

Murray Jardine on Christianity and Modern Technological Society

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ABSTRACT Key Words: Christianity and modern technology, contemporary nihilism and its roots, mis-steps of modern political and economic theory, value relativity and the re-discovery of moral limits, ethics and speech-based places of faithfulness.

Murray Jardine's The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society further develops several of the author's political and economic concerns articulated in his earlier Speech and Political Practice. It probes the impact and implications of both Christianity and modern technology for our understanding of, and ability to cope with, problems that have become endemic to Western and, specifically, American culture. Jardine's major continuing themes include: the importance to a well-formed self and society to be concretely grounded in a sense of place; the participation of the knower in the dynamic processes of creativity and discovery; how even a highly literate culture is nourished and equipped for its communal endeavors by the temporal and tensional vestiges of its oral beginnings; and how the crucial element of faith, understood as trust and commitment, gives to speech acts the power to shape self, society, and history. The major new focus of this book is suggested in the subtitle: How Christianity Can Save Modernity From Itself. More thoroughly than in Speech and Political Practice, Jardine elaborates how Christianity is important in shaping our understanding of the speech act as a creative force. He outlines how Christianity and the Greek tradition have been significant forces shaping modernity; he argues that Christianity offers potential for addressing the nihilism found in the consumer society of post-modernity. Jardine is critical of those who are unable to recognize the perversions of Jesus' message in Western history, but he is also critical of those who attribute virtually all positive developments during the past two millennia to Christianity. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the positive difference that Christian values and doctrine have made in the course of the past two thousand years. As in his earlier work, Jardine draws from an impressive range of sources, in order to make an original contribution. He is especially indebted to William Poteat, Michael Polanyi, and Ludwig Wittgenstein; his teacher Poteat's influence is pervasive.

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Introduction

In his Introduction, Jardine sketches the parameters of the broader argument in *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society*. He identifies the major source of what he regards as the present moral crisis—a crisis “far more profound than most people realize” (14)—faced by Western societies:

Specifically, I will argue that the source of this crisis is our inability to make moral sense of our scientific and technological capabilities. . . I will further argue that Christianity is the only understanding of the human situation that can allow us to make sense of these capabilities, precisely because Christianity is the source of modern science and technology (14).

Christianity is not only the source of the human drive for change and improvement, but it is also the key to recovering some sense of balance in technology-driven contemporary consumer society. However for Christianity to address the present crisis, Jardine contends, it will need to give up the extraordinary (I would add even, salvific) significance assigned to the work ethic since the Protestant Reformation. Further, addressing the present crisis will require a Christianity fully renewed and revitalized by its original ethic of unconditional love.

The Bible, with the special role and significance it assigns to the spoken word, both human and divine, has encouraged human beings (creatures said to have been created in God's likeness) to participate in God's creative act, that is, to function as creative agents who change the world. In the modern era, this has fostered important progress, which often was centered around technological development. But, Jardine proposes, we desperately need to recapture

a sense of the moral limitations inherent in our capacity for speech . . . Thanks to literacy and modern inventions . . . we live in a culture that is extremely visually oriented and relatively closed to the sound-dimension of human experience. Thus it is essential, if we are to develop a moral sense that can enable us to deal with technology, that we recapture a much richer sense of what we are doing when we speak and listen to other human beings. This in turn implies that we must rebuild local communities characterized by face-to-face contact—that is, where speaking becomes a more central part of daily life . . . (25)

Jardine contends that he is not advocating a major reformulation of Christian doctrine and practice, although some significant changes are needed to restore a sense of responsibility. Both Catholic and Protestant traditions have contributed to the present crisis but both can contribute to a moral orientation that allows us to make sense of our technological powers: “Ultimately, transforming Christianity . . . [calls for] a few relatively small but profoundly important shifts in emphasis” (10). Such a transformation he believes can be forged in serious practical endeavors that restructure local communities to promote face-to-face contact and the development of new practices and patterns of faithful action.

At the conclusion of his succinct introduction, Jardine acknowledges his book is not explicitly a textbook, although it is part of a series devoted to Christian practice in daily life. He provides a broad overview of the structure, functioning and historical evolution of modern technological societies and the ideas underpinning these elements; but his ultimate purpose is “to articulate a spiritual and moral orientation that can address the crisis modern societies are facing” (10). He identifies three areas for extensive elaboration—and these are the three main succeeding sections of his book—to clarify the précis of his argument provided in his Introduction: (1) first, there is an intricate discussion of the evolution of modern societies and modern politics which is inextricably entwined with technological and economic development; (2) following is a broad account of how the biblical and Christian traditions help make sense of both Western history and the potential of the future—Christianity provides the key to shape a society that accepts limits; (3) finally, the conclusion of his book Jardine devotes to a practical discussion of concrete examples of how a recovered Christian ethic of unconditional love can transform the social and political landscape.

Part 1: The Evolution and Crisis of Modern Technological Societies

Jardine begins by tracing the evolution of liberal capitalist democracy. For the liberal, the ideal society is essentially an aggregate of free individuals. It is the initiative, creativity, and energy of the *individual* that

gives vitality and a sense of meaning or purpose to both self and society. Jardine observes that “[a]lthough the term ‘liberal’ did not acquire a political meaning until the 19th century”(39), by the end of the English Civil War (1642-1649) and clearly by the time of the Glorious Revolution (1688), a middle class was emerging as the dominant social class in England along with the spread of capitalist enterprise. Early versions of liberal political theory can be seen in 17th-century England in Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) who, together with Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and René Descartes (1596-1650), are rightly considered the founding fathers of the Enlightenment. Locke argued that private property and wealth creation were valuable primarily for enhancing and securing the values of a liberal society; a century later Adam Smith (1723-1790) represented liberalism primarily as a means for increasing national wealth. According to Jardine, the decisive arrival of classical liberalism awaited the emergence of capitalism and the free market economy in the early 19th century. In mid-19th century England, in the wake of these forces linked to the industrial revolution and the end of feudalism, the most important of the 19th century classical liberals, John Stuart Mill, emerged.¹

Jardine observes that liberals have generally perceived the proper operation of liberal institutions—political or economic—as essentially neutral, that is, as not favoring one class or interest over another. This perception of governmental and economic operations was not shared by ancient pagan societies or by Christianity. Jardine characterizes this assumption that a neutral system can be created as a major flaw in classical liberal thought—a flaw that, if not corrected, could bring liberal institutions to self-destruction.

Just as liberals have, to the detriment of society, misconstrued liberalism as a “neutral” mode of social, political, and economic conduct, so, too, has technology commonly been misconstrued as “neutral” in its broad impact. However, in our present age of increasingly sophisticated and constantly changing modes of technology that increasingly impact on our lives, Jardine recognizes that, fortunately, some people are beginning to question this assumption. In my judgment, probably the most important 20th-century thinker to do this in a thorough and systematic manner is the French philosopher Jacques Ellul, primarily in his *The Technological Society* (1964) and his *The Technological System* (1977).

I see Ellul’s unique contribution to our understanding of the impact of technology as essentially two-fold: (1) He relies for his understanding of the concept of “technology” upon the French word *techné*, the latter term encompassing far more than the English term, thereby including within its ambit not only our usual association of “technology” but also the psychological, managerial, advertising, propagandistic, public relations and other techniques to order, manipulate, and control human thinking and behavior. (2) Ellul’s other major contribution is his representation of technology as systemic in its cultural embeddedness and its social effects, and yet essentially autonomous.

