquired value that in practice allows us -humans- to achieve that which we consider good while also understanding that the lack of practicing them preventing us from the same. This means that unless a definition of good is established our practices can be aimless and we without achievement.

The “goods” can be defined with the help of stories or narratives that can express the values that a community might deem worth. He notes that this stories and narratives will have to



be created within the context of a community. In other words, the values to be upheld and promoted need to be extracted from the community and most importantly develop the proper structure and framework to allow for its expression, and practice. Aristotle notes the importance of emulation for the expression of virtuous action. MacIntyre notes that practice then is not just the exercise of certain skills, or those acquired qualities, but how goods are conceived and valued for their own merit. Ultimately, it is the accumulation of these practices that would allow for the creation of a mature human being, and consequently a mature society. This conception or re-conceptualization of Aristotelian ethics also acknowledges the action involved in the practice of ethics in relation to others. MacIntyre emphasizes that moral philosophy and the conception of society have to co-exist; in other words, morality has to be socially embodied in order to help the state of disorder in our unrestrained society.

Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, takes a somewhat different approach. Arendt's main concern is, like Habermas, to revive the public world of debate and action to achieve the common good. Arendt recommends looking in the past for answers in the present. She focuses on men's everyday basic experiences. She argues that the classical philosophers prioritized values or aspects of the human condition in the wrong order: contemplation (*vita contemplativa*) above what she referred to as *vita activa* (active life: labor, work and action) (see **Illustration 2-2**).



**Illustration 2-2 Representation of Greek Human Condition**

Just like Aristotle, Arendt notes that contemplation is good for gods not humans. Humans must devote time and effort to survival and maintenance of themselves as well as social entities. She notes that it is Aristotle who identifies three levels of social organization: the household, the village, and the polis. These are outside the *vita contemplative*. The household manages the necessities of existence like sleep nourishment and shelter. The Village or “Civil Society” is the market, the world of buying and selling where individuals compete and cooperate in the pursuit of personal or household interests. Finally, he identifies the *polis* where the making of collective decision takes place. This one is concerned with the good life while the first two with the acquisition of necessity (Portis 2008).

Arendt also brings attention to these dimensions of the human condition attempting to discover what has gone wrong and what can be corrected. She notes that, in modernity, every citizen “belongs to two orders of existence; and [that] there is a sharp distinction [in both] ... his life what is his own (*idion*) [private] and what is communal (*koinon*) [public] (1958, 24). Arendt explains that this has been blurred or has been misplaced and forgotten in modernity. In other words, in antiquity, these realms were distinctive and clearly identifiable but today, the private – self-interest, has misplaced the public –the communal-. This has literally established the public realm as the aspect of the human condition to be the sphere of individual interest where *vita activa* is then the means to an economical, self-interested, private dimension. The public is now lost within the private, and the private (*idion*) no longer identifiable. These two realms are blurred and seem to be only aimed at the economical. The public realm has then become the arena for the acquisition of the necessities of existence and the private just an identification of those necessities. In other words, there is a loss of the public in the private where *vita activa* has

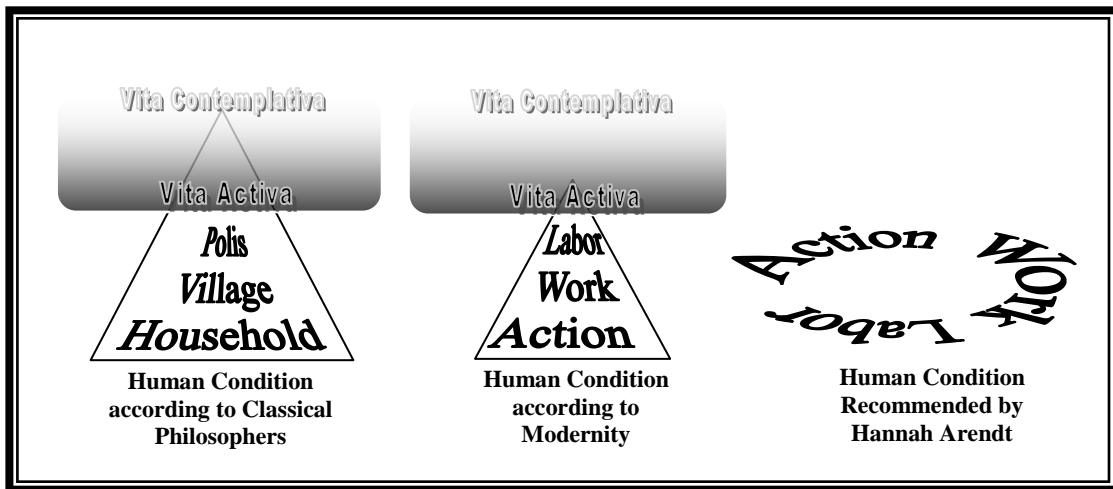
lost the *polis* in favor of the household and village. This can be better understood under the description of the human condition provided by Arendt.

Arendt presents three aspect of the *vita activa*: labor, work and action. These aspects can be understood as evolutionary and as permanent, as phases in human condition and as dimensions. Labor has to do with biological processes; “the human condition of labor is life itself” (1958, 7). In other words, labor is related to activities that provide for the necessities of life, it is unending, and/or enslaving. This human condition is linked to servants, slaves, women, those that are subjected to this condition; those bound to necessity (especially in antiquity); *animal laborans*. Work has to do with “unnaturalness...[with the] artificial;” “the human condition of work is worldliness” (1998, 7). In other words, work is related to those activities that create something, with a finished product; something that has been transformed out of something else; with a certain level and acceptance of creativity; a physical relation to the world, to the temporal; man the maker, *homo faber*. Action has to do with plurality, socialization, the condition of man in politics, speech. It is where individual interest are expressed and transformed for the collective; the human condition of action is the political.

Arendt notes that in modernity there seems to be a pronounced mix-up of all three dimensions in modern times allowing for the diminishing of freedom and speech (action) through the upholding of labor as the most important dimension in the human condition (see **Illustration 2-3**). Arendt noted that there is a victory of the *animal laborans* over the *homo faber*, and, most objectionable, a loss of freedom, plurality and solidarity. She is in other words, not only asking for a revisit of pre-philosophical thought which held the highest value to be activity in the *Polis*, but a reversal of today’s priorities where action is mostly ignored and labor upheld as the highest value in our society (see **Illustration 2-3**). In addition, and as evidence that

is not necessarily true that pre-philosophical thought had it right, Arendt brings attention to the emphasis that has been placed in upholding *vita contemplativa* over *vita activa* since classical times. In other words, *vita contemplativa* has and continues representing the highest value, even above the action, which ensures freedom and the formation of society. It can be perceived within her political thought, that action is upheld above all other dimensions of the human condition and that her main goal is to make us aware of the loss of action in the monotony of labor which is held in modern times above the public, the communal life. In essence, this is the giving up of our freedom, our ability to transform society, in other words, the political dimension.

Arendt notes that this is further emphasized by Karl Marx who establishes that “labor (and not God) created man or that labor (and not reason) distinguishes man from other animals” (1958, 86). It is important to note that to Arendt all dimensions in *vita activa* are intimately connected, interrelated, and interdependent. Labor ensures survival; work contributes a dimension of permanence and identity; and action offers possibility and transformation through speech: “all three activities and their corresponding conditions are intimately connected with the most general condition of human existence: birth and death, natality and mortality” (1958, 8). She further explains that human beings are both political and social. In other words, human beings are both contemplation and speech; private and public; social and *laborans*. This means that all three realms need to be acknowledged as part of the human condition and action within the *vita activa* reclaimed. In other words, the priorities set by the classics, which have contributed to the modern state of disorder need to be revisited but not re-embraced without proper evaluation.



**Illustration 2-3 Comparison of Human Condition**

Eric Voegelin can be said to be our link between philosophers to theologians. In his book, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, Voegelin, through a historical journey through various understandings of political representation, establishes a compelling connection amongst humans through a social relationship that amounts to a collective consciousness that develops into a kind of social spirit (1987). This is not the kind of spirit explained and developed by Charles Louis de Secondat, baron of Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1914). It is something that goes beyond a consciousness, and it is said to develop by the interconnectivity of individuals and that drives decision-making in the construction of society. Voegelin points out that it not only influences the creation of social reality as constructed by man, physically and materialistically, but also establishes or creates an essence, a fundamental nonphysical, part of the society.

Voegelin discusses several types of truth: cosmological, anthropological and soteriological. Cosmological truth is essentially the worldview of the ancient pagan societies, in which human society is seen as a cosmic analog. The greater sense of human agency developed by the Greek philosophers—wherein social order is seen as a function of human character, rather

than ritual appeasement of the gods—is referred to as anthropological truth. And finally, the still greater sense of cosmic and human agency order developed by Christianity is referred to as soteriological truth. Voegelin’s concern is with the disintegration of soteriological truth into nihilism. He argues that this has occurred because Christianity failed fully to develop some of its own implications, resulting in a revival of the early heresy of Gnosticism, which he sees as the essence of the modern age (1987, 106).

On the one hand, Eric Voegelin addresses the separation or disjointing of History in the era of Augustus from whole or complete history to holy and secular history severing knowledge and consequently truth. Furthermore, he explains that the re-divinization of modernity can also be said to have originated from Christianity through Gnosticism (even if this component of Christianity was regarded as heresy). Gnosticism is the belief that the material is imperfect and that knowledge (gnosis) consists of the truth found only through the spiritual, the divine, the abstract. This knowledge is only revealed to those that have and understand their relationship to the divine. This is pre-Christian, but although rejected by Christian at the beginning, it is not absent from Christian teachings. Voegelin explains that Christianity’s ultimate desires the “deliverance of the world” (1987, 108) and Augustinian bases support and promoted the adoption of men’s divinity; in other words, there has been something wrong with Christianity from the beginning that can be found in its roots with Gnosticism. Moreover, Voegelin explains, Gnosticism changed through positivism. Secular history has embraced positivism, scientism, and consequently replaced God. The new Gnostic movement replaced faith with tangible “terrestrial paradise” (1987, 129). In other words, both the re-divinization, and the embrace of control over the material world by men resulted in the destruction of any advancement of the truth. The misshaping or perversion of theory can be said to additionally come from the severance of theory

from the creator, from ontology. Therefore, he promotes the reconsideration of the spiritual and the political, the unity of the civil and the soul.

### **Theological Responses**

If the issue that political theory needs to address is the nihilism that seems to be the end result of modernity, through epistemology and ontology, the development of a prescription will ultimately lead to religious questions. Voegelin is the thinker who most obviously points in this direction, but ultimately the other political theorists we have examined also do. This section will examine the major post-World War II theological responses to the crisis of modernity

#### ***Early Theological Responses to the Modern Crisis***

Paul Tillich exposes another explanation for a distorted reality. In the article, “The Lost Dimension in Religion”, Tillich makes an invocation to look for the lost dimension in our understanding of reality (1999). This can only be done by understanding religion in its “basic and universal meaning” not necessarily under an specific church or canon (1999, 3) He explains that being religious means that one would be “asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers” even if one does not agree (1999, 1). Religion is defined as “believing in the existence of gods or one god, and a set of activities and institutions for the sake of relating oneself to these beings in thought, devotion, and obedience”... “the state of being concerned about one’s own being and being universally” (1999, 1). He explains, in *Systematic Theology, Vol 1*, that God is what ultimately concerns men and “is the answer to the question implied in man’s finitude” (1999, 11). The third aspect of this invocation is faith. Faith is described in *Dynamics of Faith*, as the dynamics of man’s ultimate concern: an act of the finite being who is grasped by and turned to the infinite” (1999, 13 & 22). Tillich explains that

concerns in man can be spiritual and cognitive, aesthetic, social, political; and each of these claims priority, demanding all other concerns to be sacrificed.

Tillich then explains how religion can be the needed dimension for a better understanding of our reality. He notes that there is the horizontal dimension, which relates to linearity of events and is literal. This dimension can be said to be this-worldly. Then is the vertical dimension, which may address aspects within the linearity, contains depth, and relates to powerful expression. This dimension can be or is related to the spiritual. In our own time the world is being subjected scientifically and technically to the control of men, which has resulted in the loss of any sense of the vertical dimension. Religion could offer an alternative, but religious symbols themselves have lost their power in modern times. However, he explains in “Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God” that a confusion of language, symbols and signs can be noted in modern times. In other words, religious language, symbols have developed into signs and a difference between these two needs to be established (see **Table 2-2**). This will reveal a hidden level (or dimension) of reality. This, Tillich explains, will take place because religious symbols have two fundamental levels: transcendental, that which goes beyond the empirical reality, and the immanent.



Symbols	Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the reality of that which they point</li> <li>• Cannot be replaced</li> <li>• Opens level of reality which otherwise are closed</li> <li>• Unlocks dimensions and elements of reality which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality</li> <li>• Grow out of the individual or collective unconscious and cannot function without being accepted by the unconscious dimension of our being</li> <li>• They grow and die</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not participate in the reality of that which they point</li> <li>• Can be replaced for reasons of expediency or convention</li> <li>• It is one dimension, of one reality</li> <li>• Has no relation to the soul or its different dimensions</li> <li>• Are produced intentionally</li> </ul>
<p><b>Only common characteristic: that they point beyond themselves to something else.</b></p>	

**Table 2-2 Symbols and Signs**

In modern times, one can understand the difficulty of religion as a dimension of analysis or reality. Religion, as noted by Tillich, has been reduced to specific groups and is accompanying theological teachings. This can make it difficult to make religion or religiousness part of reality or societal understanding. He notes however that it is this dimension that will reveal that which may complete the whole picture. Eric Voegelin makes a similar argument in his call to revisit and reinterpret Christian symbols. If there has been a severing of the human dimensions between the religious, spiritual and the mental, intellectual. A reunification would result in the revelation of a complete picture.

Under the spirit of reunification or reintegration of the creator with creation, Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation Volume I Human Nature*, notes the need to address the intrinsic problem man is to himself (1980a). Niebuhr sees modernity as the result of the incoherent medieval synthesis of Greek and Hebraic conceptions of man, and urges a recovery of the biblical anthropology as an alternative to modernity. On the

one hand, the classical Greek view is that “man needs to be understood primarily from the standpoint of the uniqueness of his rational faculties” where the mind is conceived of as separate from the body and identified with the divine (1980a, 6). Human rational capacities have tremendous possibilities but tend to be dragged down by the body, so that ultimately the Greeks had a fairly limited view of human agency. On the other hand, the Christian view of man is that man is a “created and finite existence” and has the ability to stand “outside both itself and the world” (1980a, 12 & 14). The biblical view sees humans as having much greater capacities than the Greeks—humans are able to transcend nature to a much greater than Plato or Aristotle thought—but precisely because of this greater capacity are much more likely to see themselves as without limits, to try to become God, that is, to sin. The modern view of man can be said to be a little of both: From the Greeks it takes the optimistic estimate of human rational capacities, without the limitations imposed by nature, while from the Hebrews it takes the greater sense of freedom from nature without the sense of limits imposed by an awareness of our sinfulness. Modern culture is then “a battleground of two opposing views of human nature” [the classical and the biblical] and fails to “comprehend the unity of mind and nature”... “the spirit of man and his physical life”... “reason ...[and] non-rational vitalities” (1980, 5 & 123), and results in a grandiose conception of human capacities. Niebuhr sees the beginnings of modern notions of inevitable progress in the optimistic worldview of Catholic theology in the high Middle Ages.

Noting the difficulty and paradoxical reality of humans’ desire of history, infiniteness, and finiteness, Niebuhr presents Christ as the answer “and his cross the fulfillment” (1980b, 6). In other words, Christ and the epic of his life transcends the meaning of history in a reinterpretation of “prophetic Messianism for the ‘Kingdom of God’ is expected” while at the same time, individuals are known to being “involved in the historical process” (1980b, 36). This

means that Christ in history allows the eternity; however, the individual has developed contradiction and misinterpretation of symbols. This can be repair because God, Niebuhr notes, has given us the meaning of life and the resources to accomplish the goal of wisdom, and power to reach grace and truth where self-love and sin will be allow and are possible in human freedom.

### *Colin Gunton and Trinitarian Theological Theory*

The crisis of modernity and nihilism has elicited responses from both philosophers and theologians. On the one hand, philosophers have attempted to re-connect ethics and politics by revisiting or reintegrating certain aspects of classical thought. On the other hand, theologians agree with philosophers that morality needs to be understood in a social context but think that the disjunction between the two probably originates in the inability of Christian theology to relate God to his creation more clearly. Voegelin discusses the complete absence of divine history (Voegelin 1987) which has led to complete destruction of symbols that not only help in the cohesion of a society, but the construction of reality (Tillich 1999), and the complexity and misunderstood paradoxical dimensions within human nature itself having to do with physical and spiritual, infinite and finiteness, mind and nature (Niebuhr 1980). I believe Colin Gunton brings together these tendencies most fruitfully providing a model for the creation of something more than political theory.

In the book *The One, The Three and the Many: God Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Gunton presents a Trinitarian theological theory (2005). He notes that there is a relation between the way creation was formulated in the west and the shape of modern culture. This has led to contradictions and paradoxes. A revision of three main features of creation is needed: first is that creation is not dual (intellectual and material); second, that humans are to be understood relationally to the one creating entity rather than in terms of fixed characteristics as

reason or will; and last, that there is continuity within discontinuity (a better understanding of time and space). He notes that in the west, theology (and political theory) has developed under the understanding of oneness, in absence of the three and the many. This means that it has developed under the acceptance of one creating entity as a single entity and apart from us, and the individual as disconnected from others and in essence from the creator himself.

