

Diversity and the Common Good: A Need Defended

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From the enslavement of blacks and the enslavement and genocide of fifty-seven million First Nation Peoples, to the genocide of Jews in Nazi Germany, Muslims and Bosnians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, of Tutsis in Rwanda, Cambodians by Pol Pot, Russians by Stalin, and Armenians in Turkey, combined with the rape of the Earth and peoples in resource rich countries through post-colonialism, the 19th and 20th centuries taught us to fear community and a state adoption of the good. Today, this fear causes us to tremble when we see women earn 76 cents for every dollar men earn, when we see women subjected to a rape-culture in which 1 in 3 are raped during their college years, when we see our black brother Eric Garner choked to death on video and discover our black brothers and sisters incarcerated at rates higher than any other group in a country with the highest incarceration rate in the world, when we see that 1 in 3 First Nation women are raped typically by non-First Nation brothers or discover that 1 in 6 First Nation brothers commit suicide due to the horribly oppressive conditions they live in, when we see our Hispanic brothers and sisters shot on sight when crossing into the US or witness them lose fingers as they work for slave-wages in chicken-processing plants, when we see our Muslim brothers and sisters subject to harassment, unjustified search, and murder, when we hear the stories of or see the nets to prevent our Asian brothers and sisters from throwing themselves out of buildings where they work in hot, dirty, and restrictive environments to build our batteries and our computers, and when we see our sisters sold into sexual slavery so that masturbating men can direct women over the internet to shove various objects into their vaginas and anuses. Our human task, and the task of practical philosophy, is to alleviate suffering especially when caused by oppression and domination like that listed above.

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The fundamental category of practical philosophy (human life) is human agency. All humans exercise agency for some good. We seek the good both individually and socially. The good the individual seeks is only known once the goods the community seeks are discovered, as I shall argue below. Thus, individual agency rests on social agency. If correct, then this analysis means that the fundamental category of human agency is the common good and the fundamental category of human action is the community. Does the prioritization of the common good and the community before the individual stand in contrast with our need to fight against oppression? Does it not support that oppression rather than provide a means for relieving it? Does it not in fact require a rejection of diversity?

I shall argue that, in fact, diversity is necessary for understanding the common good and for achieving the common good. We can only conceive of the common good by conceiving of diversity, and we can only achieve the common good when we live in diverse communities.

I shall begin by presenting the strongest arguments against diversity. Before I can reply to these objections, I will first need to define diversity. Many arguments rest on a poor understanding of how we use the concept of diversity when thinking about social justice. Because human agency is the fundamental category of human life, then diversity in the relevant political sense is a category of human agency. Even more than diversity, the concept of the common good is contested. To defend my conception of the common good as common goods of a community, I shall show that other conceptions of the common good—the good of the whole, the greatest good for the greatest number, public goods, and Maritain’s conception of the common good—fail to uplift human agency. Rather, human agency rests on the communal discovery of common goods. Such discovery entails theoretically and practically the inclusion of difference, sometimes necessarily and some times instrumentally depending on whether the difference is essential or accidental to human agency and identity.

Because the conception of the common good extends back to Aristotle, the arguments surrounding this concept are many and complex. Further, the concept is wrapped up not only with philosophical arguments but with theological arguments. God is the common good of the universe, so Thomas Aquinas, the greatest philosopher of the

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13th century tells us. Thus, I will address theological arguments as I build my own because to do otherwise is to miss out on the rich conception of the common good present in the literature and for making my own argument above the necessity of the common good as strong as possible.

Further, I write from the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition especially as articulated by Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre's writings on the common good prove necessary because he best articulates the Aristotelian conception of the common goods of community. He especially clarifies and insists on the Marxist insight that I can only discover my wants when discovering with others our wants. My own contribution here is to make more explicit the reasons for rejecting other conceptions of the common good and specifically showing how diversity is necessary for a theoretical understanding of and practical engagement with the common goods of a community.

OBJECTIONS

Why might someone say that diversity is not essential to the common good?

First, someone might say that diversity is a contingent matter of fact. Therefore, they would disagree that diversity belongs to the nature of the common good. The common good is a universal. As universal, it applies to all places and time; it covers all contingencies. Diversity, however, is not a necessary fact of life. We know, for instance, that the human population had been reduced for some reason to around 10,000 individuals some twenty-thousand years ago. Presumably, that number of individuals was not very diverse. In fact, because of that bottleneck event, homo sapiens shows much less diversity genetically than most other species.

Second, someone might argue that, just as the common good is universal, so is human nature. We share one human nature—despite how human societies and individuals have or have not accepted that fact. Therefore, because human nature is universal, then the common good is also universal. The common good is a good for this or that species of beings. It is derivative or contingent on the nature of the species, and since the nature of human beings is one—universal—then the good is also one.

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Someone could also argue that not every society is diverse. The common good is a common good for this or that community. Since this or that community may not be diverse, then the common good of this or that community may not and need not require diversity in order to be achieved. This objection differs from the second one above. The second objection contends that the common good is universal because human nature is universal. This objection looks, not at universal human nature, but at the level of community. The community defines for itself the common good. As such, any community that lacked diversity would not need to include within its concept of the common good any reference to or need for diversity.

Further, theologically speaking, God is our common good. God is the common good of all creation. Yet, God is one. While God may be three persons in one, God still constitutes a unity, a singularity. The three-in-oneness of God is a mystery beyond our human comprehension; yet, metaphysically speaking, God is one being. As such, God is simple and lacks diversity. Since God is, by definition, our common good, and since God is, by definition, unified, then our common good is unified. That is, our common good is not diverse, and diversity is not a necessary for our common good.

A final reason someone might reject the claim that diversity is necessary to the common good looks to the Bible. Specifically, Galatians 3:28, St. Paul “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In accepting Christ, Christians become one body without diversity. Whereas the objection based on God as the common good contends that the good is one, this objection insists that, in accepting Christ, we abandon difference for one good; we become one without diversity. Therefore, our common good must also be universal.

DIVERSITY

Before replying to these objections or answering the question whether diversity is necessary for the common good, we must ask “what diversity?” What exactly do I mean by “diversity” when claiming that diversity is essential to the common good? To begin, let me clarify the thesis: diversity is in some instances a necessary pre-requisite for the common good and in other cases an instrumental pre-requisite for the common good. The

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primary distinction between whether diversity is necessary or instrumental rests on the nature of diversity. Specifically, we express agency necessarily through some forms of diversity and incidentally through other forms. These different forms of expression comprise how we create our identities as actors in the world pursuing the good. Thus, some forms of diversity essential to our identity are necessary for the common good while others accidental (which does not mean unimportant) to human identity are instrumental for the common good. This distinction requires that we make judgment calls about what is and what is not essential to creating human identity. In making these judgment calls, I can only recognize that, as human, I am fallible; these judgment calls are always contestable, and I welcome discussion on those parameters. Still, we must accept that a healthy human identity is one that accepts human error and diversity.