Although Jardine cites the earlier of Ellul’s two major works, *The Technological Society*, and, indeed, addresses technique in his attention to styles of management, his treatment of technology would be even more fruitful if he applied more of Ellul’s profound insights into this particularly human dimension of *techné*. The first direct attention Jardine gives to technology appears in the course of his treatment of Adam Smith: “[Smith] argues that the key factor in wealth creation is not technology by itself but rather division of labor. Technology is actually a result of division of labor” (52). Ellul would clearly press further to insist that the demands of technological efficiency have led to the division of labor. But he would also insist that this debate, inasmuch as it presupposes a significant distinction between mechanical and human organization for the purpose of efficient operation, misses the point: forms of human organization, as much as the structuring of machines, form integral parts of a common fabric for a common purpose—in the case of Adam Smith, for

the purpose of maximizing the creation of wealth. Neither Smith nor Jardine, have an appreciation of Ellul's second important contribution: the broader systemic implications and impacts of technology. Both Smith and Jardine, to be sure, deal insightfully with some of these implications and impacts. However, when Jardine turns to dealing with technology directly again, later in his book, the limitations of his understanding of the technological phenomenon, itself, (again, as I'll point out) become apparent.

Jardine convincingly argues, as a major thesis, that modern technological society, permeated by the individualizing and creative dynamics of market forces, is both a product of the Christian work ethic and is what we have come to identify as a liberal society. Indeed,

we tend to be unaware of how unusual this arrangement [of market-based liberalism] is in human history. Most human societies are structured in such a way that people typically have much more substantial long-term obligations to each other, and agreements between two individuals are usually subject to the approval of other members of the community . . . [For example,] in premodern societies, marriage was generally understood as a lifelong relationship . . . In modern liberal societies, . . . the market has increasingly become the model for marriage . . . Marriage is regarded as purely a matter of individual choice . . . Furthermore, it has recently become much easier to dissolve marriages . . . Indeed, the marriage ceremony—which ritualistically indicates the couple's obligation not just to each other but to other people and to God—has been largely dispensed with, and it is common for couples simply to live together.

. . . [In his political theory,] Locke . . . actually takes market relationships as his model of how human society should function . . . The government [itself] . . . exists only because people find it useful and it can be discarded, that is, overthrown, if it fails to keep its end of the bargain . . . (53-54)

This market model for society, as for marriage, cannot provide for enduring relations among individuals. Indeed, the market's demand "that everyone attempt to keep pace with the most productive individuals and firms" (55) reveals liberalism's secularized distortion of the Protestant work ethic: work, if one is to survive in the competitive market place, must become, as it has, the dominating obsession of both individual and society. But even this, Jardine points out, does not assure individual survival:

In a market economy, one labors incessantly to avoid extinction, and doing one's best is not enough—one must be better than everyone else. The market is an utterly unforgiving institution.

This characteristic of the market explains two of the strangest paradoxes . . . [1] People in capitalist societies work much more than people in non-capitalist societies, even though the greater productivity of capitalism should allow people to work less . . . In precapitalist societies, people worked to live, whereas in capitalist societies, people live to work. [2] . . . Less productive individuals who had [in early capitalist societies] been shielded from the full impact of the market by various social institutions and customs were forced into a situation of full exposure to market forces and were crushed. Thus an increase in overall national wealth was accompanied by a significant decrease in the income of the most vulnerable individuals (64).

In as much as John Locke's political theory was based on free market assumptions, the social institutions he proposed were subject to the same self-destructive forces as those of the free market. Indeed, Locke's doctrine of religious toleration, Jardine insightfully notes, contributes further, although unwittingly, to this ill-fate of society as that doctrine, influenced as it was by the Enlightenment's disregard for metaphysical groundings, encouraged subjectivist, and later relativist, understandings of religious tolerance.

Summarizing what he perceives to have been the negative practical impacts on Western culture of classical liberal theory, Jardine lists (1) an accompanying narrowly materialistic worldview, (2) a tendency to rationalize the inhumane working conditions frequently found in 19th century factories, and (3) a similar rationalization of the dehumanizing paternalism and racism of 19th century imperialism.

Jardine's treatment of classical liberalism, early in his discussion, focuses primarily on the English tradition; he then suggests that the French and German variations on the basic liberal idea attempted to address some of the shortcomings he has identified. Kant recognized the biases inherent in early liberal political theory and tried to reframe a more neutral theory of government. While English liberals were preoccupied with how to limit government, Hegel considered the role of an active, centralized government as a creator of equal opportunity. Montesquieu shifted the focus to the liberalizing effects of a governmental separation of powers, and Rousseau de-emphasized freedom in the market, giving more attention to the importance of popular participation in the government of a democratic republic. According to Jardine, "it is with Rousseau that the idea of democratic government changes from a secondary to a primary element of liberalism" (67).

Classical liberalism, in its various versions, triumphed over the older aristocratic order by the end of the 19th century. Despite their predictions of a more peaceful, progressive, and prosperous 20th century, "what happened instead was one catastrophe after another: World War I and the Russian Revolution, the stock market crash and the Great Depression" (67) and then the spread of communism and the rise of fascism, and World War II. Jardine concludes, "[B]y the end of World War I, classical liberalism was severely shaken, and by the end of World War II, it was almost completely discredited even in the English-speaking countries" (67).

The consequent resurgence of European conservatism and the simultaneous emergence of both communism and fascism, with their respective critiques of classical liberalism, gave impetus to the development of what Jardine identifies as "reform liberalism, and its European cousin . . . democratic socialism" (73). Reform liberalism articulated two basic criticisms of classical liberalism. In the 1930s and in the immediate postwar period, it focused on the apparent failure, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of the market economy, made evident in the emergence of tremendous concentrations of wealth and power as well as in the instability of business cycles as they fluctuated between "boom" periods of rapid growth with inevitable overproduction and low unemployment and "bust" periods of negative growth and high unemployment. Exacerbating these market swings, as we have been reminded in the current recession, are the promotional excesses of financial markets and the excesses of retail consumption, leading to overleveraged and unsustainable levels of both public and personal debt. Jardine provides an astute historical analysis of this dynamic of the insufficiently controlled free market economy. He concludes that

whereas classical liberals thought that government was the greatest threat to individual freedom and therefore should be strictly limited, reform liberals argued that . . . the immense concentrations of corporate power that had developed within capitalism, and the very instability of the capitalist system could be even greater threats to freedom than government

... [reform liberals and social democrats] simply wanted to use government to smooth out the rough edges of the capitalist system (77).

And, indeed, these new forms of liberalism demonstrated by their encouragement of such non-governmental organization as that represented by labor unions that, in order to check the excesses of corporate power, their first recourse need not inevitably be to enhanced government powers. But ultimately, of course, reform liberals sought a large and stable consuming middle class by a redistribution of income. Thus, stability was accomplished both by ameliorating the condition of the relatively poor and also by minimizing unemployment. Some forms of democratic socialism advocated gaining control of the economy also by handing over to the government the task of management, and sometimes even the power of ownership of key industries.