Modern thought presents us with disengagement from each other and the world, making both the world itself and us into mere instruments. These misconceptions or perversions, according to Gunton, are rooted in Plato and developed throughout time, which has resulted in the separation of person and world, the separation of people from each other, and the separation from the one creating entity from his creation. This separation from the one creating entity, in essence, has meant a separation from within, a kind of tearing apart of man: a separation of the body from the mind and most importantly the spirit.

The theme of the one and the many focuses on two questions: in what sense is our universe a unity and in what sense a plurality? Gunton argues that political theology should be Trinitarian in order to unify all aspects and dimensions of humanity to the creator. In other words, to unite the one and the many, one needs the three. Gunton believes that this will facilitate the conceptualization of a new theology, one that offers new concepts of time and space and a more complete understanding of the one that embraces the many through the new covenant, Jesus Christ. This concept “embraces the being of the world in its relations to [the one creating entity] and the action of [the one creating entity] in relation to the world” (2005, 160). A theology of trinity offers a kind of transcendental unity that encircles the one and the many in a communion with the three.

## **Conclusion**

To summarize, the modern age, while it certainly appears to have some legitimate achievements in improving the material conditions of human existence, has ultimately developed a crisis in the form of nihilism. We are unable to make moral and political sense of our great human capacities because of our limited materialistic ontology and positivistic epistemology. Since World War II philosophers and theologians have attempted to understand the epistemological and ontological roots of our crisis. This chapter has given a historical review of political theory epistemology and ontology to show the development of this crisis and has then surveyed the major recent responses.

According to the most compelling philosophical or theological responses, the solution or prescription lies in the re-integration of the moral dimension to religious questions. It is philosophers and theologians in contemporary political theory that attempt to address this issue: the distorted reality that creates and/or results in distorted perceptions, values, and truth. They have attempted to bring back a sense of a creating force, the creator, and/or something eternal. Some are requesting to return to the classics and reinterpreting them or borrowing some ideas (Arendt, MacIntyre, Strauss, Voegelin). Some are calling for new approaches or dimensions (Tillich, Voegelin).

I argue that Colin Gunton seems to offer the best possibility in the next step of developing a more complete political theory, more importantly, a humanistic approach in public administration. It is through Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory that we can find solution for the crises perceived in political theory's epistemology and ontology that will transform public administration theory. The Trinitarian theological theory can offer a unity, a communion of the one and the many through the three.

## Chapter 3

### Trinitarian Theological Theory

#### Introduction

Colin E. Gunton provides a model for the creation of a broader ontology and epistemology. He presents the possibility of unification by revising classical Christianity, through harmonious particularity. In the book *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity*, Gunton presents a Trinitarian theological theory (2005). He notes that there is a relation between the way creation was formulated in the West and the shape of modern culture. This has led to contradictions and paradoxes. A revision of the three main features of creation is needed, which will challenge the way that theology (and political theory) has developed in the west, under the understanding of oneness, in absence of the three and the many. This means that it has developed under the acceptance of one creating entity as a single entity and apart from us, and the individual as disconnected from others and in essence from the creator himself. These misconceptions or perversions, rooted in classical thought, have pervaded Western thought and are now part of public administration, and have resulted in a separation of person from the world, from each other, and from the one creating entity.

This separation from the one creating entity, in essence, has meant a separation from within, a kind of tearing apart of man: a separation of the body from the mind and most importantly the spirit. This formulation has led to contradiction and paradoxes that have created confusion and incomplete knowledge. A revision of the three main features of creation is needed that will unify the intellectual and the practical while establishing a better understanding of humans' relation to each other and to a higher power, and ultimately offering a better understanding of continuity within discontinuity. This is what Gunton calls a Trinitarian

theological theory and which I believe can help to address the current state of public administration that is disengaged, from the public, from other public administrators, and from reality. This chapter will present a brief biography of Colin E. Gunton, a brief look at his writings, and then a description of his Trinitarian theological theory. I will end by noting some challenges to the theory and Gunton's probable responses.

### **Colin E. Gunton: A Brief Biographical Background**

Colin Ewart Gunton (1941-2003) was a “constructive theologian and as an interpreter he was especially concerned to observe the arrangement of, and relations between, the different parts of the dogmatic” canon, the practice of systematic theology, which for Gunton was theology (Webster 2010, 18). Theology was his primary calling and he “saw it as a human response to the gospel,” which for Gunton is the way in which the One creating entity personally relates to us as the One creating entity, Son, and Spirit (Holmes and Rae 2005, 13). In other words, he wanted and encouraged others to be part of an already open communication. He noted in *The One the Three and the Many*, that “the responsibility of the theologian ... is to seek for ways to rehabilitate or reinvigorate the concept of truth, without, however, ignoring the genuine weakness of that against which much modern thought has reacted” (2005, 129).

He was however, not only interested in theology, but also in history, philosophy, science, music, art, politics, and gardening. Douglas Farrow calls him the “the gardener” whose theological garden was fruitful and based on the understanding of theology as a “communal activity” where participants should think in as orderly a manner as possible, and where space and perspective are shaped and defined by the gospel. This is theology within “Trinitarian lines and Christological contours,” an understood “free and open order.” (2010, xi). Constantly referring back to the gospel, creed, and dogma, Gunton consciously conducted his work on the basis of

Trinitarian exegesis. However, for Gunton the doctrine of the Trinity was not an extra element of theology but the way in which theology can remain true to the gospel. “For Gunton, Trinitarian theology is what makes Christian theology, Christian and Theology” (Schwöbel 2005; 2010, 183).

Gunton grew up in Nottingham, and began his Theological studies in 1966 at Mansfield College Oxford where a year later, after completion of his M.A. in theology, he began his doctoral work. This turned into a first-rate study of the doctrine of the One creating entity in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth (*Becoming and Being*, 1978 & 2001, which is now a must read for every theologian). About two years into his research, he began teaching Philosophy of Religion at King’s College, London. He became an ordained minister and was appointed to Associate Minister of the Brentwood United Reformed Church in 1975 (McCormack, 2005; McFarlane, 2001; Schwöbel 2005; Schwöbel 2010). He was at this church for about 27 years. In 1980, Gunton became a Lecturer in Systematic Theology at King’s College and Professor of Christian Doctrine four years later. He served as Dean of the Faculty from 1988-1990. During 1994 through 1997, he was head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. In 1998 he helped found the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* which he co-edited until he died on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Gunton is said to have never considered himself a pillar of the establishment; he was “too much of an English non-conformist” (Schwöbel, 2005). He tried to avoid working out his own theology because he thought too much originality could result in deviation from the gospel or teaching of the church, losing touch with the very basis of Christian theology. He is also described as humble, despite his honorary doctorate from Aberdeen, the *Divinitatis* Doctor from London and Oxford, named Lectureships, and visiting professorships. He enjoyed what he did,



and did not do it for recognition, personal ambition, or because of a Puritan work ethic. His legacy for most commentators lies in his theological style. It is the communion and personal relations he formed with members of his church, colleagues at work, and mainly his students (McCormack 2005). This is why Farrow refers to him as “the gardener.” Gunton spent most of his career “growing many theologians..., watered and pruned as needed, until they were ready to be replanted somewhere else” (Farrow 2010, xi).

### **Gunton and Systematic Theology**

Gunton’s theology falls within the branch of systematic theology. Systematic theology, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “a branch of theology concerned with summarizing the doctrinal traditions of a religion, especially relating the traditions convincingly to the religion's present-day setting” (2011). This means that it is the relating of the word to reality and everyday activity. It is an activity that begins in the word and is not so much strictly logical, but rather has an internal coherence and external relevance (McFarlane 2001). Gunton further notes that systematic theology is “not so much a matter of the organizing of doctrines into systems, as of weighting and balance in the ways doctrinal matters are placed into relation with one another” (quoted in Webster 2010, 18). It is “an activity, or series of activities, encompassing thought, speech, and writing... ha[ving] to do with the articulation and defense of the Christian gospel as the truth- not the truth in a narrow sense, abstracted from action, but the truth that involves also goodness and beauty, the world in all its dimensions;” it attempts “to perceive connections between truths, and to know which belongs to which;” and is that “in which some attempt is made to articulate the Christian gospel or aspects of it with due respect to such dimensions as coherence, universality, and truth” (1990, 251). Systematic theology is “systematic as it is evangelical and evangelical in so far as it brings the gospel from the heart of

the Church, to the heart of the culture” (Harvey 2010, xi). Systematic theology, according to Gunton, then consists of letting the Word use one and in turn using the Word. It is a communal form of life entailing the rational, continual conversation initiated by the One creating entity. It is an activity that has not stopped and involves learning, understanding, and applying theology to everyday activities.

Gunton has been identified as the “most significant English theologian of his generation” and to have been responsible for single-handedly renewing and expanding the studies and application of systematic theology, if not completely transforming British theology during the course of his career (Jenson 2004; McCormack 2006, 3; McFarlane 2001; Schwöbel 2005). McFarlane identifies five specific areas within systematic theology where Gunton’s impact can be seen (2001). These are important because they offer a window into Gunton’s theological basis and wholeness of the application of his Trinitarian theology. Gunton can be said to have transformed the way theology is taught, viewed, understood, and practiced.

The first area is the general identification of the love-hate relationship we have with modernity and the Enlightenment. We can find evidence of this in the *Enlightenment and Alienation: an Essay towards a Trinitarian Theology* (1985) and *The One, the Three and the Many: God Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (2005). On the one hand we identify the Enlightenment as responsible for establishing a distorted conception of truth as only valid when it is scientifically proven. At the same time, Gunton notes that the Enlightenment was a great blessing to theology because it revealed the tendency “to elevate the one above the many and make the eternal appear the enemy rather than the fulfiller of time,” which has allowed for the discovery of misconceptions within theology (Gunton 2005, 130). The elevation of the one can be the self above other and the One creating entity, as well as the all-knowing and omnipotent

one-being above nature, which has resulted in a disconnection from the One creating entity, an alienation that makes the eternal the enemy--something incomprehensible and therefore unreachable if not even unreal (Suda 2005, 130).

Gunton's second influence comes from his tenacity in applying the theological basis found in the scripture and divine *oikonomia*, what is referred to as pure theology, when addressing any type of question (Jenson 2004). As a theologian, he found answers in the word for the recovery of truth and therefore the recovery or reencounter between the One creating entity and creation. This can be found in *Yesterday and Today: A Study of Continuities in Christology* (1997) and *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (1988). He wanted to bring the gospel to the culture in a way that was capable of renewing the respect for the one by offering "fresh ways," and laying down the "intellectual basis for the liberation of the many from the submersion in the one," which according to Gunton is the threat of modern life (Farrow 2010, xii).

Third, Gunton served as an example by publishing what he taught (for example, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (2005), but also in the many published sermons and articles he left behind). Understanding in theology takes place through revelation and communal interaction with the One creating entity and others. In Gunton's case, sharing and inviting into this activity expanded further than his immediate surroundings. His writings were done for a wide audience, not necessarily evangelical or academic, helping people understand and grasp the importance of theology and theological concepts (Goodliff 2005). At the same, he emphasized the application of theology to issues of contemporary church and society, thus making theology relational.

Fourth, Gunton expressed a sense of immediacy where "to be contemporary is to remember history" (McFarlane 2001, 1). At first sight, this comment is not quite clear.

However, from the beginning, Gunton in his writings notes the reality of both transcendence and temporality existing within the same time and space. This constitutiveness of transcendence and temporality reveals that there would be no contemporary without history. One can also note this concept in *Christ and Creation* and *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* and his discussion of the Spirit and *perichoresis* (1998; McFarlane 2001, 3; Jenson 2004, 85).

The impact has not only been in the form of academic writing, intellectual and spiritual exchanges amongst his colleagues, students, and members of his church community, but also in the practice of his ideas in his daily activity. This is the fifth area where Gunton has impacted Systematic Theology. Gunton was driven by community, interaction, and the connection with culture. Gunton's drive has been referred to as a "nervous energy" which was expressed in loud support or loud rejection of a position during exchanges in community, and his insistence on the importance of being culturally informed. This energy emanated from the understanding that "whenever theology was being done, there was a great deal at stake," and therefore one would have to be involved (McCormack 2006, 1). It can be said that "he would have liked to be remembered... not necessarily as someone whose theology we should agreed with, but someone who taught us why it was worth thinking hard enough about theology to disagree... the excitement in the possibility of theology, the confidence in the usefulness of theology, the orientation of theology only and ever towards the gospel" (Holmes, 2010, 45). Gunton was a theologian in communion (Schwöbel 2005).

Gunton's impact within a period of two decades influenced and renewed theology from "a purely prescriptive theology ... which could be learned parrot-fashion ... to one that is much more open-ended and fluid, ... based on the personal revelation of [the One creating entity and the Creator] of our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit," in other words, based on the

Trinity (Jenson 2004, 2; McFarlane 2001). For Gunton theology was life activity based on the gospel and his recommendation for an ontological transformation. Theology for Gunton, is not a social theory but reality itself.

### **About Gunton's Writings**

Gunton thought that the answers to most questions can be found in theology. The central question that Gunton asks of any approach to theology is “how does it relate eternal to temporal creation, and does it do so in such a way as to preserve at once the sovereignty and priority of divine action and the proper *Selbständigkeit* –relative independence- of the world?” (Webster, 2010, 19-20). This is no easy task in an era that demands scientific certitude. In this section we will address this question with a brief look at Gunton's writings.

It can be said that Gunton's theology “developed partly in critical conversation with Barth's unfinished and not wholly successful attempt to extricate reformed theology from the [perceived] deficiencies of the St. Augustinian heritage” (Webster, 2010, 18). During the beginning of his journey, Gunton was about moving away from “classical theism.” Classical theism, according to Gunton, understands the One creating entity as supernaturalistic, timeless, and a hierarchy of being (Jenson, 2010). Supernaturalistic means the One creating entity is understood as completely outside nature, which results in understanding the One creating entity through the *via negativa*. This is the understanding of the creating entity as “whatever the world [is] not” and results in a creating entity who has no particulars, is not temporal, and does not speak the language of men (Holmes 2010, 41; Jenson 2010). This, Gunton argues, is understanding the One creating entity in a way that denies aspects of his creation, thus leading us “away from the world as it presents itself to us” (Jenson 2010, 9). This has resulted in alienation making our relationality to the One creating entity difficult to understand or at times even

difficult to perceive (Gunton 2005). The understanding of the One creating entity as timeless finds its roots in Greek thought and emphasizes a disconnection between the now and the end of time while creating an oxymoronic perception of the gospel. This is because “if to be [the One creating entity] is simply to be timeless” (Jenson 2010, 9) then what about Christ?

The third aspect of classical theism identified by Gunton is the hierarchy of being. The hierarchy of being is the understanding that within the Trinity there is a hierarchy where the One creating entity, or Godhead, is understood to be at the top of a kind of a vertical chain of command. This also finds its roots in Classical Greek thought, more specifically, platonic and neoplatonic thought. This is because in platonic thought all true knowledge emanates from one source and this source is above all matter outside the perceived reality. This leads to an overemphasis on contemplation or life in the ideas, instead of life in the material. Gunton in his dissertation laid classical theism at the feet of St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Imagio Dei*.

Thomas Aquinas argues in *Summa Theologia* that when the Bible says that we were created in the image of creating entity, *Imagio Dei*, it refers to our capacity for reason. For Aquinas the mind is the essence of the soul and it allows through reason the revelation of the greatness of the creating entity on earth. Reason or wisdom is reached or accessed through understanding and will, which according to Thomas Aquinas are in the mind. It is often said that it is through the exercise of reason that we are linked to the creator or that it is in this aspect that we can share with the One creating entity (Portis 2008). Aquinas notes in *De Veritates* that “we are in the image of [the One creating entity] by the fact that we exist, that we know that we exist, and that we love this knowledge and this existence” (McGlynn 1953). This means that to be in the image of One creating entity, one has to exist, live, and understand, to contain within the soul memory, understanding and willingness. These “powers” are all part of the soul, which are its

essence, but within these essences, the mind (reason) seems to be put at a higher level than understanding and will by Aquinas.

Later, Gunton argued that this problem can also be seen in St. Augustine's theology and "doctrine of divine simplicity" (Jenson 2010, 10). In Gunton's first writings he seems to agree with St. Augustine in several respects. This is quite difficult to put aside because they seem to include a platonic aspect to themselves. St. Augustine's writings are in the realm of the spiritual not only because he is a theologian, but in a kind of exalting of the spiritual, accepting that the best is yet to come and not in the material or temporal. This is also noted in what Jenson calls "doctrine of divine simplicity," where Augustine notes that the one entity one can find refuge from the ailments of the temporal, which are also diverse and chaotic, is in the one entity, hence "not being many" (Jenson 2010, 10). The replacement of the one source of knowledge and truth in platonic thought by the one creating entity, is in my opinion, an expression of the resolute conviction of the drive towards the spiritual world, and denunciation of the material, for the perfectibility of man at the end, for the unification with the One creating entity. An analysis of the importance of historical work of the Son, and the importance of created order as means by which redemption is accomplish, does not diminish the higher value placed on the immaterial. In other words, St. Augustine, by enhancing the monism of the One creating entity as the most important aspect of the Trinity and promoting the spiritual realm as the only realm that truly counts, diminishes greatly the Trinity, and the connection of the spiritual realm with the material realm.

This third aspect, the conceptualization of the Trinity in a hierarchy, is the one that seems, according to Gunton, to do the more damage to the understanding of the Trinity because it seems to inherently cause the Trinity to be misunderstood and incomprehensible. If there is a

hierarchy within the trinity then it is not possible for them to be one, to be a harmonious particularity. Gunton explained that this is incompatible with the gospel and therefore attempts to make the Trinity the foundation, the beginning of his theology, through a new conceptualization.