Despite the ink dedicated to the topic, the authors who use the term diversity rarely define it (Beetham 2009, Borsch 2002, Bouville 2008, Gay 2011, Long 2014, Monceri 2014, Moore 2008, xi). Stephen Stich provides a rather bland definition: “a group can be diverse if it contains differences in any feature” (Stich 2014, 173). Michael Raposa writes “[t]he nature of diversity is also taken as something given, a fixed goal with questions raised only about the best strategies for achieving it. (Raposa 2012, 432). Harry Moore contends that “[w]hile seemingly simple words that may be defined, diversity, tolerance, and justice are concepts that a mere definition or notion does not adequately address in our attempt to understand the ramifications of these terms. (2008, 472). Michele Moses noting its contestability writes of diversity “[a]t the most basic level, diversity means variety or heterogeneity. In discussions centering on affirmative action diversity is characterized by a variety of races, ethnicities, colors, cultures, ages, religions, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, sexes and gender identities, abilities, languages, etc. These are qualities persons hold that cannot easily be changed. In the context of educational benefits, diversity also includes things that can be changed, such as values, beliefs, moral ideals, intellectual understandings, political ideologies, etc. (Moses 2006, 28). However, despite naming one of her sections “Philosophical origins of the Ideal of Diversity,” she never provides a more specific definition nor lists any definitions from philosophers.

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Walter Been Michaels (2006) provides an interesting discussion of diversity as associated with race. He traces the importance of the concept of diversity to 1978 *Bakke v. Board of Regents*. As Michaels notes, the Supreme Court ruled that schools could consider the race of an applicant in their admissions discussion “if it serve ‘the interest of diversity’” (3). For Michaels, this ruling meant, not that schools should consider race—which he rightly notes is no longer considered a biological entity, but that they should continue their typical practice of considering diversity while including the race as one consideration among many, for example, from where a student came. In reality, this decision led to a deep association between race and diversity (4). “We love race, and we love the identities to which it has given birth” (5). Yet, the problem is that we now look to race and identity as a run-around looking at differences in class: “so we like to talk about differences we can appreciate” and not about ones we cannot (6). In other words, differences over identity we think can be celebrated; however, we cannot celebrate differences over economic class and so we seek to avoid thinking about them. While Michaels makes an interesting point about including economic diversity in discussion—which I only hint at in this paper. Further, we should consider how diversity encouraged inequality. My argument is that a proper definition allows us to consider both sides of this discussion. Michaels, however, does not add anything to our definition of diversity here.

We might agree with Mathieu Bouville, then, that “diversity is seldom defined precisely” (2008, 52). Rather than provide his own precise definition, however, Bouville holds that diversity may be “a factual description, a craving for symmetry, an intrinsic good, an instrumental good, a symptom, or a side effect” (2008, 51). None of these are precise definitions; yet, Bouville goes through each instance to reject diversity. For example, in his discussion of diversity as an intrinsic good, Bouville argues thusly: if diversity is an intrinsic good, then we must always increase diversity. Therefore, we must increase the amount of sickness in the world and the number of women in prisons (54). Bouville intends his argument as a *reductio ad absurdum*; no one wants to increase the amount of sickness in the world or increase the number of women in prison. Bouville intends us to accept his claim so that we reject the idea that diversity is an intrinsic good. His approach rests on assumptions that sickness and prison are bad without exploring why these might

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be bad examples of diversity. To ask why we might consider it an intrinsic good means that we must understand more critically what we mean by diversity.

In contrast, Sharon Todd (2011) provides insight into the discussion. Todd notes that “diversity is frequently synonymous with a view of individuals as the aggregate of their cultural attributes” (102). Rightly, Todd denounces this definition because it prevents engagement with the terms in conflict in an educational situation. I do not think Todd goes far enough here, but the reason is that she is trapped in a paradigm of community as abstract.

Todd’s discussion is centered on intercultural education. In these debates, Todd reports that the concept of diversity is “depicted in rather broad terms: ‘culture, gender, age, social situation, geographical origin, interests, beliefs, physical and intellectual characteristics, etc. There are differences between individuals and differences between groups” (102, citing Batelaan 2003, 2). She criticizes this approach because in the endless list “diversity” becomes “shorthand for naming precisely those differences that need to be ‘managed’ since they create the conditions for conflicts to arise” implying “that diversity is a problem, a source of social tension, that needs to be remedied by intercultural education” (102). As I shall argue, diversity in relation to the common good is, not a problem to be remedied, but an opportunity for learning and growth. Endless lists of differences instead block the discovery of goods. The political implications are even more problematic. First, diversity as an endless list of differences abstracts the individual, as a representative of culture rather than as a unique person with her own identity. Such abstractions are always counter to the pursuit of the common good for human flourishing. Second, as Todd argues, this approach treats dialogue as a mere tool for “remedying the competing worldviews, beliefs, knowledges, and positions to which cultural differences give rise. Dialogue therefore cannot be about particular persons engaging as unique, embodied individuals but only as ‘cultural’ subjects (...) who solve problems in the service of democracy. Thus ... democratic dialogue becomes a social convention ... hav[ing] little to do with the specifically political dimensions of conflicts themselves” (Sharon 2011, 103). I want to push Todd’s analysis: the treatment of diversity as a problem to be overcome through dialogue for the sake of democracy fetishizes democracy at the expense

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of human agency. On my account of common goods, democracy arises, not as a system we fit into, but as an outgrowth of human agency.

In contrast, Todd adopts an understanding of antagonistic democracy. Initially, Todd's understanding of democracy appears promising. Following Hannah Arendt and Adrianna Cavarero, Todd wants to shift from diversity to the concept of plurality and from dialogue to the concept of narrative for political determination "to rethink the terms through which democratic education can create spaces not in which to "deal" with conflict, but in and through which to articulate it" (Todd 2011, 104). Given the concept of dialogue she presents, narrative has a more promising role for the concept of the common good I develop in this paper. To give a little away, I shall defend a conception of the common good as the result of a process of mutual discovery. This mutual discovery will require narrative of human persons in their concrete lives. Yet, Todd's conception of narrative and plurality remain too tied to a classical liberal conception of the human community that undermines human agency.

As Todd rightly notes, Arendt rejects the "abstract individual" of classical liberalism. Yet, in Todd's interpretation of Arendt-via-Cavarero, the conception of community remains the abstract one of classical liberalism. For Todd, "ontology signals the facticity of plurality without granting it any substantive content" (104). People reveal who they are in speech and action. They actively distinguish themselves in relation to others through speech and act; "they actively put forth their who-ness in the very gesture of their words and deeds" (105). Uniqueness cannot be an essence, because it reveals itself in this disclosure. While cultural differences might characterize our act and speech, "it is our material uniqueness as embodied, speaking subjects that constitutes the condition of plurality" (105). Making this claim, Todd rejects culture as constitutive of uniqueness and diversity in favor of material differentiation as the foundation of plurality. As an example, Todd takes up Cavarero's discussion of the hero of classical mythology. This hero appears before others and discloses himself. In disclosing himself, he "creates agonistic tensions with those others with whom" he interacts. His identity rests, not on "different attributes, or qualities, or opinions," but on "his uniqueness assert[ing] itself as freedom" (106). His physical reality as this material being substantiates his uniqueness and his assertion of freedom.

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The problem with this account is that it treats cultural difference as something given rather than something created. Cavarero's and Todd's example of the hero creates a false dichotomy between one's attributes, qualities and opinions and one's asserting one's self as free. In essence, they have reversed Aristotle's metaphysics and misunderstood individuality. For Aristotle, we are metaphysically individual because of our material reality. Human beings exist as individuals because, sharing one essence, they express that essence as distinct spatio-temporal beings. Yet, individuality cannot be reduced to material individual-ness. Zombies are individuals but lack individuality.

The crux of this difference reveals itself in Cavarero's analysis: "Rather, the political essence of speech consists in revealing to others the uniqueness of each speaker.... What Arendt calls 'political' is in fact a space that is materially shared, whereupon those present show to one another, in words and deeds, their uniqueness and their capacity to begin new things" (2005, 189, cited by Todd 2011, 107). This explanation works only if individuals are unique prior to presenting themselves to others, that is, only if individuality is merely material individual-ness. If individuality is more, however, then our uniqueness either exists prior to community—which makes little sense—or is constituted in our interactions with each other. If individuality is constituted in our interactions, which I think Todd's position implies, then culture is an aspect of that individuality.