Reform liberalism and democratic socialism were confronted in the 1960s and 1970s by an entirely different problem than the earlier apparent failure of market economics. It was, by then, clear that these liberal reform models were not neutral in the impact of their workings upon their host cultures, but, in fact, fostered certain unexpected and negative results. In all liberal societies, Jardine suggests, the policies created by reform liberalism in the 1960s and 1970s, led to an eventual relaxation or abandonment of many of the principles earlier embodied in Christian morality.

Among other things, abortion was legalized, divorces became easier to obtain, censorship of entertainment was discontinued, and restrictions on gambling were reduced. Additionally, ... state laws requiring prayer and Bible reading in public schools were declared unconstitutional. Reform liberals justified these actions on the grounds that such laws violated the principle of neutrality. In one sense, of course, these later reform liberals were correct ... But were the policies created by reform liberalism themselves actually neutral (77)?

The policies flowing from reform liberalism, no less than those that were the product of classical liberalism, are value laden. This has been made unmistakably evident particularly in the destruction wrought upon both the principles and the practice of Christian ethics by the principles inherent in the secular goals and achievements of reform liberalism. Classical liberalism, however brutal its workings, still was subject to being judged—whether well or ill—by the values of Christianity. Reform liberalism, in its discarding of these traditional values, did not abandon all values but replaced the eroded spiritual values with essentially material values.

Jardine carefully discusses the account of John Rawls, a latter-day reform liberal, who in his major work, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), was confident that he could create “a theory of individual freedom without the cultural biases of early liberalism, that is, a truly neutral version of liberalism”(77). He approached this by imagining that the founders of a society are all acting under a “Veil of Ignorance,” as they formulate and decide upon the rules of their society, totally ignorant of what position—privileged or non-privileged—they will finally find themselves in, in that society. By departing from Locke’s theory which insisted that all members of a society be bound by the norms of rationality, defined in terms of the basic principles of the “Law of Nature,” Rawls recognized the Christian “bias” of these natural laws. This was sufficient, he felt, to assure that even the worst-off person would receive optimal treatment in accord with the two basic principles of justice governing society: (1) each person’s right to “the greatest possible amount of freedom compatible with the same amount of freedom for all other individuals” in society and (2) “all inequalities should benefit the worst-off person” (78-79).

Jardine reminds the reader that, despite Rawls' emphasis in his second principle of justice, his formula still allows for substantial inequalities. Indeed, Jardine brings his point home, in a most personal but appropriate manner: "Rawls would certainly argue that Harvard philosophy professors like himself should continue to receive six-figure salaries because they make an important contribution to society" (79-80). Rawls' motive in devising his formula is not self-serving. Rather, Rawls defends his scheme of justice as one that requires a certain amount of inequality of benefits if individual freedom is to be equalized and individual benefits are to be optimized for all. The "Veil of Ignorance" is required when individuals consent to their social contract precisely because that contract must necessarily leave some people better-off than others if all are to enjoy equal freedom; at the same time, that contract assures sufficient benefits to the worst-off so as to provide for their individual satisfaction as well as for the flourishing of their society—with the recognition, of course, that these two conditions cannot be separated. Implicit in Rawls' rationale is both a practical concern for the social morale necessary to maintain social stability and a more normative concern for what constitutes fairness, or justice.

As Jardine ultimately points out, with all the judgments that must be made and all the balances that must be struck in effecting Rawls' formula of reform liberalism, it is no more successful in achieving value neutrality than its predecessors. The central objective of Rawls' theory—to provide an optimal situation for the worst-off persons—rests on a fundamental qualitative assumption regarding who are the worst-off people in a society, a judgment on which there is often no consensus. Jardine provides an example from 1978, when a Nazi group petitioned for permission to march through the largely Jewish Chicago suburb of Skokie, which included many concentration camp survivors. He asks: "If we attempt to sort out this issue according to Rawls' criteria, the critical question is, again, who is worst-off?" (80). The Jews, who would suffer from such a march because of their traumatizing experience of the Holocaust? Or the Nazis, who would be deprived of arguably their most fundamental right, that of freedom of expression? There is, Jardine concludes, no completely value-neutral answer to such a question. And, I would add, it would be similarly impossible to come to a neutral conclusion in regard to the point at which the inevitable disparities encountered in Rawls' attempt to achieve an optimum distribution of wealth represent a "right" or "just" balance between the wealthier and poorer members of a society, all things considered including the requisites for economic vitality and social stability.

The solution to providing "neutral," or "objective," answers to such questions, according to Rawls and other reform liberal theorists, is to turn these questions over to a body of "experts," specialists in dealing with such matters. There are however sharp differences among experts, even in regard to what they choose to view as a "problem." At what degree of inequality is justice, as Rawls defines it, no longer served? In other words, at what point does inequality of wealth amount to *excessive* inequality? Another reform liberal economist, contemporary with Rawls, E. F. Schumacher appears to consider the substantial differences in wealth permitted by Rawls' formula to be excessive. Schumacher spells out his liberal reform formula in his book, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*,² but he also describes the successful implementation of his formula in the Scott Bader Company, one of whose principles regarding income disparity is that irrespective of age, sex, function or experience, remuneration for work shall not vary, between the lowest and the highest paid, beyond a range of 1:7 before tax. Although Schumacher has succeeded in applying his principles only to that one company, he implies that roughly the same ratio of maximum income disparity should, and could, pertain to the society at large if his ideals of community and economic justice were to be broadly achieved. Contrast Schumacher's proposed ratio of disparity between the lowest and the highest incomes with the Economic Policy Institute's report that, in the United States in 2007, "the ratio of average CEO pay to average wage was 1:275."³ This ratio would appear to be much closer to that allowed by Rawls' formula than that permitted by Schumacher's, even though the ratio reported by the E.P.I. is based on income averages (thereby

lessening the ratio from that based on individual extremes) and even though it does not eliminate from its calculation what might be considered by Rawls to be poverty-level, or below-minimum-wage-level, income (thereby increasing the ratio reported by the E.P.I.).⁴

Rawls assumes, in imagining how one would think behind the “Veil of Ignorance,” that people are generally risk-averse, not wanting too much inequality because, in Jardine’s words, they are more “willing to forego the possibility of becoming millionaires to avoid the possibility of being impoverished”(82). Jardine notes that, while the corporate managers and, indeed, most of the business people in America, who began to dominate Western societies early in the 20th century and became completely dominant after the Second World War, were technocrats—those very “experts,” or “professionals” in human management that Rawls proposed for crafting the “neutral” economic policies of his model society—these experts in applying managerial techniques to their corporate co-workers (and, Ellul would add, to society at large through their manipulative advertising techniques), in fact, were not inclined to exercise the caution Rawls assumed would be induced by the original structuring of society under the conditions of the “Veil of Ignorance.” As events have dramatically made evident to us now, some six years after the publication of Jardine’s book, these corporate experts were, in fact, willing to risk bankruptcy and a destabilization of society for a chance at acquiring for themselves great wealth. And through their rationalizations that persuaded them of their own “neutrality,” they were blind to their own technocratic biases, as was Rawls, himself, to the biases of his own liberal-reform economic theory of justice.

In sum, it is clear that, despite Rawls’ elaborate efforts, as well as the efforts of other radical reform liberals, the attempt to achieve a value-neutral formula for economic reform, and therefore one amenable to a consensus among those presuming to pursue a “science” of economics, was a complete failure.

