

NATURE, HUMAN NATURE, AND THE SOUL

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Congress
for the
New
Urbanism

Bio:

Point I: Human Culture and Sacred Order

- A. Encountering the sacred: "Mysterium tremendum" and "creature-consciousness" / presence and anticipation / call and response
- B. Culture as an offering to the sacred / city and cultivated landscape as the physical and spatial forms of culture
- C. Marks of sacred sensibility in architecture and the city:
 - 1. verticality
 - 2. light and shadow
 - 3. craftsmanship and / or durability
 - 4. mathematical and geometric order
 - 5. compositional and artistic unity
 - 6. hierarchy

Point II: Nature, Human Nature and Culture

- A. A traditional natural law theory point of view
 - 1. nature exists independently of human beings
 - 2. human nature is part of nature
 - 3. human nature is different from nature: it is part of human nature to make culture
 - 4. human beings are by nature social:
 - a. different cultures are the social and historical forms of human aspirations for and understandings of the best kind of life
 - b. the cultivated landscape, architecture and cities are the physical and spatial forms of culture (see I.B above); each is a cultural intervention in nature, but also in some sense natural (see II.A.2-3 above)
 - 5. the good life for human beings is the life of moral and intellectual excellence
- B. Tension and conflict in human nature
 - 1. the goods of individual freedom, communal membership, and justice (each a good,

distinguishable from evil) are perennial sources of human tension and conflict

2. a permanent resolution of the conflicts between these goods does not seem possible within the context of the natural (or cultural) order itself

Point III: Against Economic Determinism

- A. assumption: economic determinism as a modern habit of thought
- B. counter-assumption: the reciprocal relation between ideas and economics, human freedom and social structures
 1. Max Weber and The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Protestantism and the rise of industrial capitalism / "inner-worldly asceticism"
 2. the paradox of asceticism and wealth generation: Aristotle / the dialectical history of monasticism
 3. the paradox of asceticism and the beautiful, durable environment
 4. ascetic ideals as the cultural antidote to consumerism?

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