For Todd, we disclose ourselves in an agonistic space and we "depend on others to hear and respond to our words and deeds, our stories" (Todd 2011, 107). Yet, she does not carry this thought to its end viz., in doing so, we create the culture through which we identify ourselves. Like individuals, culture appears, not as abstract entities prior to action, but in and through that action and revelation. The idea of pluralism that Todd wishes to substitute for diversity abstracts, not from the idea of the individual, but from the concept of community. To state the difference more perspicuously, whereas Cavarero (and her Arendt, and Todd) says human beings are unique "only when and while they interact," I contend that they discover that uniqueness in constituting their community through the mutual discovery of common goods.

In contrast to Todd, then, I continue to use the term diversity because, properly defined, it will help us understand better how diversity supports human agency.

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Bouville's example helps us reach a better understanding of diversity. David Levine (1996, 32) writes, "[i]n thinking about diversity, it matters what sorts of group identities we have in mind. In particular, it matters whether our connection with groups affirms, expresses, and develops self-determination, or represses freedom in the pursuit of group ends opposed to it." Clearly, more sickness in the world is not good because it does not affirm, express, or develop agency. People with certain sicknesses, however, might legitimately ask for more representation and more inclusion in society and organizations. Our task is to distinguish illnesses that detract from the agency of individuals from those that do not and, further, to develop responses to how agency can be supported. All people suffer from the occasional headache and, aside from health care issues, we do not consider that fact relevant to discussions of inclusion. Primarily, we do not consider it relevant to discussions of inclusion because it has little relevance to how we identify ourselves and because it has little relevance to our overall flourishing. A person might lead a flourishing life even if she suffers the occasional headache. Yet, some people suffer from debilitating migraines. Migraines define the parameters within which individuals express agency and hinder an agent's pursuit of a flourishing life. For these people, we would want to provide accommodations that might be more inclusive, for example, a more lenient absentee policy in school and employment. The question about what to include in our definition of diversity for the common good must take into consideration the affect of difference on human flourishing and identity.

Bouville's example reveals a second aspect of diversity. Leave aside the question of whether prisons are good things to have or not and presume, for the purposes of argument, that they are. Having suffered from migraines myself, I am comfortable saying that having a migraine is always debilitating, always hinders flourishing. Being a woman, however, only hinders flourishing because of socio-political conditions. Before the "white man" came, Iroquois women never experienced limitations in their flourishing simply because they were women. Today, when women earn 76 cents to the dollar of what a man earns, we cannot make the same proclamation. Thus, when we call for diversity—for greater inclusion of women—we are asking for the same sort of thing that we ask for those suffering migraines viz., the removal of obstacles to human flourishing. We do not want

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more sickness in the world for the same reason we do not want more women in prison: both represent an increase in roadblocks to human flourishing.

Initially, then, we can define diversity as inclusion of persons who in some way suffer a diminished possibility for human flourishing due to some aspect of their lives, whether natural or artificial.

These two examples differ however in the way they condition agency, something Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" (1851) reveals because it highlights the way race and gender are integrated in human identity—in the expression of agency. We have ample evidence that race can be a hindrance to human flourishing—from the fact that Hispanics are pulled over at higher rates than whites, to the blatant state execution of blacks by police officers during minor traffic stops and other offenses, to the higher incidence of blacks in prisons and on death rows, and the total invisibility of First Nation Peoples in the US. Yet, we also know that race is a social construct. Science shows that markers typically associated with race appear among individuals indigenous to different continents and, further, that skin color differs more among people typically classified as the same race than it does between individuals classified in typical race categories. Further, when Italians, Germans, and Irish first immigrated to the United States, they were known as black. The category of "black" is our best example of a nominalist concept—a universal that does not pick out a natural kind.

Yet, where race is constructed, being a woman, man or intersex, being heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, differs because these categories are bodily based. They rest on a realism that tries to pick out natural kinds. One's sex organs—and here, I mean, not simply one's genitalia, but also the mind, the largest sex organ—respond to specific stimuli, and these stimuli are primarily physical. Sexual ideation clues one into what sex one is attracted to: is one aroused by the male or the female body or by both? Making this point does not discount or deny that culture determines to a great extent what one identifies as "beautiful," "sexy," or "hot." A hetero-sexual male and a lesbian might both be attracted to women and might both find Marilyn Monroe more sexually arousing than Cameron Diaz or vice versa depending on what culture they inhabit. Further, most evidence suggests that sexual orientation is, not an on-off button, but a spectrum from strictly heterosexual to homosexual. Unlike race, however, we can point to the specific physical-chemical markers

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that identify someone as woman, man, intersex, heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. A reality underlies the universal whether we name that reality in truth. (For my views on truth, see (Author) 2012, chapter 5.)

For my argument, we must also emphasize that all of these categories are porous. As I have argued elsewhere (2012), human beings are beings of tradition-culture. We experience the world differently based on our tradition. “Race,” for instance, is a quite different category for first-century Christians than for 21st century US Americans. (Paul refers to the Christian race and the pagan race.)* “God,” so Etienne Gilson tells us, is one thing for pre-Christian Greeks and something else for Jews and Christians. More scientifically, gravity is one thing for Newton, another for Einstein. Thus, we can understand Martha Nussbaum’s (2000) arguments that homosexuality was one thing for Golden Age Greeks and something else for contemporary US Americans, just as “woman” is one thing for Iroquois, another for Sojourner Truth, and a third contemporary white women.

These examples pinpoint different ways we relate socially.† Race, sex, and gender comprise a set of meanings. Some times, the meaning held by the dominant culture can be uplifting to members who identify with this or that aspect of their race, sex, and gender, and some times it can be diminishing. Women, blacks, Hispanics, the poor, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals all suffer today because the dominant cultural meanings of those terms identify them as pejorative terms so that members these terms describe are seen through the lens of the dominant culture as inferior to the idea of what it holds up as human: the prosperous, white, male. We could not say the same thing about being a woman among the Iroquois, nor could we say the same thing about being “black” in Golden Age Athens. Individuals of groups culturally oppressed by the dominant culture face struggles over whether and to what extent they identify with their “group.” Some do so as a sign of rebellion or resistance, some accept the meaning of the dominant culture and adjust how they live accordingly, and some may not even recognize the effects of the dominant cultural oppression on them. In any of these cases, diversity means inclusion of those who suffer

* I want to thank Gerald Twaddell for this insight.

† I want to thank Christopher Arroyo for making this point clear.

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from oppression through the imposition of stereotype and other signifiers by the dominant culture; in other words, diversity entails diversity in ways of life or social practices.

Second, whether a certain aspect of a person provides a way of relating socially sometimes depends on cultural circumstances. Human nature entails that we relate to each other as sexual beings: male, female, intersex, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual. For the theologically minded, *Genesis* reveals what every marriage ceremony reminds us: God made them male and female. I am not claiming that all societies will be divided along sex and gender or involve some oppression of one sex or gender by another. Rather, we cannot relate to each other as non-sexual or non-gendered beings because our sex and our gender are constitutive, not only of our being-with-others, but simply our being. It is so fundamental to our being that we cannot even imagine what it would be not to have a sex or a gender. An asexual person is someone who still relates to others along sexual lines, in this case, denying sexual expression. To remove all gender from our language would require a completely different categorization of beings, for we could no longer distinguish between those things that reproduce and those that do not, and those things that reproduce through sexual means and those that reproduce non-sexually (amoebas). “It” would function in a completely different way than it does in human language. Some “one” who did not have sex organs or a gender would not even be able to deny sexual expression.