Even more disturbing than the chaotic state of economic theory is Jardine’s report on the verdict that modernity has rendered that moral principles are “purely subjective ‘opinions’ . . . thus destroying any possibility of public discussion of moral truth” (84). Humans abhor a vacuum of moral truths and into that vacuum has flowed what might be called the operating norms of the technocrat, with devastatingly dangerous negative results. Jardine describes three of these. (1) “To an even greater extent than was the case under classical liberalism, Western people became locked into a narrowly materialistic worldview” (83). (2) People began to experience the tyrannical impact of the rule of experts in their lives: “The tendency of the liberal goal of neutrality to degenerate into nihilism can be seen much more clearly in reform liberalism than it can in classical liberalism.” (84). Classical liberalism did embody, although in distorted form, certain ingredients of Protestant morality, but reform liberalism denied any substantive, or objective, status to moral values. Even the technocratic experts themselves experienced the tyranny of expert rule, as Jardine insightfully explains : “Since an expert is an expert on only one thing, when that expert turns to other aspects of his or her life, he or she will be subject to the power of . . . other experts” (83)! (3) Beyond whatever guidance might be available through the incentives of materialism or may still be relevant to the extent that tyranny has not become total, the only available default model for the shaping of human behavior in the modern culture of value-nihilism appears to be nothing other than the fortunately somewhat tamed but still largely autonomous market forces themselves:

[A]lthough reform liberalism did curb some of the most destructive effects of an unregulated capitalist economy, it ultimately takes the market as its model for society to an even greater extent than classical liberalism. This is most obvious in that reform liberalism creates a more highly individualistic society in its abolition of a common moral culture. But the reduction

of human social relations to the model of the market also occurs much more thoroughly in Rawls' theory than in Locke's [classical liberal] theory. Although Locke's social contract is based on the model of market transactions, his theory [conceived in a culture of traditional values] doesn't completely abstract the individuals who form society from their personal attributes or histories. Rawls, however, by placing the individuals in the Original Position under the Veil of Ignorance, actually creates a much more extreme market situation; the inhabitants of the Original Position have absolutely no connection to a larger social context (84).

Still, American reform liberalism and European social democracy seemed to be quite successful for about two decades after the Second World War. But American youth in the 1960s rebelled against the technocratic system, and by the 1970s the postwar economic boom had run its course, yielding to "relatively slow economic growth, relatively high unemployment, and . . . high inflation" (85). This produced dissatisfaction with reform liberalism and its demise as the dominant political and economic theory in the United States; similar trends led to significantly weakened social democracy in Europe. During the 1980s, conservatives were elected to major government posts, the economies of all English-speaking countries were deregulated, and government social programs were significantly reduced. To a lesser degree, similar trends occurred in Europe. Jardine observes that "by the end of the 1980s the free market was back in vogue" (85). But while classical liberal ideas were revived in regard to economic and governmental policies, the cultural rejection of commonly held moral norms that began in the 1960s (and which the early, or classical, liberalism—in the form of capitalism—had regarded as crucial for its moral functioning), continued and, indeed, accelerated throughout the ensuing decades. This became evident in 1980 "in movies, television, music . . . but . . . even more clearly in public attitudes. Legalized abortion, for example, is now supported by a larger proportion of the American population than when Reagan was first elected" (87). And this increasing moral permissiveness characterizes Western societies generally.

This revived, or neoclassical, political and economic liberalism—sometimes identified as libertarianism—has received its theoretical articulation, most famously by two economists, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, whose *laissez-faire* theories are viewed as having completed the task, undertaken by reform liberalism, of establishing a completely value-neutral system of governance. Jardine makes the astute observation that "the breakdown of the old Protestant morality of hard work, thrift, and self-denial is, ironically, the result of that very morality. That is, the secularized version of the Protestant work ethic . . . has, in fact, a self-destructive internal logic" (89). Specifically, the labor of generations of people motivated by the work ethic resulted in highly productive societies whose abundance of goods and services needed to be consumed, and therefore people were encouraged to consume extravagantly beyond their basic material needs. The Protestant ethic of disciplined self-denial, so instrumental to the dramatic emergence of free-market economies, consequently became dysfunctional and, instead, the immediate gratification of one's desires was encouraged. "Instead of responding to demand, as in classical liberal economics, business had to *create* demand" (40). It is, therefore, not at all surprising, Jardine suggests, that the revival of market economics would go hand in hand with the ascendance of libertarian morality. We begin to get a sense here of the author's title theme, which suggests that Christianity, or the values associated with Christianity, have had an effect upon both the "making and unmaking of technological society." Jardine describes the increasingly individualistic, self-serving, and superficial nature of the social values that, through the skillful techniques of advertising and the popular media, finally displace values that were once concerned with social obligation and were, at least vaguely, associated with our religious heritage. Not only utilitarianism but also, and even more severely, a superficial aestheticism, which

the author illustrates by attitudes as diverse as devotion to celebrity and what he perceives as “the elevation of art to the status of the sacred” (97) are included in the author’s criticism of the values that presently shape our society.

With the emergence of the present global economy, Jardine notes, those who support positive standards of accountability in the public interest (e.g., political oversight and regulation of the increasing power of economic self-interests) are confronted with greater obstacles than ever before. Production is more decentralized, and labor has become more dispersed globally and is much more vulnerable to exploitation while it has become less able to organize effectively. The greater mobility of businesses in the global economy has enabled them to escape both governmental supervision and taxation. As economic activities have come to transcend the traditional national boundaries of jurisdictional authority, it has become increasingly difficult for national governments to effectively track and hold accountable those engaged in these activities.

Jardine summarizes what he sees as the outcome of these trends as follows:

as the world economy becomes harder to regulate, and as relative income [equality] no longer seems essential to the functioning of that economy, reform liberal and social democratic policies will seem obsolete, and the older laissez-faire policies of classical liberalism will experience a renaissance, At the same time, the extremely productive global economy requires a veritable orgy of consumption to continue functioning, so an expressive individualist culture characterized by saturation advertising, a mountain of consumer debt, and an obsession with personal “choice” will be the inevitable result (102).⁵

One should note that Jardine wrote this more than three years before these very developments in our society culminated in the recessionary crash of 2007.

Jardine next turns to describe the political and economic theory of re-emerging classical liberalism, now referred to as “neoclassical liberalism.” Hayek and Friedman, the chief articulators of this theory, ironically agree with the reform liberal Rawls, that one’s success in a free market economy has more to do with the luck of being in the right place at the right time than with one’s falsely assumed, reward-deserving achievements. Hayek and Friedman, however, added to this rationale the assumption that there are no objective standards by which even to judge what is “success,” or an “achievement,” or even what is a “good” or a “bad” person. Whereas the focus of the classical liberal had been on man as producer, neoclassical liberals such as Hayek and Friedman preferred to view men and women essentially as consumers. Wanting to achieve “value-neutrality” in their political and economic theory, as both the classical liberals and the reform liberals had attempted, the neoclassical liberals passed the production and policy choices of society to the consumer-citizens, driven only by whatever happened to be their wants. In neoclassical liberalism, there are no standards, secular or liberal, by which to really justify a tacitly assumed distinction between “good” or “bad,” or even between “productive” or “unproductive” forms of work.