## **The Trinity**

The Trinity is a very difficult concept. This has resulted in throwing the concept into the realm of the ideal and incomprehensible. In this section we will discuss a brief historical background before moving into a conceptualization of Gunton's Trinity.

### **Historical Background**

The historical language of the word has not offered any easy help in understanding the Trinity. For example Karl Barth in *Church Dogmatics* used the phrase *τρόπος υπάρξεως*, from the early church, which is translated into "mode of being" to describe the particulars in the Trinity. The word "ὕπoστασις" (substance/source) was also used to describe that which there are three of in the One creating entity (Cunningham 1998, 27). This was further complicated with the use of person, which developed into the understanding of the Trinity as three people in one.

Neale Donald Walsh, in *The Complete Conversation with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*, offers a good starting point. The Trinity is a concept that is developed through a process, through the understanding of life, reality, or time within the One creating entity. It is not a concept of one dimension but of three and of particulars. Walsh notes that one "can call these three aspects of being ... [One creating entity], Son and Spirit; mind, body and spirit; superconscious, conscious, and subconscious." (2005, 83). This is done not for the purpose of allowing the understanding of the particulars within the Trinity, but for starting a process of understanding that the Trinity is also something more than a group of three particulars. The Trinity has to do with a process, more specifically the process of creation (David S. Cunningham, in his 1998 book *These Three are*



*one: the Practice of Trinitarian Theology*, uses the verb “production” to attempt to establish an understanding of the concept). Creation theologically and in modern psychology is understood as a process of thought, word and deed. It is dynamic. It is in this description that a good starting point and overall context for the understanding of the Trinity is found.

Historically, the beginning of this concept has been traced to the followers of Jesus Christ. The concept was developed through their life’s journey, trying to reconcile their belief in the One creating entity with their new found experience of “beholding the presence of [the One creating entity] in their midst,” with Jesus Christ (Cunningham 1998, 21; Polkinghorne 2004). In other words, if there is only one creating entity, then why did we experience divinity or the presence of the One creating entity through Christ? This resulted in having to affirm the divinity of Christ, the dwelling of the creating entity in a human being. Furthermore, once Jesus Christ could no longer be physically present he made the promise that those that followed him would receive the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit was then understood to be that which would continue offering guidance and be present after Christ, just differently than Jesus Christ had been. This development can be seen in the narratives left behind by the followers (the Gospels, Acts, Letters), which describe their encounters with the One creating entity, with Jesus Christ, and with the Spirit. This means that the concept of the Trinity “began as an attempt to account for the [One creating entity’s] definitive self-revelation” forcing early Christian thinkers to attempt an understanding of oneness and particulars (Cunningham 1998, 22).

It is the experience of the Word in the physical world that throws the doctrine of the One creating force into the realm of deliberation and discussion. How do we explain that the One creating entity, who is conceptualized in a monotheistic form, while teaching the divinity of Christ? The explanation is simply that Christ the Son is also the One creating entity, and that the

spirit is also the creating entity. Here a historical separation is usually noted between those attempting to understand the concept of the Trinity by starting at the acceptance of one creating entity and then explaining the three (the Western Tradition) from those that start with the Trinity and then explaining its unity into one creating entity (the Eastern tradition). The Western Trinitarian theology has been rooted in St. Augustine and the Eastern Trinitarian theology has been traced to the Cappadocians.

Augustine agreed with the Cappadocian's distinction of *ousia/hypostasis*. *Ousia* is the essence and *hypostasis* is the substance. This means that the Cappadocians saw the essence and the substance of the creating entity as one, the same as for Christ. Augustine treated the work of creating entity in the economy as if any of them could have been done by any of the three, destroying its plurality and oneness at the same time. Gunton argues against Augustine's understanding of the Cappadocians and notes that the Cappadocians understood the Trinity as a communion, which can only be understood by taking into account the economy (Jenson 2010, 12). Gregory Palomas (who has been referred to as Thomas Aquinas from the East noted Robert W. Jenson 2010, 13) distinguished in the One creating entity's reality between that which creatures could participate in and that in which they could not, making the Trinity a blank mystery. Regardless of the tradition embraced, because of the complexity of the concept, in looking to make sense of the Trinity, theologians turned to philosophy. This is because the Trinity is more easily perceived or understood in the realm of ideas. Once the conceptualization of the One creating entity was based on a single divine substance, the neglect of the internal relationality of particulars and subsequently the relationship of the One creating entity with creation was overshadowed by conceptualizing the One creating entity as one divinity, as an absolute subject (Cunningham 1998, 25). This means that the focus on making sure that the One

creating entity is understood as one was kept intact and the Trinitarian conception of the One creating entity was left behind. One contemporary theologian who attempted to correct this and took on the challenge of the conceptualization of the One creating entity as the Trinity was Gunton.

### **Gunton's Journey Toward the Trinity**

The Trinity, as Gunton understands it, will be difficult clearly to state. This is not only because the concept of the Trinity itself is complex, but also because in his books there is not one chapter or statement that explains this directly; it is something revealed or that can be extracted through his collective writings. This means that Gunton's Trinitarian theology is not developed at one point in time, in part because he was not attempting to develop a theology of his own, but only to interpret or recapitulate what had already been said, and in part because just like the concept he is trying to address, his theology develops through an intellectual communal process. Within him, the Trinity developed as it has throughout history in conversation with others for the purpose of the encounter of the self with the One creating entity. This section will briefly explain the evolution of Gunton's concept of the Trinity.

We can begin and end with Gunton's Thesis *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (1978 and 2001), which shows the roots of his theology. In this book, Gunton presents Trinitarian theology (from Barth) as a way to recapitulate classic theology. This is done with Ebert Jüngel's interpretation of relationality and Coleridge's analysis between monistic, dualistic, or Trinitarian understanding of the One creating entity. Coleridge noted that one may be a monist (collapsing all distinction into one and so identifying the One creating entity and the world), a dualist (finding the answer in a primal opposition) or a Trinitarian (understanding the Godhead and the possibility of otherness as not opposed, or as

“alterity”) (Holmes 2010, 38). This means that for Gunton, the Trinity will offer not a new theology, but a new understanding of theology that will allow for the relationality of the One creating entity and creature while allowing for the possibility of otherness, or particulars in the Trinity that do not oppose. This is Gunton’s starting point and the basis of his theological approach. From here, he will concentrate on certain aspects of theology with a new starting point, the One creating entity as Trinity.

It can be said that Gunton addresses several aspects of the Trinity in several writings before a fully developed Trinitarian Theology can be perceived. He begins, in *Yesterday and Today*, by addressing Christology, emphasizing the importance of Christ’s temporality and divinity while at the same time trying not to diminish the importance of either. Gunton argues that classical Christology is still relevant and presents the solution for what he describes as Christological schizophrenia of the West (that is, either utter transcendence of the One creating entity beyond the temporal, or viewing of the world as a closed self sufficient system). He notes that if Christology is understood like this, only in dualistic terms, it results in alienation. His solution is presented from the philosophy of music, which suggests new ways of understanding time. He notes that when one plays a triad, a three-note chord that can be stacked in thirds, neither one of the tones or notes is excluded. This is an example of *perichoresis*, which conceives new ways to relate word and object. He notes that the Western tradition has been the replacement of the classical dualism of time and eternity with transcendent creating entity and immanent son which not only disconnects both and emphasizes their individuality, but destroys the wholeness of time (Holmes 2010, 35).

It is in *Enlightenment and Alienation: an Essay towards a Trinitarian Theology* (published in 1985, written by 1982), that Trinitarian Theology is presented as an operational doctrine, which

allows us to make sense of our reality, because through the Trinity freedom and obligation are no longer opposing values, and objective and subjective perception can be brought together. This hermeneutical approach brings attention to relationality as one of the main concepts that needs reinterpretation or recapitulation to unite the creator and creation and creation with creation, while enhancing the understanding of the Trinity. Gunton discusses divine relationality to humanity and argues that it is absent in Western thought (Tibbs 2010, 116). Specifically, Gunton argues that Irenaeus, who was a Second Century bishop of what is now known as Lyons France, noted that the personhood of Christ depended on the empowering of the Holy Spirit, and upheld that Jesus was truly human and truly divine (Spence 2010; Cumin 2010). Lincoln Harvey in “The Double Homousion: Forming the content of Gunton’s Theology,” notes this to be a double homousion (double/one essence) and explains that Gunton settles this argument through Christological economy, where Jesus alone is simultaneously of one being with the One creating entity and of one being with humanity (2010, 87). This allows for the conceptualization of One creating entity where his divinity is maintained while at the same time affirming his genuine presence through Christ. *Enlightenment and Alienation* is divided in three sections and in each one Gunton presents a dualistic predicament. The first section is perception, which is normally perceived as objective or subjective. The second is freedom, which is normally addressed through obligation and interpretation. The third section is about biblical and canonical problems for contemporary western culture. It is through the presentation of dualism and its shortcomings that he notes the solution to be within the Trinity and the usage of metaphor.

Gunton further explores metaphors and raises questions about atonement and the use of metaphor to understand of the Trinity in *The Actuality of Atonement* (1988). The book presents an argument against rationalism in theology (Kant’s argument of our innate capacity to save

ourselves, Schleimacher's push to make Christian terms mean what they once meant, and Hegel's attempt to change the meaning of Christian terms where reconciliation is overcoming the infinite and the finite). Gunton then calls for the use of metaphor to understand our conceptualizations of the One creating entity, the doctrine of atonement, and the work of Christ. He presents six metaphors, which can unite the relationship of the One creating entity with human creation. These can assert the *oikonomia* (explained below). He argues that the suggestion that there is any language that is applied to the creating entity is not fundamentally analogical is dangerous, "and that there is a risk ... of the imaginative stretch of human language to hint towards the ineffable divine reality (*epinoia*)" (Holmes 2010, 44-45) Some theologians look at the Trinity as either definitive (as the final conceptualization) or revelatory (an ongoing, dynamic analogy). Metaphor allows for both emphasizing the relationship between creator and creation through the *oikonomia*.

It is in *Christ and Creation: The Disbury Lectures 1990*, that Gunton revisits Christology and presents the Trinity as Irenaeus did: here we first find Gunton's understanding of the Trinity as the divine working in and towards the world mediated by his two hands, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is how Gunton explains his understanding of the Trinity (75; Spence 2010; Cumin 2010; Holmes 2010, 41). This is also in connection to the concept of mediation. Mediation is described by Gunton as the process through which creaturely knowledge of God is structured (Harvey 2010). In *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, Gunton expounds the concept of communion as a function, a relation where one particular is not given priority over others (1997). At this point we are able to perceive the passionate drive behind Gunton's transformation of theology and reality. We can already perceive his focus on the unification of what has been

disengaged, his focus on the doctrine of creation, and his focus on the gospel as part of this transformation.

In *The One the Three and the Many*, his inaugural lecture in the Chair of Christian Doctrine at King's College, Gunton relates theology to the social order. He notes that modernity, thanks to the failings of classical theology, has ultimately lost any sense of truth in all three realms, the intellectual, the moral and the aesthetic (knowledge, goodness, and beauty) and presents Trinitarian theology as the healing solution. He begins his argument by defining modernity as something beyond technology, science, and economic systems; it is also a range of practices, attitudes and ideologies that are not always consistent with one another. He argues that ultimately the modern condition "presents our civilization with grievous intellectual and moral problems" (2005, 13). These are rooted in Decartes's ethic of disengagement from the world and body through an understanding of reason that views the world and even other people as tools.

The basic framework for Gunton's analysis is established by the pre-Socratic philosophers Heraclitus and Parmenides. These are important representative figures of western thought as building blocks in philosophy and theology. Heraclitus argues that the many are prior to the one. He is the philosopher of plurality and motion. Parmenides is the opposite. Parmenides presents reality as unchanging, stable, uniformed, where the many are functions of the one. Gunton notes that Western theology and philosophy, beginning with Plato, have been primarily Parmedeian. Therefore Western thought tends to see plurality as essentially conflictual, and this is true even of postmodernism, which simply celebrates plurality as conflict. But Gunton argues that plurality can be harmonious and that the Trinity is the proper model for such harmonious plurality. More specifically, he states that the Trinity can allow us to address the doctrine of creation in a way that can allow healing of our culture can take place.

Gunton also addresses theological issues having to do with particularity and person, revisits classical theism, addresses the knowability of the creating entity, presents the Triune creating entity and discusses mediation, creation, and the new revealed truth under the Trinity while addressing pneumatology (the interaction of creation and creator). It is in this work that the Irenean approach to the Trinity, mediation, personhood, and theology proper begins to take root. Gunton later extends this work in a *Brief Theology of Revelation*, where he proposes comparing human personhood with divine personhood where the words love and person means the same at levels of creator and creation (Holmes 2010).

Gunton's Trinity is driven by the need of a Trinitarian doctrine of the divine. He finds this need in Karl Barth, who according to him was not Trinitarian enough. For Gunton only a Triune creating entity would allow "a creature that is truly other than he, [to be] intimately related to him" (Jenson 2010, 10). This Trinity offers a new reality, which would allow us to think of both particularity and unity in the One creating entity. The Trinity is a dynamic activity, "in which [the One creating entity] is presently creating, electing, and redeeming humanity." The eternal decree is ongoing, the contemporary and historical, the temporal and transcendental. This is because in this conceptualization "the *transcendence* of [the One creating entity], rather than the creating entity's identification with the human condition, [is what] guarantees human freedom. It is because [the One creating entity] is free in and within [the One creating entity's] own self that humanity is free: unconditional lordship guarantees human autonomy." What is even better is that it is "*free* uncoerced, gratuitous act of [the One creating entity] which is in fact the order of the Trinity" (Campbell 1986, 331).

In *Act and Being*, he notes "all of [the creating entity's] acts take their beginning in the One creating entity, are put into effect through the Son and reach their completion in the Spirit.



In other words, [the One creating entity's] actions are mediated: he brings about his purposes towards and in the world by the mediating actions of the Son and the Spirit his “two hands.” This should not be understood as saying that the One creating entity intrudes upon creation, but rather that the Spirit's transcendent and eschatological action pulls things forward toward that for which the One creating entity has made them (Webster, 2010, 21).

This establishes the context of Gunton's Trinitarian doctrine: the One creating entity in relation with creation through mediation where the temporal and the eternal are in relation through the Son and the Spirit. This communion is what allows for the new revealed reality where time and space are defined and open, the creator is in mediated relation with creation, and the particular and the many can exist in unity without losing either their particularity or their unity.

<b>Book</b>	<b>Main Idea or Argument</b>
<p><i>Becoming and Being</i> (Dissertation Work, 1978 &amp; 2001)</p>	<p>This book is a comparative analysis of the doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth. Gunton presents the argument against “classical theism” through Barth's unfinished or incomplete attempt to understand a Trinitarian theology. In this book we find elements that were later fully developed in Gunton's theology. Through Barth and Jüngel, Gunton accepts Trinitarian Theology's function as hermeneutical in revelation. Jungel also provides Gunton's basis for relationality, which results in a new understanding of God at an epistemological and ontological level. Gunton commits to removing theology from the intellectual roots of philosophy.</p>
<p><i>Yesterday and Today</i> (1983, 1997)</p>	<p>Gunton argues that classical Christology is still relevant and launches a consistent attack on the dualisms which can be found in Greek thought (from above, which insisted on the utter transcendence of God beyond temporal being) or in our own post-Kantian culture (from below, which sees the world as a closed self-sufficient system). To Gunton, both are alienating, and the root of a kind of Christological schizophrenia of the West. His solution is presented from the philosophy of music, which suggests new ways of understanding time, and the philosophy of science which conceives new ways to relate word and object.</p>

<p><i>Enlightenment and Alienation: A Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology</i> (written by 1982 and published in 1985)</p>	<p>This book is divided in three sections: perception (objective and subjective); freedom (obligation and interpretation); and biblical and canonical problems for contemporary western culture. Gunton’s solution to alienation is Trinitarian Theology – the understanding of the creator as a triune God. In this book his main influence is Samuel Taylor Coleridge.</p>
<p><i>The Actuality of Atonement A Study of Metaphor, rationality and the Christian Tradition</i> (1988).</p>	<p>The book presents an argument against rationalism in theology (Kant’s argument of our innate capacity to save ourselves, Schleimacher’s push to make Christian terms to mean what they once meant, and Hegel’s attempt to change the meaning of Christian terms where reconciliation is overcoming the infinite and the finite). Gunton then calls for the use of metaphor to understand God, the doctrine of atonement, and the work of Christ. He presents six metaphors, which can illuminate the relationship of God with creation. These can assert the <i>oikonomy</i>.</p>
<p><i>Chrsit and Creation: The Disbury Lectures 1990</i> (1993)</p>	<p>In this book, Gunton revisits Christology and addresses pneumatology. He presents the Trinity in the terms worked out by Irenaeus, as the two hands of God, for the first time (75; Holmes 2010, p.41).</p>
<p><i>The Promise of Trinitarian Theology</i>, (Essay, 1991, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2006)</p>	<p>In this essay, Gunton attempts to find more analogies and moves towards the Trinity as theology, as a basis for ontology, and as theological anthropology. In the second edition, he notes the increasing interest in the Trinity and warns against a superficial understanding of it while introducing the idea of theology in community.</p>
<p><i>The One, the Three and the Many: God Creation and the Culture of Modernity.</i> (1993)</p>	<p>This book comes from Gunton’s inaugural lectures as the Chair of Christian Doctrine at King’s College. He takes theology to the social realm. It is in this book that he invites theologians to recover truth and apply theology to the social realm. He notes that the question of the three in one is also a question of our modern world where we “cannot find room both for the unity of mankind and the free particular plurality of the many” (Holmes, 2010, p. 38). He argues that the culprits of morphed theology were Latin Theologians like St. Augustine.</p>
<p><i>A Brief Theology of Revelation</i> (1995, 1997)</p>	<p>A proposal on the knowability of God through analogies that introduces the subject of God’s mediation. He points out some of the weaknesses in modern theology, like overemphasizing revelation.</p>