In contrast, as I have already pointed out, race is a social category. That race is a social means of relating to others is contingent on a specific time and place, a specific culture. Outside of that time and place and culture, the concept of race might not even exist. This distinction entails a distinction between one form of diversity as necessary for the common good and one instrumental (and not necessary) for the common good.

Yet, we can draw one more conclusion from this brief reflection viz., that culture or ethnicity is inherent or essential to human life. That race or sex or gender are all culturally interpreted and in some cases determined means that culture is the underlying condition of human life. Here my greatest difference from Todd and Arendt appears. Both want to deny an essential human nature, and I cannot blame them. Many have used universal conceptions of human nature to dehumanize and kill people who are difference. Moreover, clearly I run the risk of denying certain differences as essential in my discussion here and run the risk that these arguments might be used to deny some people their agency. Yet, to

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deny an essential human nature is to run the greater risk of denying agency to vast numbers of people. Todd and Arendt have responded to the denial of human nature to some by denying it to all. In contrast, I insist on saying of all that we are only human together.

Theologically, this point appears more difficult to defend than the other claims I have made. For one, *Genesis*, rather than reporting that God made us Lakota or Cherokee or Nigerian, tells us, through the story of the Tower of Babel, that diverse languages—a sign of diverse cultures—is a punishment for trying to be like God. When not taken literally, however, the Tower of Babel represents an attempt by human beings to understand why so many languages and cultures exist. It rests on an idea of God as vengeful and angry. It is told by a people confused and hurt by other cultures. Such confusion and pain is contingent as is the (false) belief in a vengeful God. What would this story look like if it were told rather from the belief in an All-Loving God?

Second, as mentioned above, St. Paul tells us that the afterlife will mean “no Jew, no Greek.” Yet, we can ask what Paul means by this passage for it contains an ambiguity. Does it mean literally that no Jew and no Greek will be part of the Body of Christ? Or does it mean that divisions that lead to suffering will no longer be part of the Body of Christ? Both interpretations require us to believe that Christ’s body will not allow divisions of suffering. Yet, the first interpretation means we must make an additional leap to the claim that no ethnicity will be permitted. If we took this interpretation further, it also means that we will have either unsexed or intersexed bodies, at least for those who follow the Pauline teaching concerning the resurrection of the body. Even the closeted Manichean Augustine of Hippo admitted that Adam and Eve had sex in Eden (they just did not experience any pleasure in the act) (*City of God* Book XVI). Again, both of these interpretations require a leap that we cannot even imagine. Therefore, we are safer sticking with the second interpretation viz., that Paul’s claims refer only to the cessation of divisions that cause suffering. When he writes that we will no longer be Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free, he means that in Heaven, we will no longer suffer divisions within the Body of Christ. Still, to carry the imagery further, a body has parts—the foot and the hand, the head and the heart. All will be members of one Body, and a healthy body is one that is whole and harmonious. Neither of these Biblical stories gives us reason for believing that we will not be cultural beings.

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My argument rests, not merely on Biblical interpretation, but on reason. As human beings, we are bound by culture. The main difference between chimpanzees, bonobos, and dolphins and human beings is that human beings have culture and these other pre-rational animals do not. To know, is to know through culture. We have no access to a universal position from which we can know, and even if we did, this position would not discount the fact that we still experience the world and create our identity through culture. The burden of proof rests on those who affirm the universal stand-point and the human-without-culture. Experience teaches that we understand the world through culture. We create our identities through culture, and that entails something specific about how we define diversity and what answer we give to the question of whether diversity is necessary for the common good. These different forms of life comprise ways in which human beings seek an identity. Race, sex, gender, economic class (which I have mostly ignored but which follows a similar analysis as to that of race) are all ways that condition how we might relate to the world and to others, how we might experience the world, and how we might identify ourselves. Am I a Lakota warrior, a black woman, a Hispanic migrant worker? These represent ways that people identify themselves. Significantly, they are fundamental to our sense of justice. At this point, then, we can refine the definition of diversity.

Initially, we said that diversity meant inclusion of persons who in some way suffer a diminished possibility for human flourishing due to some aspect of their lives, whether natural or artificial. Given the analysis of race, sex, and gender, however, we can expand this definition. Diversity means the inclusion of persons who exercise agency—know and relate to the world—differently, especially to provide extra means of inclusion for those whose agency is compromised and to provide means for learning from those whose different ways of learning and relating lead to flourishing. I will now turn to defining the common good. Only then shall I be able to argue that both of these forms of diversity are either necessary for, in some cases, or instrumental to, in others, the common good.

COMMON GOODS

If diversity is a contested term, so too is the common good. In the literature, we find the following conceptions of the common good: (1) the good of the whole, (2) the greatest

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good for the greatest number, (3) the public good, (4) Jacques Maritain's conception of the common good, (5) God, and, finally, (6) common goods of a community. In my argument, I shall argue that diversity, as understood in this paper, is necessary in some instances and instrumental in others to #6, the common goods of a community, and, further, that because #5 is a subcategory of #6, diversity is necessary to God as the common good of the universe. I choose these two conceptions of the common good because they are the ones best suited for a politics aimed at the full flourishing of each and every person. Examining each concept will demonstrate the truth of my claim.

I shall consider the conceptions of the good of the whole and the greatest good for the greatest number together since these conceptions are similarly mistaken.

The conception of the common good as good of the whole focuses on the good of the unit. Three examples help to understand this position. First, Plato defends the good of the whole in his *Republic*. For Plato, a city's happiness is independent of the happiness of its individual members. Harmony of the parts rather than the parts themselves determines for Plato the happiness of the city. He contends "Can there be any greater evil than discord and distraction and plurality where unity ought to reign? Or any greater bond than the bond of unity?" (462, Book V.) Further he insists "this unity of feeling we admitted to be the greatest good" (464, Book V). Josef Stalin's Soviet Union also is a common good defined as the good of the whole. He sacrificed millions for the good of the state, a clear sign that he did not follow or represent true Marx, who insisted on the good of each and every one. Finally, Aldous Huxley's One State in *Brave New World* suppresses individual flourishing for the good of the whole. In contrast to Plato's *Republic* and Stalin's Soviet Union, however, most individuals in the One State experience some form of "happiness"—access to soma, a highly sexed culture, and satisfaction with one's station in life. When challenged on this issue, Plato contends that those who would insist on personal happiness at the expense of the harmony of the whole are not suited for making that decision—they are not guardians (466, Book V). We can presume that he would exile such people, just as Bernard is exiled in *Brave New World*. The fundamental premise of a conception of the good of the whole is that, not individual, but group happiness is what counts, even if these examples differ on the extent to which they are able to satisfy the immediate desires of members of their societies.

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Whereas the good of the whole defines the common good on a single good of the state, the greatest good for the greatest defines the common good as an aggregate good of the whole. While rejecting Plato's belief that happiness does not matter, defenders of the greatest good would ask of Stalin's Soviet Union and Huxley's One State whether the aggregate good of the people in these societies is greater than in some other possible situation. This utilitarian conception of the common good identifies the good as a situation in which more happiness than unhappiness occurs for all. If we have enough money for only one kind of ice cream, and I like vanilla +1 and chocolate at 0, but you like chocolate +2 and vanilla at 0, then we should purchase the chocolate ice cream—the greatest good for the greatest number.

Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill are the most renowned defenders of this utilitarian principle, but we find it instantiated in a number of social ideals. Combat field medical triage is perhaps the most used example to justify the greatest good. Triage involves making utilitarian decisions in which resources are given to some and not to others. A similar argument justified the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: because more people (more US Americans?) would have died had the war continued, dropping the bomb was justified because it saved lives. More common, businesses justify relatively higher levels of unemployment in favor of greater profit for some; some languish in poverty because, overall, more wealth is produced than if taxes were higher or if everyone had a job. How many of us today justify our economic system as the best on these grounds? Our inexpensive clothes, our fast HD televisions and super-powered computers, our coffee, and the food we eat rest on the suffering of others—animals, the environment, people who work in slave conditions, people who “willingly” sell their labor but do not make enough to lead a flourishing life themselves. Yet, we defend this system on the basis of providing the greatest aggregate good for all involved.

This fact stands in contrast to the main example used in philosophy classes against utilitarianism—slavery. Slavery placed thousands of people into horrible conditions; yet, millions of people enjoyed happiness they otherwise would not have without slavery. Thus, though some suffered, overall the good of the many outweighed the good of the few. Ursula LeGuin wrote a story, “The Ones Who Walk From Omelas,” to make the costs of utilitarianism more objectionable. Omelas is a town in which each person enjoys

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tremendous happiness. Everyone is healthy, bright, pleasant, and leads a satisfying life. Omelas, however, holds a secret. Each year, when citizens turn 18, they are led to a basement. In this basement, one child is tortured. The happiness of the citizens of Omelas rests on the torture of this one child. Like One State's Controller, utilitarians ask, isn't that suffering worth the happiness of everyone else? LeGuin's answer is "no." Yet, our every day actions suggest that we do not agree with LeGuin.

These two conceptions of the common good face similar problems. First, both definitions are unrealistic. Second, both abstract the human being and the community. Third, both abstract the good. Finally, both represent denials of human agency and thus fail to guide human action.

I begin with Aristotle's response to Plato's *Republic*. Aristotle finds Plato's account of political theory too limiting for human flourishing for a number of reasons. First, whereas both believe that the community is necessary for human beings to attain all the resources they need for a flourishing life, Aristotle criticizes Plato's state as lacking the diversity necessary for achieving those goods. The unity required for Plato's state, Aristotle remarks, is identical to the unity required in a family. Certainly, those embracing a *Volk* mentality would agree with this remark, for their idea of kith and kin premises the state on blood relations. Yet, families lack the diversity of individuals to achieve the goods necessary for living life well. This argument points to the further argument, that a conception of the common good as the good of the whole means the elimination of diversity. The atrocities of the 20th century were atrocities centered on eliminating diversity, and many of our challenge moving forward continue to be challenges of accepting diversity. Now, obviously, Huxley's One State appears to avoid this problem—could a world be built on genetic engineering and Skinnerian behavioral psychology? Perhaps.

Yet, Aristotle's second complaint against Plato rejects such a state. Often, because we are so focused on Aristotle's racist and sexist views, we forget that Aristotle's best government is a government of reciprocity in which equals take turns ruling each other. It is a mixture of democracy and aristocracy. Once we remove Aristotle's accidental racism and sexism, we have a theory, not only of a fairly radical democracy, but also of a conception of the good that undermines the claims of the good of the whole. All citizens are naturally equal. The reason we value the good of each and every citizen over the good of

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the whole is that our equality necessitates, not the good of the whole, but the good of each and every one. Upon what does this equality rest?

Thomas Hobbes argues that our equality rests on our ability to kill each other. As far as I can tell, John Locke adopts this understanding of equality and combines it with the idea that we are equal because God made us. Thomas Jefferson fully adopts the idea that “all men are created equal,” resting our equality on God. Others defend our equality based on our capacity for free choice. None of these have proven adequate. In fact, Marx’s understanding, based on Aristotle’s practical philosophy, of human equality is the only conception that unites theory and practice in concrete human reality. Our equality rests on the simple fact that, not only the pursuit, but the very identification of my good necessitates the identification of our good.

Hobbes’ conception is both sociopathic and factually wrong. If true, we would either be inferior to or equal with most higher animals. Further, the ability to kill each other requires that we overcome the fundamental human—mammalian—inhibition to kill each other. Further, a theological defense faces problems—not only the fact that God created us with different physical capacities, but also the fact that God created us with different mental and spiritual capacities. At best, one could argue that we are equal because God created us as vulnerable. Moreover, it misses the central reality of God’s creation—we can only reach God through union with others. This fact, however, is just the philosophical point that, in order to identify my own good, we must first discover our good.

This conclusion, which shall become clearer as the argument progresses, entails a rejection of the good of the whole and the greatest good for the greatest number. Both of these conceptions of the common good deny that we can identify our good only if we identify our good. Under these two conceptions, either the individual’s good or the good of the whole is identifiable apart from each person’s equal collaboration in the discovery of that good.

The good of the whole defenders could argue that the good simply is the state. It is our unity. This unity, however, is either imposed on some—thus we have to exile or kill those who do not share it—are abstracted from reality—and thus we end killing those who are not part of us. Utilitarianism, in parallel, rests on the presumption that the good is simply an aggregate of what individuals already identify as good. The individual good, on

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this account, is somehow identified prior to coming together. Thus, it contradicts human reality. We cannot venture to Omelas because we would have no understanding of what it means for the citizens of Omelas to live satisfying lives nor would we have any understanding of what it would mean to torture one child. The main reason for this lack of understanding is that we are animals of tradition. While we have certain natural inclinations, these inclinations are empty without our cultural interpretations of them.

The good is not an object to be discovered; it is not something pre-existing. Rather, the members of the community come together to discover together what they want together—what they most desire. Such a community adheres to the natural law in a radical sense viz., uncovering the goods of our persistent human desires. Ideally, our cultural traditions comprise a set of expressions—contested ones for healthy cultures—of these desires. A flourishing community discovers and identify persistent human desires and goods that satisfy those desires. It then arranges its social institutions for the pursuit of those desires so that each and every member has the best chance to achieve those goods.

So far, I have discussed the conception of the greatest good and the good of the whole. We must also examine the conception of the public good and Marita in's conception of the common good before moving to our own conception of the common goods of the community, which include God-as-common-good-of-the-universe.

The public good typically denotes a set of goods that we can realize only through collective action. Defenders of this conception often gloss over or ignore the fact that all of these goods are goods which typically are enjoyed individually or the benefits of which are accessible to all but are not relevant to each person's life. For example, roads are typically one form of public good. Certain entities—for example, Julius Ceasar's army—can build roads, though presumably even Caesar used some form of "tribute" to support the construction of his roads. His roads, however, were only ever intended as a common good of his army. The construction of the national highway system under Eisenhower was a public good—intended for the use of all, even if it served the primary interest of transporting troops quickly from one side of the United States to another. Roads serve greater purposes, however, including economic purposes—the transport of goods and, in today's world, the ability of individuals and families to seek out the goods they need for life—and familial ones, the ability of family members to visit each other. Yet, even though

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they serve a common good and typically require governments to supply them through taxation, roads, like other public goods, typically benefit individually. We do not enjoy these goods collectively—we don't all go on a road trip at the same time—though of course certain groups might, like the Harley Davidson bikers who rally in Daytona every year. Further, some people may never use a highway—people living in rural areas who grow their own food, the Amish, etc. In short, public goods require participation from all but do not require collective participation nor necessarily benefit each and every person.