Jardine formulates three major criticisms of neoclassical liberalism. (1) It is misguided and inevitably fails to reach its stated goal of neutrality. (2) It is ultimately nihilistic, making it “virtually impossible to say that anything is really right or wrong,” and thus is far more blatantly socially disastrous than in classical liberalism or reform liberalism; Jardine says that “the early liberals would have been horrified at Hayek’s argu-

ments about distributive justice” (112). And, finally, (3) Jardine’s primary criticism of neoclassical liberalism and global capitalist economics is “that it completes the process of reducing all human social relations to the model of the market and subjecting all human life to market forces” (112).

What we are now facing, according to Jardine, is a “crisis of liberal capitalist democracy” (113). Alexis de Tocqueville, almost two centuries ago, despite his admiration of American democracy, warned of the danger of an excessive individualism. Without some kind of hierarchy of authority and some traditional social ties, Tocqueville warned, radical, egalitarian democracy is likely to result in a society of isolated individuals who will accept subjugation to dictatorial government. Tocqueville anticipated a new kind of despotism in democratic nations, one more widespread and milder than violent despotism, one that degrades rather than torments human beings. Jardine observes that Tocqueville failed to anticipate the kind of extreme governmental tyranny that came to the fore in the 20th century, one that has been given the special label of “totalitarian” and characterized by its ability to control not only men’s bodies but also their minds. Of course, Tocqueville can hardly be faulted for not foreseeing these developments. Jardine includes, also, among the new, and more subtle, facilitators of tyranny, the individual’s captivity to the present-day consumer economy, including what he calls “aesthetic consumption” (126). As he states it: “. . . a culture of aesthetic self-expression logically leads to a society where only beautiful people are allowed, that is, to a totalitarian tyranny of the aesthetic”(126).

Jardine sees a more significant parallel between the crisis of our time and the period of the Renaissance in the late Middle Ages than the more commonly perceived parallel between our time and the decline of ancient Rome. Despite the monumental innovations (the printing press, the clock, firearms, and the compass, plus the great voyages of discovery), European culture was in the Renaissance in a state of decadence, most vividly represented in the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. In the midst of this was born, in the towns of this period, a rational and urbane bourgeois culture crystallized by the Protestant Reformation, productive of the whole new era of modernity. However, in the aftermath of the First World War, and only a few decades after it had reached its peak toward the end of the 19th century, we begin to see the decline of this vital bourgeois culture and a prevailing irrationalism “skeptical of any claim to truth” (130). Jardine suggests

that in both the late Middle Ages and our own time, a similar situation existed: people had discovered new creative capacities, and in particular had developed significant new technological powers, but were unable to make moral sense of those capacities, resulting in psychological disorientation, cultural decay and institutional breakdown (130).

The spiritually inspired Protestantism that had brought new life out of the cultural decadence of the late Middle Ages and that came to inform reform liberalism, now essentially secularized, finds itself unable to answer the essential question of our time, namely, “what to do with the hyperproductive capitalist economy once it has met people’s basic material needs” (130). Liberalism’s inability to address this question adequately, Jardine tells us, is due to its underestimation of the capacity, or creativity, of human agency. It assumes that people “can create wealth only through a single-minded work ethic and a ruthlessly competitive market economy” (130). Liberalism forgets that people have, from time to time, been able to “produce enough to live quite comfortably without living only to work and without the merciless competition of the market” (130). The present system inevitably results in periods of vast overproduction, which requires then, for its solution, the creation of a consumer economy, which is not only socially and demographically unsustainable but also destructive of moral character. Jardine summons us to build a culture that “recognizes the full extent of human creative capacities and thus is able to establish moral limits on those capacities” (130-131).

It is important to note here that Jardine is not disregarding the valuable contributions that a market economy can make to the quality of human existence. Distinguishing between a “market economy” and a “market society,” he points out that it is only in a society that is *dominated* by the market model, or in a market society, where all human relations are reduced to contract and the longer-term bonds necessary for sustaining human community consequently disintegrate. He also acknowledges the validity of the cautions provided by present-day conservatives to encourage the development of virtuous individuals and to keep certain sectors of life, such as the family, isolated from market forces. However, he tells us,

what these conservatives fail to understand is that the model of virtue they uphold—essentially the secularized Protestant ethic of John Locke—is itself utterly destructive, leading inevitably to decadent consumerism, as we have discussed at length . . . [Indeed,] the moral virtue that early reform liberals wanted to promote was the same self-destructive work ethic of classical liberals and present-day conservatives. The only way that markets can be used extensively in a complex economy but kept from dominating and thus destroying society is through the development of a new kind of culture with a very different attitude toward work (132-133).

Jardine concludes the first section of his book on the evolution of liberal capitalist democracy by observing that, although modern people have developed dramatically their capacity to control and change their environment, they have failed to understand and to affirm the fundamental nature of morality. Moderns have consequently drifted toward nihilism “manifested first in the catastrophic world wars of the twentieth century and then in the decadent consumerism of the postwar period” (133). Jardine’s narrative of the evolution of modern liberalism focuses on how we came to avoid “the central question of pre-modern moral reasoning, that is, the question of how people should live” (133). Modernity has succeeded in avoiding this fundamental question

by taking as its basic principle individual freedom, and stating that every individual should be free to do as he or she wants, within certain limits, which themselves would be neutral in the sense that they did not favor any particular social group or impose any particular belief system or way of life on society (133).

But this very attempt by liberal theorists to attain moral neutrality eventually eliminated the possibility of the adoption of any conceivable moral standard. The result was an overly producing capitalist economy and a consumer economy that has proved to be destructive of both itself and its underlying culture. Jardine urges that, before that destruction becomes complete, we must develop “a new kind of culture with a very different attitude toward work.” In the Bible, he proposes, we can find what this new culture might be like, for it “contains a conception of human agency that recognizes human creative capacities and thus can place limitations on them” (133).

Part 2: Christianity and Its Relation to the Modern Crisis

The second division of *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society* turns from close attention to political philosophy and politics to a broader cultural analysis of the development of Western tradition and Christianity’s role in culture. The five chapters here lay out Jardine’s overarching themes and clarify the larger context within which the more politics-centered opening division of the book is nested.

Jardine starts his discussion in the second section by commenting on pre-literate pagan cultures, exploring the special significance of orality and myth. He briefly analyzes *Enuma Elish* and the Greek oral epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Pre-literate cultures rely on fragile memory shaped by the telling and hearing of stories. Unfortunately, in modern, literate cultures, “myth” has come to mean “untruth.” Jardine argues that “in an oral culture, the question of whether the story is literally true never really comes up, because people don’t think in these terms” (140). Literates are much more visually—rather than aurally—oriented. Literates generally use the term “literally” to mean something like “physically” or “materially.” Only literate people think of the world—what they call “reality”—primarily in materialistic terms. Ironically, the modern religious fundamentalist and the modern religious liberal, respectively, accept or reject the truth of the story of Moses’ parting the Red Sea on the same materialist terms. Both miss the point of the creation story that the earth and all within it were brought into existence by God’s creative act. Jardine contends “it is not accidental that the decline of religious faith in the Western world followed the development of universal literacy . . . because in a culture with an increasingly extreme visual orientation, spiritual things seem less real to people” (140).

