Comments on John K. Hord's Civilization: A Definition: Part II. The Nature of Formal Knowledge Systems

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much less problematic; yet even that may carry with it a human cost that is ethically problematic.

While each case must be weighed separately, it seems to me that there is little in favor of long term restriction to access. The Dead Sea Scrolls are an excellent example of the problems that can arise from that approach. Short term restrictions should be spelled out; sometimes they are only fair. And, of course, one must differentiate between access—the right to see materials—and publication of those materials. Access can guide a scholar's thinking without breaching some other scholar's rights to publish. Even the rights to publication should be short term. For example, in the field of Greek papyrology, scholars usually receive the rights to a text for a period of five years. During that time, they are assured that no one will steal their thunder. If they make a discovery, they will rightly receive credit. But after five years, their text reverts to public domain. I would urge archivists not to accept donor restrictions that depart from this general spirit. One must weigh the rights of individual scholars together with those of his or her field as a whole. If these rights conflict, those of the whole must always take precedence. Speaking as a Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, that is the best ethical advise I can give. Presumably this is not new advice, but as fragile ethical beings it seems to me that it is often necessary to remind ourselves of what we already know.

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Comments on John K. Hord's "CIVILIZATION: A DEFINITION: PART II. THE NATURE OF FORMAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS"

David Richardson

I liked the second section of Hord's essay (Comparative Civilizations Review, 26, Spring 1992). His definition of the "core" of a civilization, namely "formal knowledge system" has features that particularly overlap with features of my worldview theory, with my
ideas of Greek and Faustian II worldview-intuitions. For Hord, formal knowledge systems of all kinds exist: Christianity, mathematics, empirical science, the Chinese worldview, the prehistoric Mississippians ... and even low cultures: "a formal knowledge system must have room for low culture, even if disdainful of it and for high culture however evanescent its fashions." (131)

The flaws in Hord's theory are as follows: the core of civilization, its formal knowledge system, is exclusively conscious. "'Knowledge,'" writes Hord, "will refer simply to 'data held to be sufficiently factual as to constitute a valid basis for action.'" But this statement is brushing aside the all-important unconscious existence of the core-ingredients of a civilization.

Hord also unnecessarily limits the core, the "covenant," of a civilization to beliefs, which are a type of knowledge. And which is imperfect because unprovable. Since, for Hord, the core or covenant is a matrix of beliefs, it is directly accessible to reason. But Hord ignores feelings or emotions at the core of a civilization, which are not a type of knowledge at all. And even the perceptions at the center of a civilization include important irrational intuitions and sensations that Hord does not write of. The vivid emotions of abstract expressionist painters, and the great propensity of Arabians or Muslims for sensational experience cannot be explained by Hord's paradigm of a "formal knowledge system" arising out of a core of beliefs.

Though Hord assumes that the governing mental state of civilized people is rational and conscious, one does not adhere to the "covenant" or "core" of a civilization by rational knowledge, but only by belief. "The defining quality of these core beliefs are solely that they are accepted without question and that their acceptance is shared by essentially all members of the civilization. When the beliefs cease to be thus shared, the formal knowledge system ... [and] the society is failing ..." (122).

Hord and I are in agreement that comparative civilizational studies should be scientific and rational, and like him I find that I have to be an historian in order to proceed. I think that one who would get at the core of civilizations has no choice but to be an historian. Hord is not in this work a sociologist, and I am not a
philosopher. To proceed, he or I must produce science and yet be an historian.

The reason why Hord's model of the core is too rational is that his paradigm is not getting at the worldview-intuitions of a civilization, including shared intuitions: some of which are unconscious reasonings, some of which are unconscious feelings, and some of which that are unconscious sensations. All of these intuitions are present in the core of a civilization. I refer the reader to C. G. Jung's four psychological types: Reason, Feeling, Sensation, and Intuition.

The lacuna in Hord's idea of the core-covenant, lying at the center of a knowledge system, leads to an error which is perhaps the central misjudgment that comparative civilizationists have been making in the past generation. The model of a rational and conscious system of knowledge is excellent as far as it goes. The trouble is, such a system is common to an immense number of social entities, ranging from social clubs, to city-states, to port-authorities, to scientific organizations, to nations, empire, hegemons, amphycionies, and ... civilizations.

The outstandingly special qualities that only higher civilizations have, as determined by the worldview-intuitions of their educated citizens, tend to fade in this atmosphere, their vividness replaced by uniformity of approach. But there is something astonishing and wonderful to behold in the unfolding of the Greek worldview taking shape in Confucius' age, and in the phenomenon of the Faustian worldview becoming viable and practical between the two Bacons. These are histories, or psychohistories, which will be worth studying for their own sake.

It would be unfair to close without paying respects to Hord's schemata: of covenant mediated by Law, which itself is mediated by Procedure, and this mediated by Myth. I agree with him that myth is absolutely essential to a civilization.

—Charlotte, North Carolina