Public goods are one aspect of Jacques Maritain's larger conception of the common good. Maritain believes he develops his conception of the common good from Thomas Aquinas. Following the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, I have rejected this notion as an inadequate conception of the common good. In addition to (1) public goods, Maritain's notion includes (2) social-political goods, like national monuments, good laws, etc., and (3) moral-theological goods. Socio-political goods, like monuments and good laws, can be part of the common goods of a community. However, to enunciate these prior to a full conception of the common good is to put the cart before the horse. That is, socio-political goods must arise from a consensus of the members of the community if they are to be actually collective goods.

Consider the current situation of the United States. Ignore, for the moment, obviously unjust laws deny fetuses the right to live and deny women the right to choose; these kinds of laws clearly prevent the flourishing of human persons. Further, everyone does not have access to socio-political goods like monuments or other historical artifacts—how many of those trapped in minimum wage jobs can visit Washington, D. C.?

Consider, instead, the institution of a police force to “protect and serve” and a judiciary to adjudicate justice. Few, if any of us, have had any participation in the institutionalization of the police and the courts. Yet, they make decisions affecting our everyday lives on a routine basis. The recent militarization of the police force across the US is just one example of a decision that affects our everyday lives; those we trust to protect us and to serve us are given extraordinary tools used in violent combat zones to “police” our neighborhoods. Further, we have ample evidence that the police can and will lie to suspects during interrogation. The common good of the community rests on truth; we cannot achieve goods nor flourish if truth does not comprise one of the fundamental pillars of

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society (alongside charity); surely one of the goods of a flourishing community is an honest relationship with those with the authority to use violence. Without such honesty, we find ourselves in a Hobbesian state. We know, further, that significant portions of our polity, not only lack protection, but are harassed, harmed, and killed by the police force. We also know that the court system unjustly imposes stricter punishments, prison times, and the death sentence on significant portions of our polity. Simply fixing the racial biases of the system will not make the police and the court system part of the common good unless that reformation involves the participation of each and every person in the reconstitution of the system. The police and the courts will harm even members of the political majority when members of that political majority protest the injustice of the system—as we saw with the Occupy movement, as we see with laws across the US that prevent persons from feeding the homeless, as we see the legislature give itself raise after raise while refusing to raise the minimum wage, as we see with NSA spying. Echoing Karl Marx, the education reformer, Paulo Freire (2000), showed that a minority that comes into power without the inclusion of the now-displaced majority will only lead to a different form of victimization. A flourishing community depends on everyone involved participating in the (re-)construction of that community, especially its laws and institutions, its legitimate authority to use violence. Those who identify social-political goods before members of the community are able to discover them reify those goods, making them more powerful than and beyond the control of the members of the community. Such reification leads to an inverse in the natural order: laws were made for humanity, not humanity for the law.

What are we to make of moral-theological goods? We come to these goods through one of two means: either the state or church imposes them upon us, in which case they are not our goods, or we discover them together in a collective search for the good and the true. One could argue that I have just created a false dichotomy. Perhaps we discover the moral-theological goods of the community on our own as individuals. In fact, someone might argue, I can only discover these goods as an individual. This objection rests either on a mis-understanding of “common good” or it equivocates the term “as an individual.” First, to contend that one—an individual—discovers common goods on one’s own is nonsensical. One cannot discover something common by one’s self. A person who discovers that she loves another has not discovered anything if she sits in her office and admires the beloved

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from afar or drives by her window at night to see if she is all right. She has only discovered an obsession, not a good, especially not a common good. Second, that an individual discovers the common good as an individual is true to the extent that she must participate in that discovery. If she fails to participate, if she takes no interest in the discovery, or if she does not deliberate with others, she will not discover the common good—and significantly, the common good that others discover will be deformed because of her absence. Nor can the community impose this good on her, because then it is not her good, but the good of the community. (Theologically speaking, God does not impose our Common Good upon us, but invites us to discover Him together.) Like political goods, we reify moral-theological goods when we divorce their discovery from a communal dialogue that includes each and every voice. Moreover, that reification leads inevitably to some form of oppression—either violent oppression or cultural invasion.

If the moral-theological goods Maritain identifies are imposed upon us, they are no longer our goods. If, on the other hand, we discover them together as our goods, then they are our goods. Yet, by definition we cannot identify them prior to the discovery or they remain abstract. Consider the precepts of the natural law. These precepts are, for Thomas Aquinas, “natural inclinations” like the desire for family or the desire for education. Family and education might be human goods, but outside the context of culture, they are nonsensical. What is family? What is education? To his credit, Maritain identifies some common goods, but these goods are abstract goods for abstract human beings. In other words, they tell us little to nothing about real human life—the life of concrete individuals who seek the good here and now. All that Maritain has told us is that narratives have ends. Yet, such a concept means nothing until one has read *Native Son* or *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

If each and every member is to flourish, then the members of the community aim to discover together the common goods of human life. They seek to answer, “what is it we want,” so that each member can then answer the question, “what is it I want” (Notes, 251). These questions are attempts to discover what Thomas calls “natural inclinations” and what MacIntyre calls “persistent human desires.” The common goods of a community are those goods that satisfy those persistent human desires. Each community defines those goods for itself, always in an attitude of openness so that the goods and the desires are

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always contested. A healthy community identifies these goods and establishes socio-political institutions so that members can pursue those goods. In establishing these institutions, the members of the community rank-order their goods, prioritizing which community resources go to the pursuit of which goods and to what extent.

Several points follow. First, because I cannot know what I want until we know what we want, a community that silences some can never be a healthy, flourishing community. Free thought and speech are necessary elements to a community of common goods. Second, because we come to this conversation as equals and come to these goods as equals, even if some contest the goods identified, each and every person has the best possibility for flourishing. His flourishing depends on the discovery of these common goods, so any person outside these communities cannot fully flourish. Further, he participates in the rank ordering of goods and the establishment of institutions to assist in the pursuit of those goods; he, thus, has the best chance to design those institutions so that his own needs are cared for. Third, these goods are the concrete goods of concrete people living in a concrete community. They are not abstract; they are real. These facts mean that every political theorist of the common goods must be cognizant of human frailty and human fallibility. Frailty and fallibility mean that every community will face struggles—struggles of inclusion, struggles of distribution, struggles of natural resource acquisition and preservation. Members of such communities are, not only willing, but prepared to sacrifice for the good of the members of their community. The ultimate sacrifice is life in defense of the community. Yet, that willingness and preparedness rests on the concrete situation that is the fundamental basis of human flourishing. Unlike other theorists of the common good, a conception of the common good as common goods of the community resists reification and for that reason, best identifies a method for ensuring that each and every member of concrete societies flourishes. We can now turn to the role of diversity in the discovery of common goods.

DIVERSITY AND THE COMMON GOODS OF COMMUNITY

Diversity means the inclusion of persons who suffer diminished possibilities for agency and flourishing because of some aspect of their lives and inclusion of those from

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whom we might learn because their ideas, ways of life, and agency represent different ways of relating to the world and to each other. The common goods of a community are those goods that members of a community identify as the ends of persistent human desire in a concrete culture. Is diversity necessary for or instrumental to this discovery?

The analysis so far shows that healthy, flourishing communities are communities in which people seek to discover what it is they want in order that each member is best able to discover what she wants. These communities must always be open to question if they are to discover together their desires. Again, this openness does not deny that the members of the community share certain understandings about life, the universe, and everything. Yet, because they recognize that they constitute their communities in their everyday actions, they always leave open the possibility of putting to question these shared understandings. Moreover, because the community is constantly constituting itself, it can never exclude others who may belong to the community even if those persons do not accept the shared understandings in the community.