<p><i>Theology through Theologians</i> (1996)</p>	<p>This book is an introduction to systematic theology. It takes us on a historical journey through numerous theologians, not so much to focus on their missteps as to understand where we are today. The writings touch on subjects like Christology, the Holy Spirit, Creation, Atonement, Freedom, and more. Gunton discusses Coleridge, Newman, Barth, Niebuhr, Moltmann, Torrance and others.</p>
<p><i>Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study</i> (1998)</p>	<p>In this book, Gunton presents the concept of God as triune on the basis of the economy of salvation and the importance of this conceptualization on the mediation of creation through the beginning of a kind of theological history. For him, it is important that science be informed by a doctrine of creation. He outlines the elements of Christian doctrine of creation affirming the goodness of this created order.</p>
<p><i>The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine</i> (2001)</p>	<p>This book is a careful exposition of the Apostles creed. He takes aspects of the creed and therefore Christian faith and explains them through Trinitarian exegesis.</p>
<p><i>Act and Being: Towards a Theology of Divine Attributes</i> (2002)</p>	<p>In this book, Gunton addresses the concept of “person.” According to Holmes person as an eschatological concept. Gunton also argues that ontological commonality between the divine and the human can be found in an account of persons and relationships as the fundamental concepts in both divine and human ontology.</p>
<p><i>Father, Son , and Holy Spirit: Towards a Fully Trinitarian Theology</i> (2003)</p>	<p>This is the book published shortly after Gunton’s death. In it he discusses the Trinity in theological terms and insists that is not a theory but an account of God’s being. He addresses elements important to the Trinity in papers previously presented or written about the Trinity. As the title of the book notes, the elements are present to guides us towards reunification.</p>

**Table 3-1 Gunton’s Writings**

**Trinitarian Theological Theory**

Now that the conceptualization of Gunton’s Trinity has been briefly explained, I will examine in more detail his Trinitarian Theological Theory. Gunton argues that the roots of

modernity lie very deep, and indeed can be traced to the failure of Christianity to work out a fully Trinitarian theology. According to Gunton, modernity, “in reacting against Christendom, ...has bequeathed equal and opposite distortions of [our understanding of] human being in the world” further resulting in contradictions, paradoxes, and in cultural fragmentation that can be said to have ultimately decline into subjectivism and relativism that impose social uniformity and pressure toward homogeneity (2005, 13). He refers to this as “pluralist indifference” (2005, 131). In other words, Gunton notes that modernity did not deliver the promise of rational-self-reliance, but a “conformist herd” and an era that while seeking freedom bred totalitarianism, while attempting to understand the vastness of the universe has left behind the understanding of our own significance, and while trying to control the world and its natural forces have caused destruction to the earth (2005, 41). This means that all realms of our reality have been affected, the intellectual, the moral and the aesthetic.

In *The One the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Gunton addresses the need for healing these three realms, which have not only been disengaged but also displaced (2005) (see **Illustration 4-1**). It is Webster who notes that Gunton attempts, in his “most ambitious work”, to “reformulate modern thought” (as cited in Höhne 2010, 2). He explains that the disengagement that has taken place is from each other, from reality, origin or nature, and from the creator through the misunderstanding of knowledge, goodness, and beauty (truth). His recommendation is not to be understood as an all encompassing, absolute truth or theory, but instead in pursue for a different understanding of the realms themselves, a new understanding of reality, where all three realms in some conceptualization can be valued, weighted, or given importance equally. This is not just for the purpose of the reformulation of modern thought, because there are issues within theology, which have helped bring about

modernity (this refers back to classical theism), but a kind of recapitulation of history, a kind of revelation of a new reality.

### **Issues to Address within Theology**

Before looking into Trinitarian Theological Theory, we need to note the issues that Gunton argues need addressing within theology. These will help us understand his Trinitarian theological Theory and help the recapitulation or revelation of a new reality. These issues are the three main features of creation: creation as dualistic, creation's relationality to the creator, and the concept of time and space. Gunton argues that there is a relation between the way that creation doctrine was formulated in the West and the shape of modern culture. He also addresses or transforms the doctrine of the One creating entity through his writings and Trinitarian doctrine.

### ***Creation is Non-Dualistic***

Creation, Gunton argues, should not be understood as dualistic, as immaterial *or* material, because this sets the creator and creation in different worlds. A dualistic creation emphasizes the understanding that we are apart from the One creating entity. This, at the same time, has led to the loss of the Bible's affirmation of the goodness of the whole world, which has resulted in the loss of the one and the loss of the many. In other words, if only the One creating entity is good, then creation is not, and if the assumption is that we are not then everything not good is accepted as belonging in created order (nature) and impossible to connect to the good, the divine or immaterial. This is disengagement and establishes disengagement itself as reality, while also establishing any engagement or connectivity between the material and immaterial as impossible.

### *Creation is Relational*

Second, we should not confuse the acceptance of the “goodness of the whole world” as if then we are equal to the One creating entity. Instead, humans are to be understood relationally to the divine. This relationality is not to be understood in sharing fixed characteristics with the divine, as reason or will. This means that there should be different questions generated about the relation of creator and creation and our common ontology. Gunton notes that the relation between creation and creator would be better understood as human relation to the divine in the first instance and to the rest of creation in the second. According to him, it is the loss of this relationality that brought about the assumption that creator and creation are of the same nature and resulted in the loss of our place in the world while creating false universals. This has resulted in displacement.

### *Creation and Time and Space*

Third, the way that the doctrine of creation was developed has not helped the warped conception we have of time and space and there needs to be an acceptance of the new understanding of time and space where harmonious particularity is possible making continuity within discontinuity between the divine and non-divine creation possible. Modernity has emphasized the now and created what Gunton refers to as “time-space compression” (2005, 77). Modern technology after capitalism has emphasized this to where now we are expected to do more, in the same amount of time. This at the same time has resulted in the focus on short-term goals and search of faster processes. Sadly, Gunton notes, this has placed our understanding and connection to the future in the realm of ideas and disconnected it from the causal effect of the now. This has established a misunderstanding, or misconception about time and space, creating a misconception of reality itself.

Gunton notes that aspects of modernity also arose out of the failures of the doctrine of creation while also arising from its successful emphasis of one realm of reality over the other. This is rooted in classical philosophy and classical theism. It is through platonic thought that a sharp distinction between the material and the ideal that was made. At the same time, there was emphasis in the monotheistic aspect of the one creating entity. This was emphasized in classical Christianity through St. Augustine now placing all value and goodness in the one creating entity and away from the material or created order. Subsequently, through modern thought, like Kant, human agency replaced divine intervention, equating autonomy with the complete denial of the one creating entity, which denies any relational connection between creator and creation. This has at the same time, resulted in the misconception that the eternal and temporal are exclusive and therefore disengaged. Gunton expounds the Trinity and reveals as a result a new created reality. The divine as Trinitarian would incorporate the creator into the temporal, away from Plato's and Aristotle's picture of reality. It would allow for a reunion between creator and creation in a relational connection that would result in a harmonious particularity. This means that it would change not just theology but political theory and consequently public administration.

### **The Structure of Trinitarian Theological Theory**

Gunton's book *The One the Three and the Many: God Creation and the Culture of Modernity* is where his Trinitarian theory is presented as a solution for modernity's dualistic elevation of the one above the many, and subsequent lack of relatedness. The structure of the Trinitarian Theological Theory cannot be established as a system or schema to follow. This would result in what Gunton fears most, leaving the Trinity in the temporal completely when some new social theory comes along. When discussing the structure of a theory, it will be helpful

to discuss its different aspects to understand better how together they could offer a new ground for the transformation, recapitulation, or recovery of an epistemology and ontology. This is the aim of this section. First let us look carefully at the elements that compose his concept: the one, the three, and the many.

### ***The One***

The “one” in Gunton’s theory is the singular, the particulars within the Trinity: the One creating entity, Jesus Christ (the Son), the Holy Spirit; the created--man, earth, and universe. This is not to confusedly think of all of them as being in the same realm. The “one” actually indicates that the Spirit is not the Son or nothing like the Son: “If the Son is the content of [the One creating entity’s] redemptive movement into the world, the spirit is its form, and that form is its freedom” (Cumin 2010, 67). This means that within the Trinity, the “one” is each particular. Furthermore, for Gunton, the creator and creature are related but not the same, not within the divine, and not within creation. The “one” is then used to express distinctiveness, and the importance of the particular in both divine and creaturely action (Gunton 2005, 153; Wright 2010). In this individual and distinctive understanding, Gunton notes that the One creating entity is understood as the creator and the system of universal coordinates (2005, 71). The Son is the exchange, the main element in the *oikonomia*, the most tangible example of communion between nature and the divine (2005, 158). The Son is also the one that anchors creaturely knowledge (Harvey 2010, 87). He is the one that gives structure to the world (Wright 2010). The Spirit has “to do with the crossing of boundaries... relatedness” (2005, 2010, 181). It is the one who brings things to perfection, the “perfecting cause” ... “the presence of one enabling the world to be and becoming truly itself” “so that where the Son is the (personal) principle of the world’s unity and coherence, the Holy Spirit is, through the same Son, the focus of the particularity of things, their



becoming “perfect” -complete- as distinctly themselves” (Webster 2010, 24). In other words, the spirit grants space for development and creation within the structure created by Christ (Wright 2010).

### ***The Three***

The “three” in Gunton’s theory is the Trinity. Gunton notes that “in the first instance [it is] a way of characterizing the being of [the One creating entity]” (2005, 145). It is also the “primary idea, from which all ideas evolve” (2005, 144). The Trinity is at the same time, the understanding, description, of the realm, the “richness and diversity of the ways of [the One creating entity] towards and in the world,” it is the One creating entity’s agency forming a unity through time and space” (2005, 158). The Trinity is a “mutually involved personal dynamic” of the particulars, a communion, “a unity of persons in relation” (2005, 162, 215). It is here that we understand that the Spirit is not the outcome of a supposed property of Christ’s ascended human nature, but rather is a particular and mediated presence, promised through the Word and received by faith (Colwell 2010). The Trinity is not just the idea of ideas for Gunton but what will allow the exercise in the open transcendental which manages to maintain the necessary space between the creator and creation, and establishes a better understanding of time and space (Harvey 2010, 87; Green 2010). In this, the communion is seen as a characterization of all three, a relation where order and freedom are not constraining but allow for the particulars to be in free communion (Cumin 2010, 76). This results in a doctrine of the divine that instead of a vertical relation is more of what Paul Cumin refers to as an open dynamic of personal love. In this communion ontologically the One creating entity “causes,” the Son shapes, and the Spirit “completes.” The Spirit is also the mediator of the Triune love and is responsible for the Son’s

eternal begottenness drawing from the *oikonomia*. This eternal begottenness is the ever-physical presence of the divine creating entity through Jesus Christ (2010).

### ***The Many***

The “many” for Gunton is the One creating entity, the particulars within the Trinity, and creaturely collective. Creaturely collective allows for the inclusion of animal creation and nature, where because of the collective nature of the collectivity is understood to only be through the constitution of the relationship among them, and most importantly to the One creating entity, but also through a new accepted conceptualization, the Trinity. It is ultimately reciprocal, and meaningful, where the many are because of the one and the three. Gunton did all he could to have his Christ and his creation too (Cumin 2010).

These aspects are brought together conceptually by two main structures or processes. Gunton calls these open transcendentals: *perichoresis* and *oikonomia*. Generally a transcendental is understood as the clear and distinct mark of being as it has always been. An open transcendental is a flexible foundation, one which remains most basically continuous with the reality it opens up, but by which it can be changed. This means that an open transcendental is a transcendental but interaction with reality becomes while still being. He notes that it “is a notion, in some way basic to the human thinking process, which empowers a continuing and in principle, unfinished exploration of the universal marks of being... during the continuing process of the thought” (Gunton 2005, 142-143).

### ***Perichoresis***

Gunton attempts to avoid the perceived basic error of the Western tradition of theology and philosophy, the Platonizing tendency to distinguish sharply between the world of sense and the world of intellect, between unrestricted transcendence and unrestricted immanence, between

the material and the ideal, between basic modes of dualism. Gunton strongly believed that this can be counteracted by theology (Webster 2010). How can incorporation of the divine creating entity into the temporal be done outside Plato and Aristotle? While the realm of philosophy further placed the Trinity in the realm of the idea (more in the West than the East), it also allows for the consensus that even if one starts from three and the challenge is to reconcile the particulars into one, or if one starts with one and the challenge is to explain the existence of three particulars, the challenge is in the reconciliation, in the unity, in the explanation of the communion. Often this is explained through *perichoresis*. According to Karen Kilby, it is this that makes the Trinity such a wonderful doctrine. *Perichoresis* is noted in Jürgen Moltmann, and it is what “links together in a brilliant way the threeness and the unity, without reducing the threeness to the unity, or dissolving the unity in the threeness” (Kilby 2000). In other words, *perichoresis* is the concept that explains that the persons of the Trinity give and receive existence from each other in a dynamic event of interdependent reciprocity. Furthermore, it is what allows for eternal exchange of love between the particulars in the creating entity, between the creating entity and creation, and amongst creation. *Perichoresis* is a communion of mutual open particulars, it is what John Polkinghorne refers to as, a “profound degree of relationality” (2004, 103). *Perichoresis* becomes an open transcendental, “which means that the pattern of being found in [the One creating entity] can also be found alongside [the One creating entity] in the creaturely world... [where] ... human persons are constituted in relation through ‘perichoretic reciprocity’” (Harvey 2010, 92).

This is what to some seems to be the attraction to Trinitarian thought, the development of the understanding of the Trinity in concrete reality while encompassing the intangible. *Perichoresis* allows for the understanding of unity in a non-restrictive, non-compromising form,

in a communion. At the same time, *perichoresis* allows for what LaCugna notes that the acts of the One creating entity in history as been “the original subject matter of Trinitarian theology” (Cunningham 1998, 22). This means that the subject matter of Trinitarian discussions is the acts of the One creating entity in the realm of the physical and not just in the now. This means that the One creating entity has an internal and external history, a temporal and eternal involvement, which most theologians have to think through. This history for the most part is assumed into religious consciousness, leaving in reality a presumption of the divine and where this history has been neglected. This has been emphasized by the reliance on defining reality outside the narrative, in the concrete. It is through the Trinity that a recovery is taking place. For example, Karl Barth attempts in *Church Dogmatics* to assert the centrality of the Trinity by “grounding it in the narrative of the One creating entity’s relationship with Israel and the Church, both of which find their ultimate center in Christ” (Cunningham 1998, 24); Walter Kasper in *The God of Jesus Christ* notes that when one reflects on the Trinity, it is never just abstract but grounded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Cunningham 1998, 23). Jurgen Moltmann encouraged and helped theologians consider the interaction of [the One creating entity] with history by “explica[ting] Trinitarian doctrine through categories that are primarily social... revealing [the creating entity’s] activity in history...” which makes revelation a freedom state where the passivity accepted in Christianity could no longer be in place (Cunningham 1998, 24). The concept of the Trinity can be said to have risen “as a response to the insistent complexity of the encounter with the reality of [the One creating entity]” with the reality of creation, “not as an act of unbridled and ungrounded metaphysical speculation” (Polkinhorne 2004, 99-100) but a bottom-up movement that comes from the experience of salvation, the One creating entity’s nature is made known through revelatory acts, the *oikonomia* (Polkinhorne 2004). This will

allow for history to be restored taking into account the past, the responsibility in the present, and the importance of the future.

***Oikonomia.***

*Oikonomia* has been at times what replaces *perichoresis* in the explication of the Trinity's activity, but in Gunton's theological theory it is the context of *perichoresis* and all other activity, either divine or creaturely. This theological concept emerges early in the Christian tradition as a financial metaphor. This describes the "generosity of [the One creating entity] on both the gift of Christ ('yet for your sake he became poor') and the 'down payment' of the Spirit" (Harvey 2010, 90). When in the social sciences one refers to an exchange of benefits one refers to this as economy, and is not always based on monetary exchanges. These exchanges are based on values like justice, equity, ethics, discretion, representation, and freedom, which cannot be quantified in monetary value but still understood as an economy. The exchange involved in theology, can be said to be as difficult to measure, but is still not necessarily unperceived. These values are the creating entity's gifts of "sacrifice of His Son" and the benefit of forgiveness of sin for humanity, which also established a new covenant and subsequently starts a kind of new timeline or reality for the world. It is this, "restart," that is understood as the Spirit's down payment. This understanding has allowed for the term *oikonomia* to be understood in terms of a divine activity.

Harvey notes that this divine activity is holding together all the different variables that took place within the world at the time of the exchange, within the temporal, as unified whole within Christ. This is why, according to Gunton, this is the only place to begin Christian theology (which is paradigmatically from the spirit). This is because the *oikonomia* breaks down dualism. Jesus in the *oikonomia* is simultaneously of one being with the One creating entity and

of one being with humanity (this is what Harvey calls a double homoousion; same essence) and it is what “ties the speech of [the One creating entity] to Jesus” (Cumin 2010, 66; Harvey 2010).