In the pre-literate pagan past, only the gods, in any fundamental sense, had the capability of acting effectively thus “humans have no control over what happens” (146). Cosmology was reflected in the ordering of ancient societies and therefore it is not surprising that

most humans are servants of the warrior class, and even this privileged class is fated to suffer . . . this understanding of the human situation, or something close to it, has been the dominant view of most humans for most of history . . . It is found in all the world’s ancient societies . . . Only the biblical tradition puts forward a truly different understanding of the world and humanity (146).

The social/political implications of pre-literate paganism are threefold. (1) Since the only immortality available to humans was in their being remembered for their great deeds, the pagan social order was not very peaceful. (2) Because of this nearly constant threat of war, the social order was quite tenuous, and the nature of the ruling class’s relationship to the servile class was generally harsh, often brutal (3). Because in pagan cultures it was assumed that one’s birth or bloodline determined his and his descendants’ place in society, the concept of social mobility and certainly the concept of universal human equality were alien to those cultures. Although Christianity from its beginning, Jardine notes, represented a radical challenge to such dehumanizing distinctions, the power of the aristocratic classes who owned land was fully broken only with the coming of industrialism in the nineteenth century. Even now, Jardine suggests, most of the world still considers allegiance to one’s family ethically prior to allegiance to one’s church or to one’s nation and its laws. The contrast between pre-biblical and biblical cosmologies and their respective social/political implications is a dominant theme Jardine’s discussion develops.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, began the break away from the pagan worldview. Jardine particularly focuses on Aristotle who he recognizes today is often seen as offering a convincing philosophical counter to liberalism’s ultimately futile attempts to create a neutral system. Although Aristotle develops an ethical system with elements important for any workable ethical system, Jardine concludes that none of the Greeks successfully addresses “the central issue in this book, that is, the question of human creativity” (148). Greek philosophy transforms the earlier emphasis upon the warrior, replacing it with an emphasis upon the philosopher, a figure who understands the world’s order and is best suited to rule. Jardine notes that it is not coincidental that Greek horizons changed as literacy took root; abstract analytical thinking supplanted mythological accounts.

I have no quarrel with Jardine's claim that Aristotle presents an interesting counter to modern liberalism's commitment to value neutrality, a commitment that Jardine argues devolves ultimately into value relativism. I am less clear about why Aristotle is much preferred to Socrates or Plato who also seem to offer firm grounding for values regarded as absolute and from which the articulation of virtues (or a character-based ethic) is possible. Aristotle gives more attention to details but all of these Greeks stress the community and the nurturing of character and this is, as Jardine sees, a corrective to the social isolation and shallowness of consumer-driven culture fostered by the nihilism of modern liberalism. Aristotle does, of course, temper Plato's speculative metaphysical dualism, grounding matters in a more empirically accessible normative natural order. Aristotle, Jardine reminds his readers, suggests "humans . . . cannot choose different goals than they are constructed to want by nature" (162)—that is, if they are to be truly responsible and, therefore rational, in their choosing. Compared to Plato, Aristotle provides, in his *Ethics*, a more "user-friendly" and rationally demonstrable manual of "prudential" instruction for both private and public behavior; and one might argue that, correspondingly, the Roman Catholic church, through both its official doctrine and formal ecclesiastical structure (themselves much more indebted to Aristotelian than to Platonic thought), offers a more explicitly articulated and worldly representation of a prudential ethic. Jardine seems to acknowledge this in the context of his effort to find grounds for challenging the liberal search for neutrality: he reminds us that "the Roman Catholic priesthood . . . attempts to establish a hierarchy of spiritual wisdom and character" (150). Still, it would be good to know more of Jardine's rationale. While Aristotle provides one with considerable philosophical and theological insight for challenging modern and post-modern trends in moral and ethical thought, I find Plato's more speculative, but still firmly grounded, mode of inquiry is much more akin to Michael Polanyi's fundamental epistemological principles and concepts (e.g., his "tacit intimation" and "fiduciary commitment,") and Jardine has indicated his own indebtedness to Polanyi.

Surely Jardine is right to emphasize that Aristotle represents an advancement of social and political thought beyond the earlier phases of pagan thought. However, I must point out one respect in which I think Jardine has misinterpreted Aristotle, and this is in regard to what he asserts as Aristotle's denial of the agency of human will. Rationality, he says, is what distinguishes the human being from all lower forms of being. In his words, according to Aristotle,

humans cannot *choose* their goals. There is nothing like a concept of free will in Aristotle. Humans, like other animals, plants, and inanimate objects, have their goals set for them by the natural order. Humans . . . cannot choose different goals than they are constructed to want by nature (162).

If Jardine means that Aristotle's embrace of the concept of natural law does not allow him to suggest that one's *proper* goals are determined by free choice ("free" understood here to mean not even *morally* constrained, which is what modern liberalism has come to believe), then I must agree with him. But his words suggest much more than this, indeed, a determinism more encompassing than Calvinism, namely that human beings cannot choose for right or wrong, good or bad—and this is not completely true to Aristotle. Aristotle, like Plato, assumed a tripartite structure of the human *psyche* (intellect, will, and desire). Both assumed the capacity of men to choose the wrong behavior and poor institutions of government. Otherwise, there would have been no point in either of them constructing elaborate arguments to advance the best form of society for them, and it would hardly have been possible for Thomas Aquinas, much later, to construct a Christian theology that incorporated the fundamental principles of Aristotelianism and that insisted upon an understanding of man capable of making morally wrong decisions.

At the same time, it must be admitted that, for both Plato and Aristotle, their understandings of the faculty of human will were grossly inadequate. Both based their understanding of will upon the supremacy assigned to human intellect, or rationality, over will and Plato's articulation of this ranking is his famous formulation, "To know the good is to do the good." I have argued elsewhere that, although this eliminates specifically *moral* choice in his exercise of will, it does not, however, eliminate *all* willful choosing.⁶ It, instead, limits the exercise of choice primarily to choices of whether and what one is willing to know, or to learn. In other words, the focus of human choosing is shifted ostensibly from questions of morality to questions of cognition—which, admittedly, is an extremely inadequate understanding of the actual functioning and range of focus of the human will. It is similarly inadequate, to my thinking, in its implications for coming to an understanding of the processes involved in learning and discovery, which—as Polanyi points out—cannot be separated from moral, or fiducial, commitments. Still, Plato's understanding of *periagog* (literally "turning around," or "conversion"), as it is represented in his Allegory of the Cave,⁷ readily suggests a process of—not just moral—learning and discovery that is an essentially passive response to transcendence, not something, at least initially, actively engaged in, or chosen. And, although Plato in his larger corpus is ambivalent on this topic, it is arguable that this passivity in regard to moral choice could have conceivably influenced Aristotle's thinking in regard to the latter's alleged claim of a total absence of a human capacity for moral choice. I find nothing in Aristotle to suggest that, as Jardine seems to assume, there is no substantial ambiguity in Aristotle on this topic and, indeed, much to suggest that Aristotle assumes the presence of moral choice even though, like Plato, he does not adequately provide theoretically for it.

The issues I've just raised above do not necessarily distract from the rationale of Jardine's major endeavor in this book, i.e., to re-establish, in response to the value relativity of present-day liberalism, a more firmly grounded moral sense of direction. Whether one looks to Plato or to Aristotle in this pursuit, both can be reasonably interpreted to offer substantial corrective guidance. It would simply be satisfying to detect in Jardine's treatment of Aristotle some recognition of his ambiguity on the subject.