The very conception of the common goods of a community, then, necessarily requires the inclusion of difference where such difference contributes to human agency and flourishing. A community that excludes others because of difference undermines its own possibility. On the one hand, members of the community who suffer diminished possibilities for agency and flourishing will never be fully capable of participating in the co-discovery of common goods without special accommodations. A community in which some people are incapable of participating in the discovery of common desire has undermined that discovery. My discovery of what I want rests on our discovery of what we want.

Yes, of course, in some sense I can come to a community with pre-determined desires—a desire for a home, and for a family, and for work, just as I come to a friendship with desires for leisure, or for watching movies. These desires, however, are not really mine until they are concrete desires. What would it mean to desire a family until some “we”—some concrete she and she—desire a family together? What does it mean to desire a job until some concrete employer and some concrete job seeker come together to discover together what that job is? Yes, yes, in our world, people find and leave jobs every day—working at McDonald’s or Wal-Mart or some Apple factory in south-east Asia. Yet, those people do not exercise much agency and certainly cannot be said to flourish. These

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communities and these jobs are not ones in which concrete human beings seek and live flourishing lives, in which, as Aristotle says, people live well. That fact is why, for better or worse, Aristotle limited citizenship to those who could contribute to the discovery of common goods and said that others did not flourish. I believe that, if we ever were, we do not now live in a world in which some or most people must live lives of diminished agency. The theoretical foundation of a community in which all face the real possibility of flourishing is necessarily one that includes difference.

On the other hand, a community that excludes those who do not accept the shared understandings undermines its capacity to be a community of common goods. Since the community constitutes itself—creates itself—in its every day activities, it always involves the participation of those who resist or contest the shared understandings that undergird the community of common goods. A community cannot *a priori* exclude those who contest their shared goods because they do not know who those people are. Nor can the community continue its pursuit of the goods by excluding dissenters once it has determined its set of goods for two primary reasons. First, a community is always in the process of constituting itself, so it is never “done” or at a point when the goods are no longer contested. Such “finished” communities are always already dead. Second, because it is always constituting itself, the community needs dissenters from whom it can learn about the good. A culture (here, the more appropriate term would be tradition) that is no longer learning, and learning from others, is no longer a living thing. Yet, a community must always re-constitute itself in its beliefs and practices if it remains healthy, for, following J. S. Mill, to do otherwise is to presume infallibility, to inhibit creativity, and to prevent a true understanding of those beliefs the members share (see Moses 2006). Second, because common goods always result from a discovery of what we desire, to exclude those who do not share in our understandings is to exclude them from the discovery of what we want, which, as we have already seen, means preventing us from discovering what we want and preventing individuals from discovery of what I want. Further, such closing off means that the community has stopped learning, has stopped seeking answers. Healthy communities are ones that realize they are not infallible, which means that they must always be open to hearing from others.

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These arguments demonstrate that the concept of diversity is necessary for the concept of the common good. Diversity of differently abled person, of sex and gender, of race, and of ethnicity are needed for the discovery of the common good because these are concrete realities that shape the way we discover answers to the question, what is it we want. This fact entails that, when we focus on the practical level, diversity is necessary for the pursuit of the common good.

The pursuit of the common goods of community require certain necessary steps and certain instrumental steps.

The discovery of what we want requires the inclusion of those who suffer from diminished agency, either through physical or cultural inhibitions. Today, few people would deny that those who cannot walk need differential access to meeting places where the discovery of goods occurs, or access to all the spaces in which members of the community exercise their agency and pursue common goods. Yet, many deny affirmative action for blacks and Mexicans, and the Equal Rights Amendment failed to achieve passage by enough states to become an amendment. Thus, our sisters earn 25% less than males do, and studies show that resumes with black sounding names do not earn interviews at the same rates of identical resumes with white sounding names as applicants. Lack of affirmative action and equal rights denies the discovery of our goods because it places people in a situation in which they are hampered in participating in the discovery of what we want. Do we want our black brothers shot on the street for jaywalking? Yet, our denial of affirmative action means that their agency is constrained in ways that prevent their and our flourishing. We must ask, not only what accommodations can we make, but also what resources can we give to improve the ability of all persons to exercise agency.

More importantly, we must also ask, what we can learn about human life and human goods that we did not know before from people who face extraordinary roadblocks to human agency and flourishing. We must also risk asking ourselves, what can we learn from those who suffer the “long dark night of the soul,” who suffer spiritual ennui, who stand in silence before the atrocities of human history, and how best we can include their suffering into the discover what we desire.

Moreover, all people will need appropriate financial security so that they have (1) the time and (2) lack of worries in order to contribute to the discussion. Thus, women will

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need equal pay to men if the community distributes goods through a salary, and blacks and Hispanics will need equal access to jobs and equal pay. All will need to take turns providing forms of child-care so that parents are able to contribute fully to the discover. Any roadblock to human agency is also a roadblock to contributing to the communal discovery of common goods, and a community that does not alleviate such roadblocks by definition undermines its own capacity to discover those common goods they might share.

Many communities, including most communities in the United States, face special challenges of diversity. Members of the Pine Ridge Reservation face challenges to agency from extreme poverty, cultural exclusion and invasion, and broken legal systems, as well as an alcoholism epidemic. Blacks in Ferguson, MO and Baltimore, MD and Hispanics in New York and Los Angeles among other places in the US face problems of racism. Women throughout the US, especially on college campuses, face problems of sexism and terrorism from rape. Muslims face various forms of verbal, mental, and physical abuse.

In all of these cases, communities aimed at human agency through the pursuit of common goods must use necessary resources—educational, financial, etc.—to act affirmatively to include members of these groups. To contend that a community does not have any legislation that is racist and that only individuals are racist is to both miss the point and to fail in the real possibility of exercising agency. This answer misses the point because, as argued throughout, a community of common goods is a community of persons dedicated to the search for what we want. Any such search must address racism and sexism head-on or undermine its capacity to discover those goods we share, because we can never share exclusionary beliefs. That answer always represents a real failure of agency because agency entails reaching out to help others. MacIntyre writes about the virtue *miser cordia*: “to recognize another as brother or friend is to recognize one’s relationship to them as being of the same kind as one’s relationship to other member’s of one’s community” (DRA, 125). We could not live in a community of common goods if we did not treat each other as brothers and sisters and friends; therefore, we could not fail to act to fight racism and sexism for then we would no longer recognize women and blacks and Hispanics and First Nation Peoples as brothers and sisters and friends. In short, we deny our own humanity when we fail to act to help those suffering.

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This point leads to a discussion of God as the common good of the universe. Unfortunately, some have used belief in a particular God as a basis to deny admittance to a community of common goods. Religions themselves have made these same denials, and the Catholic Church has a history of such discrimination when given political power.

'All men are equal before God and God wills them to be at one" can either be interpreted to mean that inequality and disunity are a scandal Christians ought to strive to abolish or they can be interpreted to mean that it is only before God that men are equal and only God that can make them at one, so that a merely human equality and unity are neither desirable nor possible. I do not doubt that the original Gospel commands imply the former interpretation; but any Christian who wants to can always rely on the second. As most do (Notes, 63-4).