In *The One the Three and the Many* Gunton notes that “because [the One creating entity] is economically involved in the world on those various ways, it cannot be supposed other than the action of [the One creating entity], Son and Spirit is a mutually involved personal dynamic... in eternity ... sharing a mutual reciprocity” (Gunton 1993, 158). This links creation, incarnation, and redemption where creation is always moving towards the coming of the One creating entity and where Jesus Christ allows for the re-imagining of the creaturely realm while mediating the One creating entity’s working with temporal reality where the assumed latter is no longer needed because the creating entity sort of already has “let that down ... on the incarnation of his eternal Son within the structures of worldly being” (Harvey 2010, 91). This is what has been understood as a theological anthropology. It is a linking of creature to creator through Christ (Harvey 2010; Tibbs 2010). At the same time, this dogmatic linking of Jesus to creaturely ontology represents a shift from *oikonomia* to the immanent Trinity, keeping the temporal Christ’s through a horizontal axis. Christ as creator and as the first new man allows for the understanding that “to speak theologically of the *oikonomia* is to speak of the way in which [the One creating entity] constitutes reality” (Harvey 2010, 92).

According to Gunton, Irenaeus has it right. The very function of Trinitarian talk is to construe the *oikonomia*, which emphasizes and allows some understanding of the Trinity. This is where the history of creation, consummation, and redemption is one history. In the aspects of Gunton’s Trinitarian theological theory, one can see that he is addressing not just displacement and disengagement, but developing a new ontology and a new epistemology. Gunton offers a whole new revealed reality to depart from.

First, Gunton recommends a rehabilitation or reinvigoration of the concept of truth, a new approach to the construction of knowledge itself thru a non-foundationalist foundation.

Foundationalism is understood as “a discipline’s claim for rationality and truth that must be based on some broadly accepted intellectual foundation, established by universal and certain reason” (2005, 132). This seems to put all knowledge creation in the hands of humanity with no consideration of the possibility that human knowledge may be flawed (Suda 2005). The rational and the empirical compete for foundational status (neither succeeded in delivering what they promised), and undermining the possibility to finding truth in both, the universal and the particular. Non-Foundationalism is when “the basis and criteria of rationality are intrinsic to particular intellectual enterprises, which should not have imposed upon them in procrustean ways the methodologies which are appropriate for other form of intellectual life” (2005, 133). Suda notes that Gunton also rejects non-foundationalism because not only does it attempt to construct a barrier outside critique, but it also runs the risk of subjectivism (2005).

Second, Gunton recommends recapitulation. Recapitulation takes into account what has been and the changes that have taken place. This means that change and certain elements kept or preserved allow for the transcendental and immanence to exist together. It allows for the conception of a kind of open metaphysics, which enables a conceptualization in reality with openness to the possible. This can be done through the Trinity and the concept of *Perichoresis*.

Third, Gunton aims at presenting a theology of being that resists the pressure of homogeneity and gives the right value and weight to the particular. This is the Trinitarian theology, which allows for the understanding of the one, the three and the many when none are above or below any other. This is done through the right understanding of the spirit in the

Trinity, and mediation. The spirit allows for the relatedness, the material and the immaterial, the universal and the particular, the immanent and the transcendental.

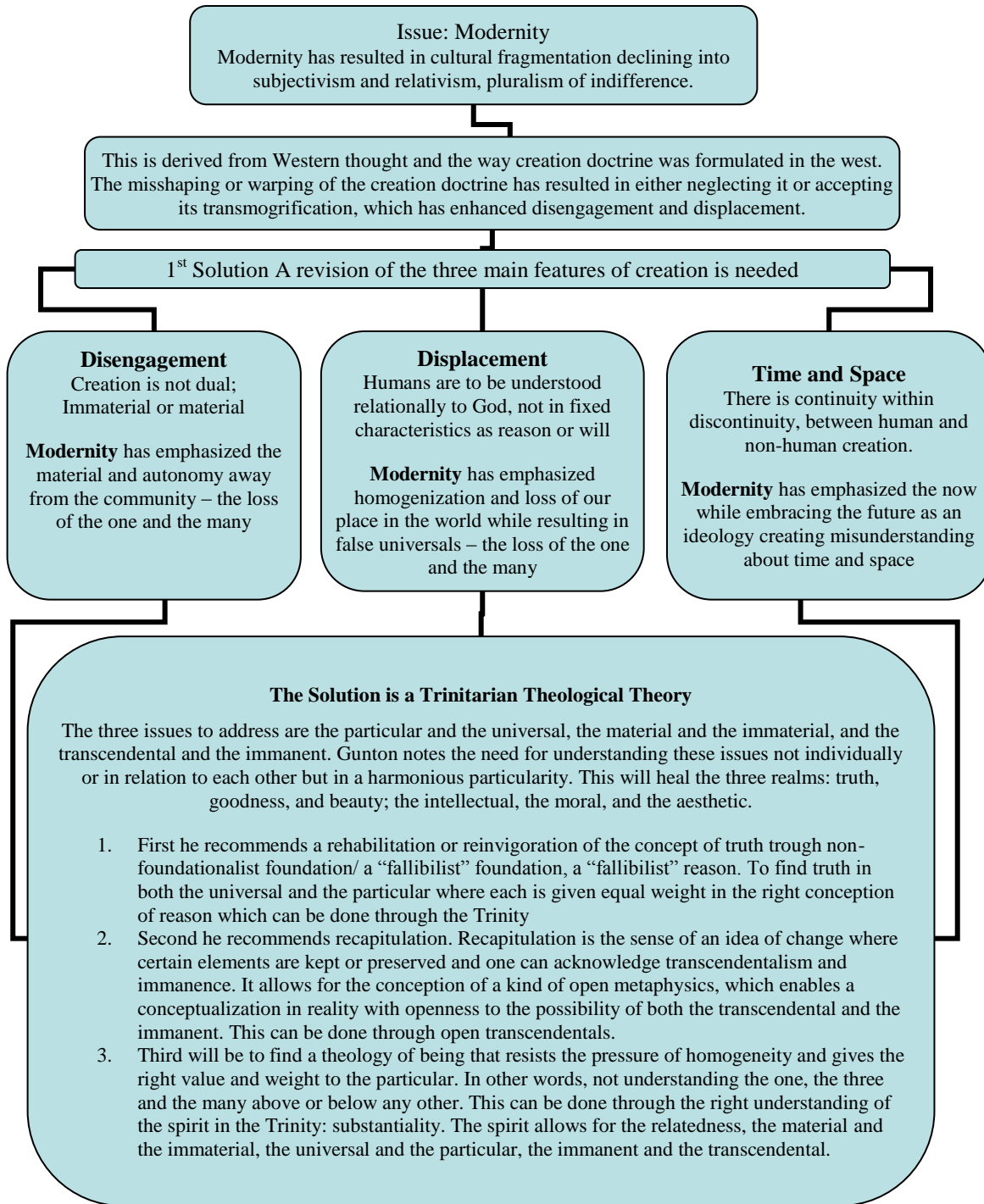
We have now a better understanding of Gunton’s Trinitarian Theological Theory. This theory aims at addressing three issues: disengagement (amongst particulars and from the universal), dislocation (of the material and the immaterial) and time and space (the transcendental and the immanent as separate). In other words, Gunton is arguing that through the Trinity an understanding of the one and the many can take place and disengagement, dislocation, and the truth about time and space reveal the communion that will heal the three realms: truth, goodness, and beauty; the intellectual, the moral, and the aesthetic. The structure of Gunton’s Trinitarian theology can be seen in **Illustration 3-1**.

Following this paragraph is **Table 3-2** with more concepts that have been used not only in Gunton’s writings about the Trinity but those commenting on Gunton’s writings that can help further the creation of new bases for knowledge and/or reality. These are examples of harmonious particularity.

<b>One Creating Entity</b>	<b>Spirit</b>	<b>Christ</b>
Word	Thought	Deed
Moral	Intellectual	Aesthetic
Goodness	Knowledge	Beauty
Mind	Spirit	Body
Super-conscious	Subconscious	Conscious
Antimatter	Energy	Matter
Being	Knowing	Experience
Theoretical	Tacit	Empirical
Ethics	Science	Aesthetics

**Table 3-2 Other Concept to describe the Trinity**





**Illustration 3-1 Trinitarian Theological Theory Structured**

## **Critiques of Trinitarian Theological Theory**

Trinitarian Theological Theory with all its possibilities does not come without some criticisms and challenges.

### **General Critique**

One of the most useful critiques from a theological perspective to note is the troubling tendency noted by David S. Cunningham in *These Three are One: the Practice of Trinitarian Theology*, which he calls historical scapegoating (1998). Historical scapegoating is the blaming of the doctrine of the Trinity's misunderstanding, neglect, or decline on particular theologians or theological movements from the past. Some examples that Cunningham notes who have used historical scapegoating are: Karl Ranher and Colin Gunton blaming St. Thomas Aquinas; Robert Jenson and Colin Gunton blaming St. Augustine; LaCugne's blaming Gregory Palmas, St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, also the Cappadocian Fathers, Athanasius, and the Council of Nicaea; Jürgen Moltmann noting the fault of one or more Evangelists. He then notes that this type of writing casts doubt on subsequent traditions, it is done with instruments created in a different period, and saddles ancient Christian authors with positions that were not theirs. This becomes even more difficult when some critiques do have to be addressed in order to better understand what Trinitarian theology can offer, what is Trinitarian theology all about, and how formulation of the doctrine has spoken and can speak to the present context (Cunningham 1998).

### **Critiques in Terms of Social Theory**

Some theologians have argued that the Trinitarian Theological Theory outside a conceptualization of an open transcendental, *perichoresis*, and/or open reality can result in the legitimacy of a hierarchical and absolutist form of government. This is because even in the Trinity there is still the misconstrued tendency of oneness, of unity, and in addition the general

acceptance of what has been referred to as “Godhead.” This leads to the submission of the many to the one by losing the particulars to the perceived singular most important particulars of the Trinity. Sadly, this can also be perceived in Gunton’s Trinity by his return to Irenus and the two hands of the One creating entity. This description or conceptualization of the Trinity contains within the perception of Godhead, of a hierarchy he so graciously discourages. Karen Kilby notes that “before [the One creating entity]... all human beings are leveled: all alike are creatures, absolutely different from their creator, and any attempt by some to lord it over the others can be seen as a sinful attempt to usurp the place of the [one creating entity]” to exalt the many in the place of the one (2000, 7).

At the same time, within this critique is the perception of the masculinization of the Trinity. In the Trinity, two out of three particulars are normally referred, as masculine, and even when the understanding of the Trinity is of one essence, the concept has been generally understood or genderized masculine. This can be seen in the art, poetry, liturgy, and hymnody, where depictions of the Trinity have been masculine. This masculinization or patriarchy of the Trinity has been further emphasized in Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism with all male clergy. This is not to argue whether depicting the Trinity in any particular gender is better than the other but rather that it is not appropriate to depict or assign any particular gender to the Trinity. At the same time, it is a legitimate critique of patriarchy that has filtered into our practices (Cunningham 1998; Kilby 2002) where one gender has been perceived to be above the other. I have attempted to address this issue in this dissertation by referring to God as the One creating entity. This concept is based on David Cunningham’s recommendation in *These Three are One: the Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (1998).

## **Projection**

The strongest objection against Trinitarian theory is presented by Karen Kilby as projection, or high level projection, which is described as the development of the understanding of the Trinity within the self either as self-possess or constituted by relationships which could be either presented by an individual author or society's latest ideas of how we should live in community and then imposing that as the doctrine of the One creating entity. Kilby understands that at some level all theorists project and create concepts to describe what cannot be comprehended filling in their theories with borrowed notions and personal experiences. Then this understanding is presented as a wonderful new thing that Christianity has to offer the world (2000). She notes that the danger lies in that whatever is projected on to the One creating entity is immediately projected onto man. In addition, she notes that doctrines of the One creating entity run the risk of presenting a false understanding or statement of what the One creating entity is or is not.

## **Fallen Beings**

Another critique worth noting is presented by Brad Green in "Colin Gunton and the Theological Origin of Modernity" (2010). He notes that all of the issues of modernity cannot be explained in terms of improper theological missteps, misunderstandings, or misconceptions. Green notes that in order for Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory to be complete, we also need to consider that we are flawed beings, damaged by the fall. This means that we need to consider that although one can agree with Gunton, that modernity overemphasizes the one over the many, and that certain theological doctrines may have laid the groundwork for this alienation, attention needs to be paid to human sinfulness. Green says that Gunton's analysis is incomplete, and that he needs to accept the biblical anthropology that "in our fallen state our human tendency

is not to gravitate towards better theological construal...rather the more fully [the One creating entity] reveals... the fallen sinner's mode is to resist such revelation" (2010, 173) There are plenty of passages in the Bible in support of this, as well as philosophy. Paul sees sinful humanity as refraining from accepting the truth, "scripture consistently links our ability to know with our desires, loves, and with the state of our hearts, and the reality of sin shapes and mitigates and twists our ability to know" (Green 2010, 174).

### **Challenges in Terms of Application**

In addition to various theoretical criticisms against the Trinitarian Theological Theory, there are some perceived challenges to its application. These challenges were presented by David S. Cunningham's call for more practical and specific examples of the application of Trinitarian Theology from theologians (1998). First, those aiming at a systematic account or application of the Trinitarian theological theory need "to release the doctrine from its imprisonment within the dusty history of dogma, translating it into our present context" (Cunningham 1998, ix). Second, it is necessary to render it more intelligible to both Christian and non-Christian. Third, it is important to present the testimony to its profound significance for the shape of Christian life. In other words, he recommends bringing the Trinity outside thought, into everyday life, into action. It was Ludwig Wittgenstein that noted "practice gives words their sense" (quoted in Cunningham 1998, 1). Cunningham guides us by recommending that we ask questions like how diversity within unity can help us address issues of identity and differences in matters of gender, sexual orientation, or criminal punishment (1998, 42).

Another challenge, one directly addressed by Trinitarian theology, is the tendency toward dichotomous structures of thought and knowledge found in analytical thinking. Most analytical thinking leads to "either or," "true or false," "this or that," in other words tendencies to zero sum.

According to Cunningham, in modernity, this thinking in dichotomous terms is applied to realms where it had formerly been assumed to be inapplicable (1998). Analytical thinking is traced to Aristotle, and he noted that in areas of politics, poetics, law, and ethics, analytical thinking should not be applied. This is because it has had a great effect in depleting the rich complexity of some of these endeavors and results in the misguided assumption that the end result is sound. It is like most of us through analytical thinking compare and observe, but stop at one dimension, forgetting about reasoning what we have observe and then going one step further into making something of what we have learned after reasoning. Some examples in theology are arguments about Christ's humanity or divinity, history or myth, body or soul, *theologia* or *oikonomia*, and even Gunton's dichotomy presented in his argument of Heraclitus and Parmenidian.

Cunningham notes that although Gunton presented this distinction as a heuristic devise it became a dichotomy that was difficult to shake (1998). This meant that you either followed one root of thought or the other: Heraclitus is also Postmodernism and the focuses on human embodiment while Parmenidian is Western Christian thought which was enthusiastic about the soul. This, according to Cunningham, reads the history of thought through a Hegelian scheme of thesis and antithesis, which at the same time makes it difficult to create a communion (1998). Some examples in public administration are politics or administration, efficiency or equality, social justice or profit, church or state, accountability or discretion, legalism or morality. This has resulted in either/or arguments allowing zero sum assumptions that result in an answer that does not fit the situation or which is not examined in further depth.

In relation to this mind-set is the question of whether a theological theory can be applied in a secular environment. Is it possible to apply theological terms to the efficient and positive program or mind-set of public administration? It is possible, and even necessary to apply

theological concepts to a secular environment. This is the main purpose behind Trinitarian theological theory, the unification and recovery of the divine and the secular. This may result in a more controversial and therefore difficult question having to do with the application of a Theological Theory in a process or aspect of society where the separation of church and state or secularism is presented under the assumption that it allows for efficiency and equal treatment. This question itself is something that on the surface can be answered in three ways: if one believes theology to exist only in the realm of the immaterial without relation to the material the answer will be no because the application of theological principles cannot take place. Second, if one believes that theology can only be theology in the application of its prescriptions, the answer can be yes. However, these answers will call for a third choice when one is faced with the three approaches to theology that Cunningham notes: speculative (theology at its most basic etymological sense, words about the One creating entity), grammatically (creates a structure for our conversation about the creating entity), and of levels of ethics (helps us to understand the kind of life we are called to live) (1998). This reveals the understanding that all three approaches are needed for the acceptance of the spiritual, material, and how these create a communion. This means that the understanding of the Trinity calls for the acceptance of Gunton's call to accept the conceptualization of the possible realm where the material and the immaterial, the secular and the spiritual, the empirical and the theory can relate and exist in a communion. It is like the Trinity will transform not only reality, but the status quo of construction of knowledge. It will demand knowledge, understanding and practice to be all equally important.

### **Responses**

Gunton responded to these challenges. His main drive was for the integration of the divine to the secular. He attempted to offer a practical application through the revelation of a

new ontology and epistemology, a new reality where the Trinity would be the point of departure. However, one of the greatest concerns Gunton noted of Trinitarian theological theory was his fear that it would be reduced to just a social theory. This makes the practical aspect a challenge, because Gunton's fear was that the theology would be distorted by treating it like a fad. He even expressed concern that his greatest work was perceived to be *The One, the Three, and the Many*. According to him, this book contained the least amount of theology. In many cases, it is this book that presents the practicality of the Trinity and possible healing gift for modernity, but results in Gunton's own work and words to be only a suggestion.