As a reader, I was somewhat surprised to find that Jardine's narrative, having welcomed Aristotle's concept of natural law as a firmer grounding of values and a major challenge to claims of value neutrality, later in his book, turns his analytical attack upon this Aristotelian contribution. In a word, Jardine argues that in Western history the more encompassing worldview of Christianity, with different values and virtues, took root and undermined much of Aristotle's credibility: "For Christianity, the three main virtues are faith, hope, and . . . love. These three virtues are not found in Aristotle's list, and indicate a profound difference in worldview" (169). Equally important in terms of the implications for Western development and the limits of Aristotelian vision was a shift from a worldview with an uncreated and therefore, eternal or unchanging cosmic order to a worldview with "a created world that does change" (169). At least in the modern world shaped by Christianity, any contemporary reader of Aristotle can see that he accepted glaring inequalities (think of his view of women, slaves, and barbarians) and regarded most people as not philosophical and thus inferior by nature and incapable of the highest human virtues. Moderns can also see that there is a fundamental problem with Aristotle's understanding of the "natural order." Things simply are not as stable and unchanging as Aristotle assumed and predicated many of his ethical ideas upon. The world is changing and can be changed and thus we cannot build a system on "certain unchanging goals and . . . certain virtues that must be practiced to achieve those goals" (170). If we change nature, we must also change our goals and this, Jardine points out, ultimately leads back to the major problem of modern liberalism, the problem of philosophical relativism, which we recognize as an inadequate response to change.

Today we readily accept the essential equality of all human beings and we recognize that human beings have and continue to make major changes in the world. What Jardine suggests is that we take a closer look at the Bible as a source that shaped Western history and as a future resource for self-understanding and reshaping common life. He, of course, outlines such a closer look—significant elements of his book’s discussion thus provide what is essentially cultural analysis driven by a particular biblical theology. Jardine argues “the Bible represents a revolution in human understanding” (171). After Christianity became the religion of imperial Rome, it came significantly to shape the major social and political institutions of Western societies. Christianity fundamentally transformed human thinking and human practices, Jardine argues, by describing the world as created by God’s pronouncements and as fundamentally ordered and good as opposed to chaotic and evil:

It is impossible to overestimate how important this difference is. With the idea that the world is good, that it makes sense, comes the possibility of scientific investigation of the world . . . similarly, with the idea that humans are good comes the possibility of escaping the brutal warrior ethos of the pagan world (174).

Since the God of the Bible is a creator, humans should recognize their own capacity for creating. And as God is known to have created by his spoken word, so humans came to acknowledge their own creative capacity through language; it is through words that humans are able to construct conceptually new worlds and, from these concepts, to actually improve their own world. Whereas the mythic portrayals of pagan culture tell us that tools were given to human beings by the gods (indeed, in some instances, stolen from the gods), in Genesis 4:22 human beings are confirmed in their capacity to create tools. Genesis narratives present a new lofty image of humanity as no less than a partner in God’s own act of creation, but also as creatures subject to misuse human powers. To have been created in the image of God should not be taken as license for thinking of themselves as God. The myth of the Garden of Eden tells of humans yielding to this temptation and becoming prideful. The narrative corollary to being encouraged to learn something of the order of the world is the story of humans learning about moral limits and of the danger of sin, that is, of ignoring those limits.

Man’s capacity to create, unlike God’s, is *limited* . . . We cannot create physical objects out of thin air by speaking. More importantly, we cannot create just any conceptualization of the physical world and expect it to work, nor can we create just any social structure and expect it to work (175).

Human beings, in Jardine’s account, must both recognize and accept their creative powers and at the same time not presume to exercise all of the powers that are at our disposal. We must, in other words, choose to operate within the self-limiting context of certain moral principles. Human beings must concentrate on discovering moral principles and defining and redefining their particular implications and applications in ever-changing situations that emerge in our dynamic world. Modern technology is both the cause and the embodiment of this dynamism. The morality represented in the biblical traditions, Jardine holds, is more suited to guiding humanity in such a dynamic technological world than any other system or tradition that we know. Christianity views the world as one of infinite possibilities. Even when the world seems in disorder, there are indications of a more fundamental order and Christians are taught to live faithfully in trust. But the world changes each time we use our creative capacity for speech. God and humanity have infinite possible ways to act but in fact the order we find in the world suggests that concrete choices are also limited according to the structure of human existence. In Jardine’s analogy, there are an infinite set of whole numbers but at the same time the set of all whole numbers is limited since it does not include those numbers that are not whole numbers. To this reader, when Jardine speaks of having indications but not proof of a fundamental orderliness in the world, he comes close to Polanyi’s idea that humans have “tacit intimations.” In perceiving indications or having “tacit

intimations” of a basic order, we are provided with what we need to act as trusting or faithful beings. It is this fiduciary relationship to our world and our fellow beings that allows us to act responsibly.

In his discussion, Jardine makes the surprising observation that “modern historians of science agree that the conceptual basis for modern science comes from the Bible, and that in fact incorporation of Greek philosophical ideas into Christian theology actually retarded the development of science” (183). The Greek sense of order emphasized deductive reasoning. As a result, Greek science is not much akin to the productive power of modern science which emphasizes inductive reasoning. Induction implies having to trust in the order or reasonableness of the world prior to that order becoming more apparent. The biblical notion of sin revolves around the lack of trust in God and God’s created but unfinished created order. Sin manifests itself in the human attempt to replace God’s creation with our own and in unfaithful human acts such as lying to and dominating others. What characterizes the pinnacle of Christian virtue, in Jardine’s account, is unconditional love as this is presented in the Bible:

the ethic of unconditional love implies that humans must practice both forgiveness and mutual correction . . . But from the biblical standpoint, revenge destroys the capacity of humans to fulfill their role as cocreators. On the other hand . . . forgiveness does not mean allowing a person to continue sinning. Thus people must correct each other when they sin.

Seen in this context, we come to understand liberalism as a reductionist version of the Christian ethic of unconditional love. Liberal tolerance does not involve deep respect or caring for people. Rawls’ liberal concept of the “Veil of Ignorance” is “essentially a technocratic attempt to conceptualize the idea of putting oneself in another’s place” (189). In liberalism, the market economy is ultimately the model for all social relations. Ironically, however, it was only in a Christian culture that the idea of a market economy could arise because the necessary trust underpinning a market economy simply does not exist in pre-modern economies where individuals generally tend to be distrustful of those not a part of their extended families.

To summarize, Jardine’s discussion is a grand narrative that leads readers from early pagan culture through the various stages to contemporary Western culture with its serious governance problems. He affirms human creativity and outlines how technological advances led to modern styles and standards of living unimaginable in earlier periods. Our capacity for creativity seen in this development has not been adequately guided by a system of morality that provided correctives. We have slipped into the excesses of consumer-oriented materialism which threatens our survival. A solution is desperately needed and Jardine suggests the high virtues represented in the Bible and the best of the Christian tradition—particularly Christian compassion—can provide proper limits and directions.

