

THE BLAKE-BLAKE THEORY OF COMMUNION

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This theory has been largely inspired by William Blake's prophetic poem 'Milton'. In this magnificent work, Milton transforms from a puritan locked into Selfhood into a 'plenary' State, which is the redemption of Albion. As preface to Book Two of the poem, Blake writes:

"How wide the Gulf & Unpassable! Between Simplicity and Insipidity"

"Contraries are Positives
A Negation is not a Contrary"

Let us bear this in mind. The core of the theory is given in the section 'Propositions' and the rest is amounting to commentary and gloss.

PREAMBLE

We have been concerned with two questions. Firstly, is there a deeper ground on which Bennett's systematics rests? Secondly, what are the implications of Pensinger's concept of multi-value for groups, or assemblies of individuals?

The investigation of the first question led to puzzlement about unity and counting. It seemed to us that how we count and how we understand unity are coupled closely together. We also came to feel that the starting point of systematics in sets was inadequate. There must be many kinds of grouping, other than those distinguished by number. These different kinds were to be distinguished in ways that systematics has not acknowledged.

Pensinger's multi-value or m-logue concept requires of us that we conceive of groups in a new way. If we ascribe multi-value to individuals, then the 'togetherness' of individuals with each other cannot be conceived of in terms of sets or classes.

Our starting point was given by William Blake's concept of 'States' as 'Combinations of Individuals'.

We need, however, to allow for States to inhere in Individuals, if we are to accommodate Pensinger's concepts. In the case of 'Milton', the leading character himself is described as taking on such a State: "And thou, O Milton, art a State about to be Created." We introduce, therefore, the idea of Individuals that, though 'eternal', are able to assume States. Such multi-value thinking was initiated 2,000 years ago in the struggles to understand the nature of Christ, aspects of which are to be found in our theory. Christ as 2-valued and God as 3-valued were incredible steps of thinking. Considerations of God, prophecy and sin fall naturally out of the theory.



Now, this theory concerns itself with Individuals. There is no place for more abstract elements such as forces, sources, limits, etc. – in other words, none of the content of traditional systematics. We believe that systems are merely reflections of the primary reality of States of Individuals. Individuals are not composed, even though they may assume States. In proposing this, we echo the original genius of Duns Scotus (born just a few miles away from where I live in the Borders of Scotland) who taught that we first have knowledge of concrete individuals, each with its *hæcceitas* or ‘suchness’, and only secondarily with the general ‘forms’ of existence.

States correspond to experience. What then are Individuals? Our provisional answer is that they are much the same as Bennett’s Will, though in its most concrete form. Bennett’s treatment of Will (in volume II of ‘The Dramatic Universe’) gave a curiously composite form to Individuality and never sat comfortably with the idea of ‘particulate’ Will. However, in his book ‘Hazard’, in Appendix Two, we can find a closer model (see Comments at end).

PROPOSITIONS

1. Reality is made of Communions.
2. A Communion of Individuals is such that every Individual is in a State of combination of Individuals of that Communion.
 - 2a. There can be an Individual that is in a State of combination of every Individual of the Communion (including the 'fallen' – see below). This is the Plenary Individual.
 - 2b. There can be a 'symbolic form' (such as ancestral totem pole) in place of the Plenary Individual.
 - 2c. The symbolic form is 'God'. The Plenary Individual is 'prophet'.
3. Individuals who are in a State of combination only of themselves are 'fallen into sin'.
4. Sex consists of all States of combination of two Individuals in the Communion.
5. Individuals of a Communion can be in a State that includes the Plenary Individual. Such States are called 'participation'; but they are only partial.
 - 5a. A symbolic form of a participation is called a 'church'.
 - 6a. The States of combination of single Individuals ('in sin') are 'conscious'.
 - 6b. The States of combination of two individuals ('in sex') are 'creative'.
 - 6c. The States of combination of three or more Individuals, including the Plenary – i.e. in participation – are 'unitive' ("When two or three are gathered together in My Name, then am I with them")
 - 6d. The States of combination of Individuals which belong to different Communions are 'transcendent'.
7. A Communion is defined by its inclusion of a Plenary Individual or symbolic form. Hence such are religions, faiths, tribes, ways of living, etc.
 - 7a. Individuals who are included in two or more Communions are called 'peacemakers'.
8. Reality is without boundaries.
 - 8a. The Individuals of a Reality cannot be counted.
 - 8b. The States of a Reality go beyond experience.
 - 8c. The Communions of a Reality are unknown.
9. States resolve into subjective and objective aspects in that single-valued Individuals are most like objects and Plenary Individuals are most like subjects.
 - 9a. It is likely that this gives much the same results as e.g. Kashmiri Shaivism.
 - 9b. The theory of Communion contains Whitehead's concept of organic prehension (as States) and Leibniz's concept of monads (as Individuals).
10. The theory does not involve communication or any transfer 'between' Individuals. We regard communication as a poor theory of communion. In Communion, there is no need for any exchange because different Individuals are not separated in the States they assume.