It is a fact that the argument in this book begins with a dichotomous approach, but it ultimately results in the production of a harmonious particularity that allows for the transformation of Gunton's view. At the same time, it is in his writings that he expresses that the greatest challenge to the Trinitarian reality is the habits that we have to break in a dichotomous kind of psychological map, a dichotomous way of thinking. This however, does not seem to challenge the greatest gift of Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory, his insistence on living the gospel every day. He seemed to be driven by the inspiration to invite everyone to the live and convert in action the conversation between the creator and creation. However, at the same time, there is a limit to those receiving revelation, which is why he seems to go back to transforming the Trinity to how it had been understood before he challenged it, with a hierarchical approach.

## **Conclusion**

If one remembers that the Doctrine of the Trinity is a concept that has derived from our attempt to connect with the One creating entity, from an attempt to form a better relationship with the One creating entity, and from the acceptance of an open communication with the One creating entity, then the next step would lead to something better. This has been Gunton's



underlying vision “the created world...[reflecting] in different ways [the One creating entity] in communion” (Tibbs 2010, 116). One can see that the call or invitation from Gunton appears simple but is really quite complex and revelatory. He invites everyone to think beyond the secular without creating an absolute value of the spiritual over the secular. He intends to revolutionize the need to over power, the need of absolutism, while offering the solution for relativism. His approach is not something along the median or mean, or middle of the road, but an acceptance of something more, a communion. He invites us to accept the understanding of the Doctrine of the Trinity, not as giving insight into the creator or providing a picture, but as a rule or set of rules about a new reality, a new arena where the possibility into something more, something we have not yet conceptualize, can be perceived. Gunton invites us through the revision of classical Christian theology in his Trinitarian Theology to develop a model of harmonious particularity, which can be used to work out a broader epistemology and ontology, not for social theory, but a new reality.

## Chapter 4

### Public Administration Revealed

#### Introduction

In this chapter I will argue that the broader epistemology and ontology implied in Gunton's theology can be used to develop a more humanistic, participatory model of public administration, independently of the specific theological aspects of Gunton's thought. Specifically, this model will help break down the sharp distinction between politics and administration. Since its inception, the goal of public administration has been efficiency. Although ideology and practice were intended to be integrated, the zealous drive for professionalization and the passion for efficiency resulted in a mechanistic public administration where science and technology have grown to be the schemata for political decision-making and distorted the political realm itself. This has resulted in positivism becoming public administration's epistemology, as the only form of knowledge creation and decision making, disregarding any possibility for the philosophical dimension, and affecting not only the political but also the administrative aspects of society. Incomplete and incomprehensible epistemology has not only distorted our role and values as public administrators, our contributions as citizens and agents to the "running of the constitution," but even contributed to our overall social reality. It is time to create change that does not regard what has come as a slate to erase, but on the other hand, takes into account what has taken place to find and comprehend where we truly stand. Now is the time for a meeting of the minds between political theory and public administration where transformation can take place and administrative theory is transformed into something more, a political theory that is a public administration theory. This is the time to reunify ideology and practice.

One answer can be found in Trinitarian theological theory. In this chapter I will attempt to present the structure of Trinitarian theology as a new ground in understanding public administration theory by addressing one of the main aspects of public administration epistemology: the politics-administration dichotomy. One of the most important aspects of Trinitarian theology is the idea of three being one without losing particularity. This is what Gunton refers to as harmonious particularity. It is this aspect from Gunton's Trinitarian thought that will break down the sharp distinction between politics and administration through a broader epistemology and ontology.

### **Ontological Roots Disengagement**

Postmodernism can be said to represent the beginning of post-positivist public administration theory. This period created a revolution and in its examinations of our epistemology shed light into hidden or rarely perceived mechanisms that affect humans and their socialization, which includes the creation of knowledge and/or reality itself. This is the understanding that "civilization" itself and its systematic approach to order can enslave humanity into a pattern of control.

This can be found in the classics also, but it is revealed in a kind of holistic context in postmodernism. Postmodernism argues that the application of scientific developments also promotes and supports power structures that redefine and transform reality itself and make it very difficult to question those structures. Thus our understanding of our needs becomes limited and even distorted. This understanding seems to have come to a climax in recent events where economic criteria for decision-making can be perceived in every aspect of our social and personal life.

Postmodernism raises important questions but does not offer much in the way of answers. However, several current political theorists do. For example, much current public administration theory and political debate addresses the question of individual self-interest v. the community or collective interest and presumes that only an either/or answer is possible, because objective knowledge of either is ultimately unknowable. By contrast, Jürgen Habermas notes that no knowledge is independent of human interest but that this does not eliminate the possibility of objective knowledge (1972; Streibel 1991). Human interests vary from the technical, the hermeneutic, and the emancipatory but are all derived from the capacity to communicate and therefore can still be objectively understood by the natural sciences, historical or interpretative analysis, or critical philosophical reasoning. It is through communication, which can take place in various forms, that objective knowledge, morality, and political values are discovered. It is through the pursuit of these interests that the political can stay active and eventually transform society even outside its normalized and distorted reality. This provides a glimpse into the possibility of individual interest and collective good existing within, some order within order and the possibility of harmonious particularity (Streibel 1991).

Another political theory that may have revealed a new way of understanding these issues is that of Alasdair MacIntyre (2007). He notes that the modern attempts to understand morality lack a *telos*, an internal goal that defines life's path and focuses decision-making, since modern thought has abandoned the teleological understanding of nature from which premodern political theories derived such a *telos*. But a *telos* for human existence, and the virtues that allow humans to reach that goal, can be derived from the stories human communities tell about their collective search for truth and meaning. This is not just internal and static, but external and in constant motion. MacIntyre notes that *telos*, is pursued and made real with our actions, more specifically,

virtues. He defined these virtues in modern society as “acquired human qualities that one possesses which become the guide and action to achieve our aim only through practice” (2007, 191). With this redefinition, virtues are understood to be not just an aim, but an already acquired value that in practice allows us -humans- to achieve that which we consider good and is at the same time transformed with those actions into that which we would like to achieve. This means that *telos* is no longer just a thought or intention, but strongly connected to action in which it will acquire its true meaning and value. MacIntyre notes that practice then is not just the exercise of certain skills, or those acquired qualities, but how virtues themselves and goods are conceived (2007).

Like McIntyre, Hannah Arendt looks at the classics. She brings attention to the active dimensions of the human condition; labor, work, and the polis. Modern society has made labor the central human activity, but Arendt argues that action, the public life of the community, should be restored, on a more democratic basis, to the preeminent position it held in the classical polis (1958). The harmonious particularity involved in debate and action to achieve the common good could be understood as an application of the Trinitarian approach discussed in the previous chapter.

Somewhat more generally, Eric Voegelin and Paul Tillich would argue that the severing of the spiritual realm from human decision-making and the construction of society on this basis has contributed to a distortion of reality (1987, 1999). They suggest that reintegrating divine history and secular history--which would result in engagement between creator and creation--would help to heal this distortion. This would result in a more complete or holistic reality. It is through Tillich that we understand that the way we conceptualize the creator and how we, as

creation, relate to the creator, affects how we relate with each other. This can be said to be further emphasized by the severing of the secular and spiritual that Voegelin notes (1999).

In **Table 4-1** this relationship is explored even further. One can note that before the classic period, around Babylonian time, the conceptualization of the One creating entity (or many) was mythical, misconstrued, one could almost say that it was, infantile. Our relationship expressed between creation and creator(s) was ritualistic and while collective and tribal, it was reactionary towards the incomprehensible. This relationship maintained creation in a state of confusion and dependent of an unreliable and capricious nature. This allowed for unity amongst creation because we seem to be together at the will of the misunderstood or mischievous creator(s). This also strongly established disengagement between creator and creation.

During the classical period, the conceptualization of the creator (s) was not only disengaged from nature itself, but at the same time, understood in terms of anthropomorphism. This is because greater understanding of nature developed creating or taking that which was understood away from the unknown, the creator (s). Although it was argued that this is the root of modern understanding of society, it was also argued that it is the root of misconception or the One creating entity. The platonic roots have been connected not only to political theory and the disengagement between ideas and action, between theory and practice, but the disengagement of creator and creation. This at the same time has affected the relationship between each other where the discovery of potential drove humanity to conquer each other and manipulate each other under the pretense of expansion and natural right. It allowed for the beginning of the breaking down of the collective and the tribal. This gave way to the loss of faith in the standing institutions and values, which allowed for the new found conceptualization to spread. There was a great need for a new reality that was offered by Christianity. Although in a great sense, this

allowed for a better understanding of the creator, it further promoted disengagement as noted by Gunton. The platonic and agnostic roots did not allowed for a true understanding of the creator (Gunton 2005; Voegelin 1987). This, according to Gunton, as further emphasized a disengagement from each other that encouraged and at the same time, can be said to, set the stage for individualism specially with the challenge to Christianity by the protestant movement.

Modern thought and philosophy, in reacting against Christianity, developed a conceptualization of the creator that was to be not only personal but also left to every individual. At the same time, the creator was left to reside in the private and left outside the realm of the real, or the practical. The creator and creation were disengaged and created confusion about how we could relate to one another (Gunton 2005; Tillich 1999). It is argued then, that a recapitulation of the conceptualization of the creator as a Triune creating entity, could heal the disengagement from the One and the Many and among the many.

<b>Period</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Conceptualization of Creator</b>	<b>Relationality/ Human Consciousness</b>
Before Classic	Enuma Elish/ Popl Vuh	Power over creation/ Mythic & Ritualistic	Dependence/ Cosmic, collective, tribal
Classic	Classic Greek Thought	Power over creation but involvement is absent from daily/Transitional/ Semi-mythic, Semi-ritualistic, and rebellious	Semi-Independence/ Semi-Collective, Rebellious
Christian	Christianity	No power over creation	Independence/Self- Interest, individualistic
Present	Modern Philosophy	Absent and will create confusion on how we related and human consciousness	Interdependence/ Self- Interested <b>or</b> Collective

**Table 4-1 Conceptualization of the creator affects how we relate to each other<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The information in this table was gathered from Tillich, P. (1999). *The Essential Tillich: An Anthology of the Writings of Paul Tillich*. (F. F. Church, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Lynch, T. D. & Lynch, C. E. (2002). *Applying Spiritual Wisdom. Public Administration & Management: An Interactive Journal*, 7 (1), 8-25; and, Cousins, E. (1993,

## **Epistemological Roots Displacement**

In the second chapter we learned that public administration canon has established from the beginning the scientific as the bases for decision-making. Even in the case of human behavior, the spiritual or moral dimension has been dislocated, in order to fit the creation of truth in the positivist schemata. It has been mechanized even in attempts to accept the fluidity of leadership and organizational context. Public administration as it is right now has a rational-legal structure, with a scientific mind, and a spirit of efficiency. This was established in the classical canon where separation and disengagement were founded as the context in which to understand the reality dealt with by public administration. At the same time, even attempts at humanizing public administration are promoted as tools for use within this scientific context rather than as transformative.

For example, the human behavior school of thought, even while attempting to humanize the administrative machine, enhanced the separation of mind and body by presenting solutions based on efficiency and conceptualizing any solution within the universe of tools. It almost regarded humans and their actions as robotic and their calculations as decision-making. Simon, who in a way called for a transformation within our understanding of organizations and decision-making, has resulted in a stronger systematization of human behavior (1957). He noted that moral behavior can be systematized differently according to organization and organizational needs and goals. He established the understanding of psychological mapping that has helped the development of artificial intelligence but has resulted in a form of moral relativism. This has also emphasized the legal-rational approach to ethics (1957). Moral relativism is in a way perceived as a loose guide for the understanding of morality in public servants, but has also promoted the

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Summer/Fall). Judaism-Christianity-Islam: Fascism Modernity Together. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 30 (34). 417-425.



possibility of the systematization of moral behavior. It has resulted in the loss or displacement of morality (1957; O'Reilly 2011). Simon assumes that there is a standard of decision making even though it changes according to situation. In other words, there is a systematic approach where there is a separation of fact and value (objective and subjective values; the is and ought) and an identification of goals. Ironically, while this could result in replication and validity, it can also result in identification of continual or transcendental values (O'Reilly 2011). Regardless of the attempt to transform public administration's epistemology its own roots have left it immobile in its own mechanistic universe.

This is where one looks at the present for the contribution it can make toward understanding the public administration theory canon. Not in an attempt to rewrite, but recapitulate, a kind of transformation. As a whole, we can see a call for transformation outside the roots, economical and rational, positivist basis. There seems to be a call that would take us outside the perpetual positivist cyclical motion for the establishment of validity in the public administration science. It is like public administration is stocked in a paradigm itself of scientification and efficiency from its conception. Contemporary thinkers shed light not only into the need of stepping outside this mechanistic approach but the acknowledgement of other dimensions within public administration epistemology that have been ignored.

Laurent Dobuzinski notes that public administration is already within the postmodern condition (1997). This means that the positivistic framework informing public administration can now be questioned and that the paradoxes within public administration's schemata of decision making can possibly be addressed. Camilla Stivers notes that we should question our reality and be critical in order to find new approaches to public administration and be able to share with the public the good that government is and can do (1997; King and Stivers, 1998). Stivers and C.S.

King give three reasons for current high levels of discontent with government: strong control, inefficiency, and disconnection between government and the citizens. They respond to these perceived problems by calling for engagement, for the exercise of power through political involvement in administration, where the role of the administrators would be to find ways or establish processes that facilitate political activity. Janet and Robert Denhart further emphasize the need for something other than the economic values (2007). They called for the total transformation of the role of public administrators. Stivers moves in this direction by arguing that the context of both public administration and public administrators needs to be the political (2008). She notes that it is philosophy that can offer the tools for addressing thinking that has broken down the political realm to the point where we have forgotten how to act, to practice action. She says that we have displaced values and forgotten about the meaning or virtues that uphold the political. The role of the public administrator has shrunk to that of dealmaker, contract monitor, and overseer, even as the role and size of government has expanded. This means that somewhere there is a basic disconnection between the role and purpose of public administrators, government, and the citizenry.

Ontology and epistemology have somehow met in their acknowledgement of needing something else, something beyond the cultural, technical, and intellectual norm. The two realms seem to want to acknowledge an unknown and out of our control dimension; Something that will bring about unity in creator and creation without losing the particular or relational value; something that will allow for engagement; something that will revive action to transform the *vita activa*; something that will allow for the revelation of truth, beauty, and knowledge that will not allow for displacement. This transformation cannot be temporary; cannot be self-contained; that it is not only a particular but also constant in a bigger context where it is transformation itself

while transforming. We have agreed that we need the equal value of both, the contemplation and action, the creator and creation, where a third aspect creates the understanding of a unity while respecting the value of all three.

### **Trinitarian Theological Theory**

Trinitarian theological theory is an aspect of systematic theology. Systematic theology can give us insights into a holistic approach to public administration. This is because systematic theology is concerned with summarizing the doctrinal traditions of a religion and relating those traditions convincingly to the religion's present-day setting. For public administration systematic theology would give a sense of the direction a more holistic approach would take, relating the canon, to the political. As Gunton stated, the systematization involved in systematic theology is “not so much a matter of the organizing of [conceptualizations] into systems, as of weighting and balancing in the ways [political] matters are placed into relation with one another” (quoted in Webster 2010, 18). This will allow public administration epistemology to become the rational conversation that would exist in a communal form that would “relate eternal [creating entity] to temporal creation [the now], and [will do it] in such a way as to preserve at once the sovereignty and priority of [eternal] action and the proper *Selbständigkeit* –relative independence- of the world” (Webster, 2010, 19-20).

We now have a better understanding of Gunton’s Trinitarian Theological Theory. This theory aims at addressing three issues: disengagement (which has taken place from each other, from origin or nature, and from the creator), dislocation/ displacement (of the material and the immaterial) and time and space (a new understanding of the transcendental and the immanent challenging their view as separate). In other words, Gunton is arguing that through the Trinity an understanding of the one and the many can take place and can reveal the communion that will

heal the three realms: truth, goodness, and beauty, or the intellectual, the moral, and the aesthetic. His recommendation is not to be understood as an all-encompassing absolute truth or theory, but instead in pursue for a different understanding of the dimensions themselves, a kind of recapitulation of history, a kind of revelation of a new reality. He presents three solutions that I have attempted to reword for the purpose of taking them outside the theological rhetoric into the public administration canon.

There are three assumptions that we have to challenge in every concept we address in public administration. This will create the context in which Trinitarian ontology can reveal a new reality. First, creation should not be understood as dualistic, as immaterial *or* material, because this sets these two apart, isolated, and gives each of our dimensions a different value. A dualistic nature emphasizes one dimension over the other. This can be seen in arguments where one gives more importance to the spirit than the body, or thoughts more than action. Second, while creation should not be dualistic, it should not be thought of as equal to creator. It is important to start assuming the possibility of particularity, distinction, individuality in a collective where individuals retain their particularity. We should think of the relationship between creator and creation, and different aspects of creation, relationally. Third, we have to challenge our understanding of time and space because it has not only influence thought, and action, but also limited our potentiality. We seem to have not moved away from Newtonian conceptualizations of Time and Space and deterministic language where control and rigidity is still part of scientific logic (Overam 1996). There is a possibility of continuity within discontinuity, outside the strong focused on the now which has placed our understanding and connection to the future in the realm of ideas, which is already understood to be other than.