Although I share the author’s respect for Christian faith and values, I (and I suspect others will also) sense that at times Jardine overstates his case. He draws at times on very specific doctrines of Christianity as directly relevant to the issues shaping the development of Western culture. Also he makes too exclusive a case for what Christianity has to offer, ignoring possible contributions from other traditions. This is not an irenic discussion. Regarding my first criticism, I simply do not find Jardine persuasive in his attempt to include the specific doctrines of Nicaea—e.g., the specific relevance and virtues of trinitarianism—as part of his argument. Regarding my second concern, it would be interesting to have Jardine engage with some of the recent writing of Karen Armstrong who argues persuasively that the virtue that the author makes central to his solution, compassion, is an important virtue in all of the major world religions. Nevertheless, Murray Jardine’s reflections are an invaluable contribution, giving readers attuned to cultural history, contemporary politics and Christian faith much to think about.

Part 3: The Christian Response to the Moral Crisis

The final two chapters and the conclusion of Jardine’s book can be dealt with more concisely. This material comes after the author has made his argument; this concluding discussion is a practical coda in which Jardine says he will “examine closely how the biblical conception of human agency does place moral limits on human creativity” (235). Otherwise put, this section turns to the arena of concrete practice, an arena wherein Jardine says that he wants to display “an ethical concept of speech-based place” which he links to biblical notions of “places of faithfulness” (235). Jardine initially provides some further discussion of “place” in terms of the biblical tradition and stalwarts like Calvin and also briefly develops ideas about interesting “place”-related topics such as apprenticeship, ritual and narrative. But the main elements of this final discussion are focused on very concrete matters such as the need to redesign cities, to re-construct work life and move toward a new social order. Such concrete matters are part of a program to re-establish Christian communities and Christian life grounded in an ethic of unconditional love.

Jardine’s practical program for the redevelopment of communities and the revitalization of an ethic of love strikes this reviewer as a breathtaking challenge to readers. However compelling this book’s case to address this challenge is, such a challenge is likely far more daunting than Jardine appears to recognize. Those who have in the past attempted to persuade powerful economic interests involved in community development (the real estate and construction industries, along with the banking and advertising interests that support them) have generally failed.⁸ It perhaps would be a most worthy and practical follow-up project for Jardine to study the history of attempts to restructure, according to humane values, our communities in order to identify the causes of past failures and learn how to avoid them in the future.

Endnotes

¹Although John Stuart Mill was clearly a champion of the individual’s freedom, there has been a tendency, even among political theorists, to overlook the significant role Mill assigned, in rare but important instances—but for the purpose of protecting freedom for all—to the placing of legitimate limitations upon not only an individual’s actions but even his words. In this sense, he might well be regarded as a precursor of reform liberalism.

In 1859, Mill published his *An Essay on Liberty*, which remains to this day, at least in the mind of the present reviewer, the most impressive formula ever designed for protecting, by a proper balancing, distribution, and limiting of both social and political powers, the freedom of the individual from not only an excessive exercise of the powers of government but, also, from the less recognized and, in his judgment, more subtle, and therefore more threatening, forces and manipulations effected by majority opinion. His formula, as I have paraphrased it and as it emerges from my reading of the sum of caveats and considerations he provides in his essay (I’ve capitalized those concepts to which he gives special and thoughtful attention in explaining his formula), can be, succinctly but comprehensively stated as follows:

The GOVERNMENT or SOCIETY of a CIVILIZED COMMUNITY can property intervene COERCIVELY in the affairs of a MATURE and MENTALLY COMPETENT member of that community only when the ACTIONS, WORDS, OR INACTIONS of that individual threaten to cause SERIOUS, DIRECT, AND REASONABLY AVOIDABLE harm to OTHERS.

A proper understanding of this formula and the balances it attempts to strike between an individual's freedom and justifiable coercive limitations of that freedom (the latter, for Mill, substantial but still the exception rather than the rule) requires a thoughtful reflection on his entire, roughly one-hundred-page essay. Unfortunately, Mill's social/political philosophy has often been unappreciated, often because ignored, by those who take issue, as I do, with some of his more epistemological, metaphysical, and theological thoughts, and thereby the socially and politically practical "baby" has often come to be thrown out with the more abstract and (although not insignificant in itself) not-directly-relevant "bathwater."

However, in his earlier *TAD* essay, "Some Implications of the Political Aspects of Personal Knowledge" (v. 34, no. 3 [2007-08]), Richard Allen's abrupt dismissal of Mill appears to be for quite different reasons. Allen provides valuable insights into the inadequacy of rules and laws deemed to provide sufficient guidance for human behavior entirely through their explicit and simple formulations. But, on page 12, he unfairly refers to Mill's articulation of a rudimentary formula for a free society in Chapter One of his *Essay on Liberty* as an example of such a simplistic endeavor, not seeming to realize that Mill did not intend this to be an adequate statement, but one that required the remaining four chapters of his treatise to develop, as thoroughly as possible, the tacit implications of freedom, resulting in (as I've attempted to demonstrate by my above paraphrasing of these implications) perhaps, the most nearly adequate formula for social and political freedom ever articulated.

²New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

³Christopher Hayes, "The Twilight of the Elites," *Time*, March 22, 2010, p. 58.

⁴I have cited figures from the E.P.I., even though Jardine provides his own comparably-based figures (i.e., they, too, are based on averages and also bracket out averages for those in the poverty range), because Jardine's figures, calculated by the Institute of Policy Studies and reported in the November 2002 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* (p. 46) are at least five years older. However, it is interesting that during the half-decade between the height of the economic "bubble" and its bursting, the ratio between the pay of the average wage earner and that of the average CEO changed from 1:411 (according to the I.P.S.) to 1:275 (according to the E.P.I.). With unemployment figures mounting toward the end of that period, one might speculate that an increasing number of lower-paid wage earners had transitioned into the unreported range of those receiving less than a minimum wage.

⁵*Ibid*, p.102. I have bracketed the word "equality" to indicate that it is a replacement for the author's word in the text, "inequality," which he recognized as a typographical error when I called it to his attention.

⁶See Walter B. Mead, "Will as Moral Faculty" in *The Ethical Dimension of Political Life* (Francis Canavan ed., [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983]).

⁷Book 7. See also James L. Wisner's treatment of *perialog* in his "Philosophy and Human Order," *The Political Science Reviewer*, v. II, Fall, 1972, pp. 137-161.

⁸The impressive model of community design created by the brilliant Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, for Chandigarh, the then-new capital of the Punjab, is perhaps a major exception. Interestingly, here we have an instance of an architect, although doubtless influenced by his own native Christian culture, designing for a populace dominantly Hindu. However, my own cautious assessment of the chances for successful community planning in accord with the unquestionably laudable principles laid out by Murray Jardine, has been influenced by not only my study of numerous unsuccessful attempts within our own society but also by my own unsuccessful efforts over a period of several decades, from both a seat in local government and in my role as citizen, to persuade local developers, zoning commissions, and planning boards to curb urban sprawl, to implement development impact fees, to allow for green areas, to reverse the trend away from sidewalks, to provide for more neighborhoods that are situated around cul du sacs, and to promote front porches, hiking and biking trails, and community centers. Even an effort to persuade local air and print media to provide forums

to apprise citizens of the relative merits and disadvantages of larger vs. smaller communities, to engage their opinions, and to follow this up with an electoral referendum to inform government officials of their constituents' preferences, was constantly thwarted by the managers of the local media, who felt their advertising revenue would be threatened by even discussing these issues.

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