11. A divine messenger is transcendent

A prophet is unitive

A saint is creative (lovers = one saint)

A sinner is conscious ("Hell is oneself" T. S. Eliot, taken from Blake)

12. In a Communion, 'many' is always 'one', and 'one' is always 'many'. When one = many, there is a State. All States are 'images' of the Communion.

COMMENTS

1. Our theory may strike the reader as abstract and elevated and not concerned with the usual human condition. This would be a mistake. What is offered here for contemplation is a seeing of the world of communion in which we already participate. We have experience in states, though these are ordinarily regarded in terms of 'awareness of the world' or 'relationships', which token only external connection. We have to go to the implicate side of our experience, into the interiority of states. We then need to allow this implicate type of perception to 'disclose' communion. The communion cannot be reduced to an experience, not unless we are the plenary individual. By taking the plenary individual on faith, we allow this state to 'in-form' us. It is by this in-forming, we argue, that we are supported in our faith, hope and love.

The theory allows us to conceive of 'sacred individuals' but also of the possibility of our participation in their nature. It seems to us that this gives substance to religious views which must, as we believe is obvious, concern the 'subjective' aspect of communion. At the same time, the realm of human interaction, usually considered in the objective' aspect of communion, can be accommodated.

2. The systems of systematics appear in the theory as reflections of states onto the objective aspect. For this to be acceptable, we have to allow a symbolic replacement of individuals by sub-elements of experience such as objects, forces, sources, limits, etc. In this light, systems may be thought of as, in their essence, 'acts of will'. It is no accident that systems are as they are because they are 'seen that way'. The view of systems as based on external connections becomes valid only at the objective limits of communion.

We draw attention to a critical proposition in Bennett's systematics. This is that the 'terms' of any system are 'homo-ousias', that is, of the same kind. In this guise, they can take the place of individuals: individuals are strictly homo-ousias and 'equal'. The mere approximations to the ideality of systems we find in empirical circumstances can be understood as deriving from the lack of true equality and individuality of empirical terms.

The variety of a system [N] we find in practice are due to the variety of states of N individuals in combination to be realised in a given communion. This may serve to explain why cultures are significant for the explication of systematics.

3. In the book 'Hazard', Bennett says that Will is "an indivisible whole that always remains the same and yet it is composed of an infinity of particulate wills." (Appendix Two). Though poised on the threshold, so-to-say, he makes no allowance for any



significance of combinations of particulate wills. In another place, in the book 'Creation', however, he uses Cantor's concept of transfinite numbers to entertain such an idea. In 'The Dramatic Universe' (vol. II) he talks extensively of Will as 3-fold, but not even as a state of combination of 3 particulate wills or individuals. Our theory offers a bridge between his various models. Of course, our theory gives an exalted status to 'individuals', much as in the religious sense of individuals as 'sparks of the divine'.

In 'Hazard' he says that the 'atoms of will' only make themselves felt when enclosed in a vessel. How such atoms can be enclosed is a mystery. Our theory allows us to postulate states as intermediary. There are no vessels as such. Particles of will can 'take shape' in combinations.

In many places, he speaks of the 'self-limitation of will' in terms of the formation of the 'determining-conditions' of space, time, number, etc. We would like to replace the concept of self-limitation by the theory of combinations. Because a combination of individuals is involved, there has to be agreement about 'how to act'. It is this agreement that is the basis of the determining conditions. We can then see that there are a multitude of determining conditions, in the form of agreements. The individuals in a combination have to act together; and they thereby exemplify what Bennett, in yet other writings, called 'coalescence'. It is this property that gives rise to Cosmos out of the apparent Chaos of raw communion.

Implicit in this argument is a strong version of the 'anthropic' principle, but based on individuals and not on human generality. It implies that the far greater part of the universe is yet to be discovered. Agreeing with Bennett, we can conceive of a baseline agreement which is simply to 'exist' at all.

Finally, to revert to Bennett's model of a 'vessel', we can take note that he regarded this as 'being'. We want to point out that the root concept of being is 'inner-togetherness' – which is tantamount to what we mean by combinations of individuals. In this sense, every individual contains' every other who belongs in the same state.