The elements of Trinitarian theology are, the one the three, the many, *perichoresis* and *oikonomia*. The “one” in Gunton’s theory is the singular, the particulars within the Trinity. The one expresses distinctiveness, and the importance of the particular in both individual and collective action. It is also understood as the system of universal coordinates, what gives structure to the world, where the individual is the main element in the process of communion between creator and creation and allows the third aspect to act, and thus relate and perfect. The “three” is not just the Trinity in communion, creator, creation and relatedness, but also the communion, the collective, the process (for lack of a better word) of universe of particulars in relation; *perichoresis* and *oikonomia*. The “many” is then the particulars within the Trinity, and creaturely collectivity. Creaturely collectivity allows for the inclusion of nature. Gunton attempts to avoid the perceived basic error of the Western tradition of theology and philosophy, the Platonizing of Western tradition, the basic modes of dualism. *Perichoresis* is what links, what allows for the communion of particulars without losing their particularity or singularity, or reducing their communion into a unity. It allows for the understanding of three dimensions, which may receive existence from each other in a dynamic event of interdependent reciprocity without reducing this interdependence to only this relationship. *Perichoresis* is a communion of mutual open particulars, a “profound degree of relationality” (Polkinghorn, 2004, 103). *Oikonomia* has been at times what replaces *perichoresis* in the explication of the Trinity’s activity, but in Gunton’s theological theory is the context of *perichoresis*. *Oikonomia* includes the assumption mentioned above where the communion is not in favor of one particular over the other. It completely replaces selfishness with love in the exchanges of the communion, which is now viewed as not limited by time and space.

As noted above, the issues to be addressed with these concepts are disengagement, displacement, and our conceptualization of time and space. First, to address disengagement is to address the issue of a dual nature where the immaterial and the material have been accepted as separate dimensions in the human condition rendering us as only rational, physical, or spiritual. We would have to accept that being means all three dimensions at once. This will allow for the transformation in thought that we are not only instinctual animals guided by a desire for self-preservation, but also empathetic; not only self-interested but also of a collective mind. Understanding that we are individual and collective at the same time would create further change: our understanding of the role of government, our definitions of power, authority, and rights, and consequently the structure of our society. We can no longer view ourselves as animals fighting to reach the top of the mountain at the expense of each other. We have to accept an inherent good that relates each one of us to the collective.

Second, to address displacement of values, truth, and beauty, we would have to acknowledge not only an entity or energy that somehow is not seen or completely understood but present and provides for a unity, holding chaos and disorder together. It would mean accepting that there is an unknown meaning and value in history while maintaining personal responsibility for its development. This is not just about faith, about the assumption that not everything can be scientifically explained, or that there is unanswerable questions and unaccounted variables outside our control, but also about the acceptance of personal responsibility for our immediate proximate environment and for its ultimate fate. This new accepted fact and reality, a new truth through where everything else can be revealed, will engage us once more to the creator, to each other, and to creation, accepting both individual and collective value and goodness, in a union, a communion.

Third, it is important to change our perception of time and space. We cannot longer accept time and space as separate. We must embrace Einstein's believe in timespace, where the possibility of relation between temporal and immanence exists. This means that there is a possible relation between the eternal and the now where the two can hold the same value and we can see the possibility of continuity within discontinuity, or transcendentalism within temporality. This means that value has to be understood in terms of a bigger picture, a long term, not just the now.

The conceptualization of the creator or creating entity will inevitably be tied to a particular theological approach. However, this essay will not argue for a Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or other theological approach, but simply that secular thinking is not the only path to rationality. It is possible for scientific and non-scientific thought to achieve a holistic approach to knowledge, to achieve wisdom through the spiritual. In public administration there is vast scholarship about spiritual wisdom, some of it mentioned in previous chapters. It is argued that this can help us, as administrators, make informed ethical choices (Lynch 2002). Furthermore, it acknowledges the inner life and the relation of this to the outer life. It allows for the comprehension of the individual act to the collective good. Without promoting one religion or philosophy, there is one aspect that can help in the spiritual aspect of the theory. It is in our convergence, in the meeting of our minds, that we can find basis for building fundamental universal collective wisdom that can emerge from the acceptance that the material, the immaterial and spirit exist and should be regarded with equal importance. In the context of the everyday, thought, action, and word are what creates, and not just in the present but in the eternal. A Trinitarian approach would not only mean no more dichotomies, but allow us to truly access where we are and where we might be going.

<b>Summary of Trinitarian Theological Theory</b>		
<b>Problems Identified</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disengagement (from our creator, nature, each other, and our reality)</li> <li>2. Dislocation/displacement (from a holistic understanding and misunderstanding of knowledge, goodness, and beauty)</li> <li>3. Misunderstanding of time and space</li> </ol>		
<b>Solution</b>		
<b>The Trinity</b>		
<b>Context of Solution</b>		
1. Relating public administration theory to reality		
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nature cannot be dualistic –material or immaterial, bad or good</li> <li>2. Creation and creator cannot be of equal value. The disappearance of dualism means the disappearance of a divisive wall between two concepts; however, this should not be taken as if then the two concepts, distinct in their own right, become the same or of the same value. To understand the new nature, we need to think of creator and creation, creation and creation, relationally</li> <li>3. Time and space cannot longer be thought of as separate or mutually exclusive.</li> </ol>		
<b>Elements</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One (creator, creation –individual and nature-, spirit/ all in particular and distinct from one another)</li> <li>2. Three (communion of all three; the relationality process; <i>perichoresis</i> and <i>oikonomia</i>)</li> <li>3. Many (collective of all three, or collective of creation)</li> </ol>		
This is a list of more concepts that have been used not only in Gunton’s writings about the Trinity but those commenting on Gunton’s writings that can help further the creation of new bases for knowledge and/or reality		
<b>One Creating Entity</b>	<b>Spirit</b>	<b>Christ</b>
Word	Thought	Deed
Moral	Intellectual	Aesthetic
Goodness	Knowledge	Beauty
Mind	Spirit	Body
Super-conscious	Subconscious	Conscious
Antimatter	Energy	Matter
Being	Knowing	Experience
Theoretical	Tacit	Empirical
Ethics	Science	Aesthetics
Body	Mind	Soul

**Table 4-2 Summary of Trinitarian Theological Theory**

### **Rendering the Politics/Administration Dichotomy a False Dilemma**

There are many areas of study in public administration. We could explore different segments within public administration, from employee incentives to organizational culture, from the public administrator’s role to what is the goal of public administration. However, I will address here only one of the tenants of public administration epistemology and reveal how a



Trinitarian theological theory approach can transform our view of public administration. This tenant is the politics-administration dichotomy.

### **What is the Politics-Administration Dichotomy?**

The politics-administration dichotomy is the idea that politics and administration should be separate, mutually exclusive, opposing spheres. This separation of spheres has been rooted in public administration epistemology, beginning with Woodrow Wilson in his article “The Study of Administration” (1887). His intent was to promote efficiency in the application of government services, thus reducing corruption and avoiding anti-politics sentiment by running the constitution on scientific principles. He promoted politics and administration as different spheres for the purpose of studying administration separate from politics, thus promoting the professionalization of public administrators, and specifically getting rid of the spoils system. He also established the idea that politics establishes and prescribes the rules and parameters of administrative action that can ensure and promote efficiency in the administration. This was expected to keep administration outside the political realm. Although this was in response to the development of a mass society with diverse demands to satisfy it was also an attempt to achieve the goal of political neutrality, rooted in the liberal tradition of political thought, which attempted to guard against the passions of politics (Skelley 2008; Overeen 2005).

John Goodnow, although not necessarily promoting this dichotomous approach, has been historically linked to it by not completely rejecting it. He promoted the dual functionality of government asserting the complementarity of politics and administration but noting that at certain levels or stages of governing politics should stay outside administrative operations because “certain aspects of administration are harmed by politics... by [the] perceived demand of compliance to political agencies” (Svara 1998, 53). He noted that this was analytically

possible but practically impossible and therefore a harmony between both was necessary for the modern state. Goodnow and Wilson “wrote [promoting a dichotomous approach to public administration] in a time when bureaucracies were ripe with patronage, incompetence, and even outright corruption” (Svara 1998, 42). They both believed that politics was strongly influencing administration (Overeem 2005). The dichotomous approach is useful for the establishment of boundaries, of limits to authority, of jurisdiction, which allowed for the professionalization of administration and for the perception of equal treatment through the establishment of administrative rules and regulations (Svara 1998).

It should be noted that Svara (1998), Van Riper (1984), Yang & Holzer (2005), and Walker (1989) do not agree that the origin of the dichotomy can be entirely traced to Wilson, or that the analysis of the concept should be absolutist. They believe that Wilson was not necessarily establishing a dichotomous approach to public administration but trying to advance neutrality in its application. Yang and Holzer also argue that the conceptualization of Wilson and Goodnow was more open and that an enthusiastic drive for neutrality turned it into a social construct that lasted until the Hoover Commission, if not even later. Svara (1998), Van Riper (1984), Yang & Holzer (2005), and Walker (1989) argue that the root of the dichotomous approach to government action can indeed be traced to the U.S. Constitution, because in the Constitution we find the separation of legislative and executive powers. This allows the distinction to become logical and helps to establish the dichotomous approach to public administration as an ideal. This can be seen in the council-manager form of government (Svara 1998; Skelley 2008). The council-manager government is the approach at the local government level where the manager of a town reports to a council, which in turn is responsible to the public. Under this form of government, it is presumed that the city manager has no involvement in the

shaping of policy but is instead a neutral administrator that follows the prescription given. Furthermore, it has been shown that the dichotomy has been perpetuated or reinforced not only throughout the various schools of thought, but by the expansion of authority of the executive which has enhanced the importance of the executive above the legislative, while placing the blame on the legislative for inefficiency since it is here where politics plays a stronger role (Rosenbloom and Ross 1994; Skelley 2008; Waldo 1948). This is epitomized in the recent quest to “reinvent government,” which further discourages citizen participation in favor of experts; private values to public values (privatization); and analytical techniques above democratic practices.

In any case, after this review of public administration epistemology, we can see that this dichotomous root can be found in positivism where social reality is understood through a separation of fact and value. Dobuzinskis calls this a “positivist dogma.” Wilson seems to have emphasized it by noting bureaucracies as the instruments through which implementation of policies and programs can take place through scientific processes (Dobuzinskis 1997).

The dichotomous approach to public administration seemed to have changed around 1940 because there was a strong argument that the middle and upper level bureaucrats play a role in politics that influences the rules and regulations that construct limits and parameters for governmental action. This does not mean that scientific approaches of principles were abandoned, but a type of blended view of politics and administration replaced the dichotomous approach. The separation seems to have resurfaced during the sixties and then again in the eighties (with the spirit of privatization). This may have been a “historical response to social change” (Skelley 2008, 552; Dobuzinskis 1997). There seems to be somewhat of a cycle where the separation shrinks and grows, but in any case the distinction persists. Patrick Overeem

argues that is a concept that we cannot leave behind because of our constant promotion of government neutrality (2005).

This has left public administration epistemology with two models or approaches to the politics-administration dichotomy. The first model, derived from the classical/rational school of thought, is the assumption that politics and administration are separate spheres. This separation is done for the purpose of a strict structure of organization where responsibilities, expectations, and jurisdiction are carefully prescribed and therefore politics and administration can exist in separate-non-inclusive-dimensions. This also allows for the separation of political science and public administration as separate professions. This model also implies that public administration is subordinate to politics (democratic government), although its critics argue that it tends to make public administration unresponsive (Walker 1989). The second model is the blended, complementary, and or cooperative approach to politics and administration. This approach is believed to be open to the interrelation and interdependence between the political and administrative dimension of public administration. It is described as an “interaction of political control and professional independence” (Svara 2001, 179). It also accounts for political power of administrators within and without the agency and at different levels of the organization. This approach sees administration as more democratic.

### **The Dichotomy’s Consequences on Public Administration’s Epistemology**

As just discussed, the politics-administration dichotomy has been challenged since the 1940s. It was observed that administrators could influence policy making and therefore the spheres were not so exclusive. The barriers thought to separate them came down (Svara 1998). Instead there seems to be a “complementarity of politic and administration” (Svara 1998, 179; Skelley 2008). This concept has even been declared dead by several public administrators

scholars while others insist that it will never go away (O'Toole 1987; Waldo 1948; Skelley 2008; Appleby 1946). Svvara rejects dichotomy as a term because it reflects a misrepresentation and obscures the complexity of public administration. He notes that only understanding politics and administration as complementary can allow for policy implementation and achievement of political aims. This cannot have been perceived or understood without been aware of the consequences of the conceptualization itself. These consequences can be said to be rooted in the complexity of the relationship between politics and administration, which is both normative and empirical.

### *Normative*

The normative aspect of the politics-administration relationship is rooted in Weber's understanding of bureaucracies and bureaucrats: "the politician in a bureaucratized society must be an 'identifiable, politically and ethically responsible individual at all time,' because bureaucratic decisions cannot be attributed to one individual but are collective in nature" (Skelley 2008, 556; Yang and Holzer 2005). The dichotomy has provided a functional distinction that is said to parallel willing and acting and it has a powerful ideational heritage. It is mechanistic and scientific through the institutionalization of behavior by developing or prescribing bureaucrat's accountability to a higher authority and establishing expectation of behavior at all levels of government. It also potentially guards against vainglory and the possibility to undermine public values while allowing for limited individual discretionary action. The separation aims at the practice of neutrality and impartiality in politics at the administration level. It allows for two distinct ethical frameworks, the bureaucratic ethos and the democratic ethos (Yang and Holzer 2005). This is how the dichotomy has been made an ideal normative

theory. It has in a way been used to describe and prescribe behavior-insulating practice from political interference. (Svara 1998).

***Empirical***

Empirically the conceptualization of politics and administration as separate spheres allows for functionality, and constitution. It is argued, whether against the dichotomy or in favor, that it is and was established as an analytical tool, not a rigid understanding of the functions of governing (Svara 1998; Waldo 1984; Appleby 1949; Overeem 2005). In other words, its separation of action allows for clear understanding of expectations while rooting it to the authority of government action. It is said that is an “important tool in the fashioning of the administrative state true to the constitution” (Skelley 2008, 552). This means that it is the dichotomy that roots the administrative state to the U.S. Constitution and reinforces the administrative state’s legitimacy.

<b>Some Consequences of the Politics-Administration Dichotomy</b>
<p>Dichotomous Approach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Neutrality (reaction to the spoil system)</li> <li>2. Pursuit of administration as an autonomous profession (outside politics)</li> <li>3. Promoted competency and democratic values</li> <li>4. Separation of power/ promotes constitutional frameworks</li> <li>5. Distinct ethical frameworks</li> </ol>
<p>Non-Dichotomous Approach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring about constitutional inconsistencies</li> <li>2. Recognizes administrator’s role in policy making</li> <li>3. Represents the complexity of public administration</li> <li>4. Presents lack of legislative control over administration</li> <li>5. Allows for effective legislation</li> </ol>

**Table 4-3 Politics-Administration Dichotomy Consequences**

**The Politics-Administration Dichotomy other than a False Dilemma**

The politics-administration dichotomy can be said to be part of the public administration epistemology forever. This means that we have to accept the different arguments presented as part of the epistemology that has shaped were we are right now. I will concentrate on the two

major points made about the dichotomy, that as a dichotomy it allows for a distinction and separation between politics and administration, while as complementary it allows for the acceptance that each although distinct does complement the other. Trinitarian theological theory will simultaneously transform the concept itself and the context in which it is argued by transforming basic assumptions in the conversation and action into a new reality. It will allow for a harmonious particularity of opposing concepts, views, and arguments to accept both sides as part of the concept itself.

The problems identified in public administration can be seen as parallel to those noted about modernity. There seems to be disengagement, displacement, and a misunderstanding of time and space. The disengagement of modernity is ontologically from our creator and from each other. Our reality is mainly secular, and language has become so technical that there seems to be a break in the communication that can take place among fellow citizens where scientification has completely replaced wisdom. Epistemologically the disengagement is noted between fellow academicians, and between academicians and practitioners. Displacement in public administration takes the form of replacement of service and connection with the political realm for the drive to professionalization and scientification of public administration. This takes place instead of a democratic ethos. The misunderstanding or disconnection to new possible ways of conceptualizing time and space has left us in a rigid, mechanistic reality where absolutism and zero-sum arguments seem to be the only norm accepted (see **Table 4-4**).

### ***Disengagement***

The lack of acknowledgement of a spiritual dimension in the human condition has led to a severed humanity. It is literally like we have left part of ourselves behind. Thomas Lynch and Cynthia Lynch, while addressing the question of spiritual wisdom for public administrators, note

that developing spiritual wisdom is not a promotion of one religion above the other, but in the acceptance that spirituality serves a purpose that lies outside religion itself (2002). Paul Tillich, discussed in Chapter 2, would agree and notes that spirituality (religiosity outside a religion) starts at the ontological questions of where we come from. Spirituality allows us not only to develop guides for decision making, but see ourselves as part of the collective where the eternal matters and is in relation to the present. It also acknowledges something bigger than ourselves that unites us by being creatures.

One way to link the self and the collective is through the soul (spirit). The soul, according to the Lynches, is “an acquired conscience of one or more sentient beings that guides our behavior” (1999, 25). They note that the purpose of a sentient life is the development of a collective spirit through shared consciousness. This means that if one takes into account the spirit in the unification of knowledge and practice, there will be a context for the exercise of the vocation as a public servant. Lynch and Lynch note that this spirit can be empirically observed during times of union. They give examples of one crying in union with someone else for their sadness, but also of been driven to action by someone’s words or determination. Ignoring this empirically verifiable spirituality has resulted in a spirituality that is not acknowledged at any level, including the societal level, resulting in disengagement. We have lost our link to each other and collective consciousness has broken down.