If God exists, then God is the common good of the universe. As common good, though, God is our common good exactly in the same way that any goods are our common goods. Specifically, common goods are just those goods a community discovers as the ends of their persistent human desires. One persistent human desire is the desire for the transcendent—for God. Yet, we cannot discover God alone; none of us can discover God without others. For those who are Christian, Jesus says, "where ever two or more of you are gathered together." We need at least one other person to discover the Christian God. To place a personal relationship to God over our communal relationship to God is to reify God as an object and to be ignorant of human nature. In doing so, one runs the risk of totalitarianism. If I accept that meeting God requires others and, in particular, diversity of others, then I cannot exclude others—through intolerance, laws against other religions, or the killing of people of other religious beliefs—from the pursuit of that common good, God. If, however, I believe I can get to God on my own, then nothing stops me from denying your belief as valid or your rejection of belief as valid.

In fact, all of Catholic theology and philosophy points to our common journey to God as the common good. All law—eternal, divine, and natural—functions to lead all things to God. Each participates in God to its own nature. Thus, human beings—homo sapiens—reunite with God in a way different from superstrings and quarks, elements, and plants and

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animals. Yet, as Pope Francis noted recently in *Laudato Si*, we human beings have a peculiar responsibility to usher all animals back to God. Our destiny is wrapped up with the destiny of all of creation. As such, our destiny requires diversity in the broadest sense.

If we are responsible for ushering into eternal life all of creation, we are also responsible for sharing this journey with others. More importantly, we cannot undertake this journey without diversity of “race,” gender, and ethnicity or diversity of religion. The Biblical narrative answer to the question “am I my brother’s—or sister’s—keeper?” The answer is a resounding “YES!” Christ died on the cross for that reason.

Further, no one of us can enjoy the beatific vision if we do not help others to achieve that vision. The cross is a heavy cross. We are called to love our enemy, to love our neighbor as our self. Such love means that I suffer if my neighbor does not enjoy the beatific vision. Such love means that I suffer when even my enemy cannot achieve the beatific vision. We are called, of course, not to have any enemy, though we are human and may fail in this task. If we are called to love our enemy and to love our neighbor, then we are also called to love those who are different from us, for they are our neighbors, at the least. Our common good requires diversity for we cannot enter the beatific vision without loving those who are different from us.

Finally, we cannot even enjoy the beatific vision without embracing difference, difference of practices and maybe even differences of belief. Each person carries Christ in him- or herself. Each person carries within him or her a little piece of revelation. By discovering others, we discover a bit of Christ. By learning from others, God reveals God’s Self to us through our relationships with others. The mystery of the Trinity, in part, is the importance of relationship. We cannot come to God without be in relation with others. The more different another is from us, the more we discover about God. In short, the foundation of God’s revelation is the relationships we have with each other. Thus, in the discovery of the Biblical message of love, we see how we are called ever more to relationship with the Other—with difference. This argument seems quite abstract. Yet, Bishop Tutu makes it very concrete. “You see, we can’t go to heaven alone. If I arrive there, God will ask me, ‘where is de Klerk? His. Path crossed yours.’ And he also—God will ask him. ‘Where is Tutu?’ So I cried for de Klerk—because he spurned the opportunity to become human” (Country of My Skull, 210).

CONCLUSION

The answer to the objections with which I began should be obvious from the argument. In some cases, diversity is contingent, and in some cases it is necessary to human agency. Specifically, while we may not differ genetically to a great extent, we differ culturally, we differ bodily in relation to our sex and gender. The pursuit of the common good requires diversity so that all can exercise agency and all can learn from those who exercise agency and flourish in different ways. To resist this conclusion is to presume infallibility and to kill our own cultures. Indeed, we need such diversity because our universal human nature is universal in the fact that we are cultural beings. The answer to the questions what do we want and what do I want are always cultural answers. Thus, those cultures which are homogenous cannot achieve flourishing or fully exercise agency because they are closed off from the discovery of what we want. In addition, because God is Three-in-One, the common good is fundamentally relational. Moreover, our discovery of God rests on our discovering God together as our Common Good.

Yet, what about the more practical objection viz., how has this reflection helped us prevent genocide, murder, rape, and economic deprivation based on difference?

“The anonymous martyrs of the concentration camps are the symbols of the humanity that is striving to be born. The task of philosophy is to translate what they have done into language that will be heard, even though their finite voices have been silenced by tyranny” (Horkheimer, 114). Likewise, the deaths of Eric Garner and Sandra Bland, the suicides of First Nation Peoples, the lower living standards of women and of people of color cry out for articulation. What they lack—what we lack, for no one can flourish when others suffer—is the ability to participate in determining our destinies through the discovery of common goods.

Strategically speaking, this lack means that we must fundamentally reconstitute our social institutions. The politics I have sketched here rests on the fact that “human beings create their own history.” We must recognize that collectively we have the power to change our political institutions and our political culture through massive resistance. Such resistance, however, must come from below, otherwise the collective “we” risks

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undermining human agency. Further, such resistance must always be local. These words will comfort few for often what we demand is radical change at the national and even international level. Telling the Lakota that they must work at the local level of Pine Ridge is little succor when faced with the overwhelming imperialism of Washington, D.C.

When Red Cloud visited Washington, he realized the impossibility of war. Returning to the Lakota, he reported on the numberless whites who could send soldier after soldier to kill the Lakota. The only real step forward was to accept peace and live with the whites. Crazy Horse was happy to do so until the imperialists violated their treaty and the holy place of the Black Hills. History shows us that Crazy Horse died for his resistance to white imperialism, and imperialism permanently defaced the sacred Black Hills with images of their greatest leaders. The lesson of Crazy Horse and the Lakota is the lesson embodied in Dr. King's non-violent resistance—a bitter pill, but is it any more bitter than the other one we must swallow if we refuse this one?

In fact, I find hope here. Nothing prevents us from standing together, arm in arm, in the face of injustice and demanding “no more!” Yet, that stand must aim at one thing: the end of suffering through the communal determination of our common desire. What I think Dr. King (and Gandhi and Dorothy Day) have taught us is that resistance to injustice—justice itself—must be deeply rooted in love. We might express this love through the remembrance of our martyrs, telling their stories over and over, holding vigilance, celebrating their lives on the anniversary of their deaths. Thousands of people travel every year to commemorate the death of Elvis Presley. Are we no less dedicated to the memory of Michael Brown or of Crazy Horse?

Can I say anything more concrete, here at Providence College, a bastion to truth and Catholic love? Our fundamental unity rests in our dedication to learn. I have argued that diversity is required for learning about our common goods. Several points follow: (1) we must contest the terms of our debate—what is “Western Civilization,” what “diversity,” what “justice”? (2) We must incorporate in our discussions the voices of a diverse field of thinkers on these topics—not only W. E. B. Dubois, but also Aristotle, not only Simone de Beauvoir, but also Sojourner Truth. (3) We must recognize that divisions between faculty and administration and staff and between all of them and students compromise the discovery of what we want and, thus, our agency.

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In my own department, it means that we must do everything possible to hire for diversity—women and other minorities. It also means that we must develop a curriculum that opens for investigation philosophies that both challenge and compliment the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition—Native American, Latino, African and African-American, and feminist philosophies. Insofar as we fail to demand of ourselves a search for diversity we deny our own agency and our own ability to flourish.

Finally, as an educational institutional dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the education of the whole person, we must embrace those pedagogies that best open up the pursuit of truth and human agency. My department could contribute to this task a line to the philosophy of education, which would look specifically at the pedagogy of the oppressed. The College could invest more in those forms of education that encourage those who belong to groups under-represented on campus.

We have many tasks before us. We must remember that these tasks define for us our agency. This agency rests on joining in the discovery of what we want.

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