Observing disengagement at the level of public administrators, one can see that the confusion of who we are adds to our confusion about what we are supposed to do. This can be seen throughout our epistemology where there is a struggle between public official *or* public managers, between engagement *or* strict administration. This struggle is so ingrained in our profession because we lack connectedness to a collective consciousness. Stivers notes that we



disregard the political for the pursuit of individual goals. If we accept the political as the collective consciousness we would unite in a collective spirit where we, as public administrators, will become true moral agents. It will be our moral responsibility or duty to consider moral dimensions in decision making because of their impact on the collective soul, spirit and or identity, making every decision an individual and collective choice. This is not easily achievable under the assumptions of modern thought, but could be accomplished if we develop guidelines from developed from a Trinitarian theology (see **Table 4-2**). By accepting the spiritual dimension, we could empirically learn that the actions of public servants for the good of the collective, what Lynch and Lynch call virtue ethics, which takes place with the collective consciousness, and or identity, will reveal love, the *perichoresis* and *oikonimia*, a new nature that enhances life and not merely individual self-preservation.

At the epistemological level, disengagement between academicians and practitioners leaves a gap between what we research and what practitioners need. This is evident in the scholarly work presented in respected journals for public administration. Bushouse notes that most research is conducted outside practice. Seventy seven percent of articles reviewed in *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* and in *Public Administration Review* have no practitioner involvement (Bushouse 2011, i101). The report from Minnowbrook III calls for the creation of a bridge between theory and practice. It notes that theorists of public administration have become “academic free agents rather than institutional, community, or academic citizens” (quoted in Bushouse 2011, i102). Being academic citizens is the essence inherent in the spirit of public service, where action takes place with the collective in mind. This means that the academic work, or rather, academic service is guided by an innate pursuit of intellectual and civic progress (Bushouse 2011). This frees us into a new reality where one’s

actions, although individual, will serve and shape the collective. The article notes that for this to take place, we have to work with other disciplines, discover new forms of language, to challenge old assumptions, and reintegrate knowledge. These goals can be accomplished by accepting a new paradigm where the pursuit of knowledge means discovery, integration (interdisciplinary research), application (relevance), and knowledge sharing (Bushouse 2011). Or as Yang and Holzer noted, “balancing seemingly opposing values can only be achieved in an ongoing process of solving social problem” (2005, 124)

This is not only a possible solution, but also a solution that will drive transformation in reality because it will completely change current assumptions. It is difficult to ask a profession to humble itself. Public administration had to step out of the shadow of politics to become its own field, and this process created a negative attitude toward politics which actually forms part of public administration’s identity. However, in seeing our nature not as dualistic but rather in union with practitioners and politicians, we can accept a communion for the benefit of not only ourselves but the collective (see **Table 4-4**).

### *Displacement*

Displacement in public administration has taken place in the relation of its role and purpose to values within the profession. An example is the replacement of service to the political realm with the professionalization and scientification of public administration. Some of this displacement would be addressed by greater engagement with politics. However, we must address the confusion that emerges from attempting to make public administrators managers, and not public servants, to really address this displacement.

We can begin to get a sense of what this would mean by examining a distinction made by a prominent public administration theorist. Political behavior and action behavior according to

Brunsson involve different kinds of decision-making. The action organization requires agreement regarding goals and avoidance of conflict and requires a strong organizational ideology, which is presumed to reduce choice. Political organizations focus on the organizational environment reflecting a variety of ideas and demands satisfying a variety of expectations from diverse groups, and are governed by the principle that conflict produces decisions. This means that a political organization, according to Brunsson is “to [communicate] in a way that satisfies [a variety of] demands, to decide in a way that satisfies another [variety], and to supply a product that satisfies a third [variety]” ( quoted in Skelley 2008, 559). Public administration has the characteristics of both action and political organizations. Thus it deals with conflict and struggle. But public administration has tended to deny the inevitability of conflict. Thus equality or justice is displaced by effectiveness, and public administration forgets of its public status, its communion to the collective. This can be perceived in both political theory and public administration theory where the scientification of politics has resulted in rigid mechanistic understanding of politics itself. At the same time, the pursuit of scientification in a conflictual environment like politics results in further disengagement from politics, thus displacing political virtue for political apathy. Bureaucracy is not understood as the public organization of a complex state guided by a collective consciousness through law, but as a group of trained incompetents blinded by red tape.

This displacement can be transformed first by engagement, and second by pursuing better forms of understanding knowledge. This in turn must accept that there is no possibility of a clean slate. We cannot and should not forget what we have to learn from each other; now is the time for acknowledgement of one another and reunification of our minds for the purpose of creating a holistic knowledge where mind (knowledge), body (experience) and spirit (connectedness) in

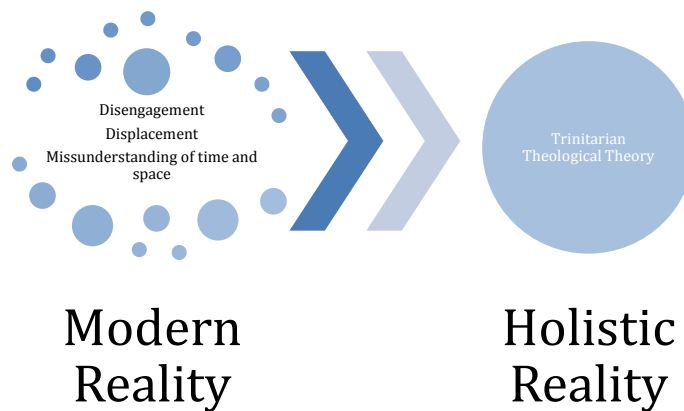
communion reveal a new reality. This means that we must proceed with holistic epistemology. We cannot pick and choose but must integrate through different perspectives. At the same time, we have to take into account our experience, what we have learned and done with our knowledge. Finally, in communion with these two, we must consider our spirit. This will be not only our collective consciousness, but our acceptance of something greater than ourselves that will allow for a vision of the eternal and the temporal in a cosmic process. The spirit will unite, will guide, and will transform while also revealing the new transformed reality (see **Table 4-4**).

### *Time and Space*

It is obvious that in the field of public administration classic scientific thinking has had a huge impact. More specifically, classical scientific theories of time and space have influenced our approach to social theory. Sam Overman (1996) argues that administrative theory seems to be stuck in Newtonian scientific thought. He notes that ideas about scientific management rely on ideas or conceptualizations of fixed time and space and casual relationships. This has left administrative thought stuck in Newtonian language and the logic of determinism. In this article Overman argues that more recently, two scientific theories, Chaos Theory and Quantum Theory, have had a significant influence on public administration theory. Chaos theory changed a little the perspective of order but did not revolutionize our thought and has kept language deterministic, because even though it addresses chaos, it also assumes a systematic understanding of chaos. Thus it remains essentially Newtonian. Quantum theory on the other hand can create confusion because it focuses on “energy not matter; on becoming not being; on coincidence not causes; on constructivism not determinism; and on new states of awareness and consciousness” (1996, 489). This results in shift of focus away from objective reality, certainty, and simple causality, towards the spiritual and qualities of organizational life. Aaron O’Connell

is an experimental quantum physicist who has recently challenged our assumption about time and space by showing that one thing can be in two places at once. He created an object and showed that the object vibrates and does not vibrate at the same time. In his explanation of this experiment, he argues that this discovery will create a revolution in many areas. For him, however, it means not only that there is a possibility of one thing being in two places at the same time but that it is possible for physical representation of the individual and the collective being one: “in Quantum Mechanics everything is interconnected. That is actually not right. It’s more than that. It is deeper” (2011). This implies that connections define beings and allow for both the distinct object and its communion to all. This literally means that the eternal and the temporal relate.

Addressing the assumptions behind the conceptualization can transform the public-administration dichotomy to a relationship that goes beyond the complementary, to a communion. Public administration is both politics and administration accepting both their distinctiveness and relationality to each other for the purpose of the constitutiveness of the political which also allows for the spiritual in which it finds communion that constitutes, guides, and perfects in temporal and eternal motion.



**Illustration 4-1 Public Administration Revealed**

The transformation has resulted in a revealed public administration where politics and spirit create a harmonious particularity that will accept both a “participatory administration” and a distinct profession where the legislation and executive are in communion united by one spirit, one identity acknowledging not just the present but the eternal (Walker 1989, 511). It represents the point of view of Woodruff, where “Politics and administration are not two antagonistic elements, each seeking to enlarge its sphere of action at the expense of the other. They are not even independent powers in the government, each working in a distinct field, performing its appropriate acts, and having for this purpose an authority of its own. On the contrary, they are two [particulars in a communion]... In a sense, politics and administration take part jointly in every act performed” (Woodruff 1919, 37 quoted in Svava 1998, 53). This revealed public administration will acknowledge all the elements, the one, the three and the many not in a communion but in a harmonious particularity that is dynamic process that accepts the importance of history and reforms without declaring a clean slate.

<b>Summary of a Revealed Public Administration</b>	
<b>Problems Identified</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disengagement (from creator, from the collective, from practitioners, and from each other –as citizens and as professionals)</li> <li>2. Dislocation/displacement (from a holistic understanding of knowledge, goodness, and beauty/ displacement of values-- policy-administration/ bureaucratic democratic ethos)</li> <li>3. Misunderstanding of time and space (unforeseen possibility of both a distinct understanding of politics and administration, while accepting a complementary relationship/ We need to move away from Newtonian language and logic of determinism)</li> </ol>	
<b>Solution</b>	
<b>The Trinity</b>	
<b>Context of Solution</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relating of the canon to existing reality (Engagement)</li> </ol>	
<b>Assumptions</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nature cannot be dualistic – politics (chaos, partisanship) or administration (organizational; neutral)</li> </ol>	

2. Creation and creator cannot be understood in terms of equality/ Politics and Administration cannot lose their distinction or particularity. (The loss of dualism means the disappearance of a divisive wall between two concepts; however, this should not be taken as if then the two concepts, distinct in their own right, become the same. To understand the new nature, we need to think of creator and creation, creation and creation, relationally/ politics and administration relationally/ the political and bureaucracy distinct, particular in a communion, of equal importance to the realm of social processes)
3. Time and space cannot longer be thought of as separate or mutually exclusive. It is better to ascribe to the timespace theory of Einstein where the conceptual possibility of permanence and temporary exist relationally and deterministic language changes.

#### **Elements**

1. One (creator -the unknown, creating energy, the unexplained, the Political realm, society, government, oneself-as citizen, and spirit) creator, creation –individual and nature-, spirit/ all in particular and distinct from one another)
2. Three (communion of all three; the relationality process; *perichoresis* and *oikonomia* – the sharing of the love; the political)
3. Many (collective of all three, or collective of creation, society)

#### **Table 4-4 Summary of Public Administration Revealed**

#### **Conclusion**

From a Trinitarian perspective, public administration’s problem is the confusion of positivism and science. Positivism is a warped interpretation of science as a form of knowledge. It gives an incorrect description of how scientific knowledge is attained. Recent philosophy of science shows that gaining scientific knowledge is in fact holistic, participatory, and even a passionate process. This discovery can allow public administration theory and practice to retain objectivity while moving away from narrow, scientific, technocratic thinking. Trinitarian theology can show more specifically how can this be possible.

Since Wilson, the politics-administration dichotomy “has been with us as an empirical statement, historico-cultural consequence, reform rationale, behavioral norm, myth, intellectual aberration and process gap” (Skelley 2008, 549). The dichotomous approach to public administration has persisted despite clear knowledge that administrative facts have political

consequences, that there are administrators who initiate policy or shape it after the fact through evaluation and analysis, that civil servants are also citizens who are not necessarily politically neutral, and that legislation influences administration not only through policy but investigation. (Skelley 2008, 550) This persistence is due to the promotion of classic scientific principles of administration/management which leads to: the belief that there are still principles to be discovered; the reduction of civil service reform to administration; the use of science as a symbol of anti-corruption efforts in government; the anti-politics flavor of American politics; its roots to the U.S. Constitution which in the general approach is bifurcated (Skelly 2008, 552). Today is time to see a new reality. It is time to create change that does not regard what has come before as a slate to erase, but rather takes into account what has taken place to find and comprehend where we truly stand. Now is the time for a meeting of the minds between political theory and public administration where transformation can take place, where administrative theory is transformed into something more, a political theory that is a public administration theory. This is the time to reunify ideology and practice.

A Trinitarian approach would not only mean no more dichotomies, but would also allow us to truly access where we are and where we might be going. Science is not the enemy; it has offered a universal language. The problem is that a warped interpretation of science, positivism, has allowed us to forget other dimensions that are still present in the reality of our society. We have moved from no control or understanding of our reality (ancient times) to believing that through classic science we can understand it all. According to the Trinitarian approach, revelations can come through science, but other dimensions outside the positivist schemata can complete our understanding. This means that in search for the truth we need to accept that there are truths that cannot be revealed through classical science and therefore that what scientific



thinking reveals is not necessarily the only truth. At the same time, John Dewey notes that the scientific method can be and at times should be used to help in the solving of social problems, but it should not be allowed to separate fact and value. A Trinitarian approach would accept that values, experience and facts are all needed for the revelation of truth. The broader epistemology and ontology implied in Gunton's theology can be used to develop a more humanistic and participatory model of public independently of specific theological aspects of Gunton's thought. This model can help to break down the sharp distinction between politics and administration that currently characterizes public administration theory and practice.

## Conclusion

To conclude, my goal has been to apply work in recent political theory, specifically from recent political theology, to issues in public administration theory, and specifically to the politics-administration dichotomy that informs so much of current public administration theory and practice. Contemporary political theory addresses the crisis of modernity, its apparent disintegration into nihilism. Modernity has been described as a period of technological development and of ideologies that have created a greater value of the self and individual interest relative to the collective. This means that modernity is related to the loss of many in place of the one. It also means that as modern technological capacities improve, older natural law theories, which assumed a natural order beyond human control, seem less plausible. This has resulted in an increasing inability to make moral and political sense of our human capacities.

My purpose was to look into the solutions presented to the perceived crisis and extract from political theory the approaches presented and apply them to public administration theory. I did this by examining public administration theory in light of recent developments in political theory. Chapter 1 examines the canon of public administration writings. Here we can see that public administration theory inherited the materialistic ontology and the positivist epistemology of the Enlightenment. Public administration theory has attempted to move from its original narrow scientific orientation, but it does not seem to be entirely successful in doing so. This was not an attempt to reinvent, or reconstruct public administration. It has revealed a possible reencounter of the mind that will be of benefit and offer a fertile ground for what is to challenge the application of public administration theory in a new age. This was made possible by looking into public administration theorists that have already noted shortcomings, flaws, or incomplete epistemology within political theory and or public administration theory and offering a possible

solution to a lack of certain values in governance (Allison, Appleby, Denhart and Denhart, Waldo, Stivers and King, and Stivers). All of these recommendations, although calling for some type of reevaluation, have fallen short of any integration, transformation, or recapitulation of public administration epistemology where values of the political and the public realm, like public participation, deliberation, and justice, can co-exist with reliability, efficiency, and rationality. We are in need of re-encounter of the old, the new, and the renewed. In this chapter, we discovered that we can truly nourish and maintain what Denhart and Denhart called the “public spirit” (2007, 30); and bring together, as Stivers recommended, fact, deliberation and knowledge, allowing for true deliberation, accumulation, and practice through a point where political theory and public administration can meet and find healing.

In Chapter 2, we made a historical review of political theory that revealed that origins of the epistemological and ontological assumptions informing public administration theory as well as examining emerging alternatives to those assumptions. The general solution according to these philosophical or theological responses to the crisis of modernity lies in the integration of the moral dimension to material reality because a distorted reality creates and/or results in a distorted perceptions, values, and truth. We examined both philosophical and theological responses to the crisis of modernity and argued that the theological responses hold out the best hope for a reconstruction of political theory and public administration theory.

In Chapter Three we discussed one particular theologian, Colin E. Gunton, and how his Trinitarian theological theory could broaden our ontology and epistemology through a model of harmonious particularity. Gunton invites everyone to think beyond the secular without creating an absolute value of the spiritual over the secular. He intends to defuse the need to overpower and the need for absolutism while offering a solution for relativism. Through a revision of

classical Christianity, Gunton introduces his Trinitarian Theological theory which offers a window into a new reality where the political can be once more reintegrated into a holistic dimension where fact and value can be in communion with the spirit, where ideology and practice no longer have to be in competition, where efficiency and equity can be upheld as equally important and not in constant struggle but both as aspects within the political. It is through Gunton's Trinitarian theological theory that we can find solution for the crises perceived in political theory's epistemology and ontology. The harmonious particularity can offer a unity, a communion of the one and the many through the three, a true model of integration.

In the fourth chapter we applied the idea of harmonious particularity to one of public administration's main tenants, the politics-administration dichotomy. We discovered in the second chapter that now is the time for a meeting of the minds between political science and public administration where administrative theory is transformed into something more, a political theory that is a public administration theory. This model helped to break down the sharp distinction between politics and administration that currently characterizes public administration theory and practice. This chapter revealed how a harmonious particularity allows for the view of politics and administration not as a false dilemma but as an acceptance that both are particulars and in full harmony as the only way to truly serve the public.

My intention has been to shed light into the possibility of finding answers in areas not commonly traveled by our minds. In my journey, I found so much more, a harmonious particularity that will transform not only the way we think, but completely transform the reality we analyze. Harmonious particularity is the one and the many coming together through the three.

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