A Framework for Political Theory Based on Zubiri's Concept of Reality

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Abstract

Zubiri was especially keen on understanding what mathematics is, and what literature is, not in the operational terms often employed to describe them, but as knowledge about reality. Through his philosophy of sentient intelligence, he came to understand that in both cases, a new reality is created which is then explored, and the essential ingredient is postulation. This insight was only possible because Zubiri recognized that reality is not a zone of things, but formality. Zubiri's notion of postulated reality can be extended to a third area, political theory, where analysis reveals that key realities are postulated by the action of politically empowered entities, usually states. However, postulated reality in this area differs in some important ways from mathematics and literature.

Resumen

Zubiri tuvo gran interés en entender qué es la matemática, y qué es la literatura, no en sentido funcional, sino en sentido de saber acerca de la realidad. Por su filosofía de inteligencia sentiente, llegó a entender que en ambos casos, se crea una realidad nueva que se explora después, y el ingrediente esencial es la postulación. Tal percepción solo fue posible ya que Zubiri se dio cuenta de la realidad no es una zona de cosas, sino formalidad. Su noción de realidad por postulación se puede extender a un campo tercero, la teoría de la política, donde el análisis revela que las realidades claves son postulados por acción de entidades autorizadas políticamente, en general, estados nacionales. Pero, la realidad postulada en este campo difiere de la matemática y de la literatura en sentidos importantes.

Introduction

One of Xavier Zubiri's most profound and original insights is his new philosophy of mathematics and of literature, based on the notion of postulated reality. In turn, postulated reality rests upon Zubiri's insight that reality is formality and not a zone of things. Debates about the nature of mathematics and mathematical entities, usually inconclusive, most often argue nominalism versus Platonism or some form of realism. Significant developments during the twentieth century, especially the work of Gödel, has greatly clarified the nature of mathematics with respect to its logical structure.

But Zubiri takes Gödel's work as a stepping stone, and seeks to penetrate to the core of the problem, as he always does, by going deeper into it than others have thought possible. With respect to literature, philosophers starting with Aristotle have almost universally concentrated on aesthetics, but rarely ask questions about the reality of literary characters or places. By asking this question, and answering it in the context of his philosophy, Zubiri has both clarified his thought and also enormously advanced our understanding of why literature has such a long history and so profoundly affects our lives and culture. Can the notion of reality by postulation be extended to other areas, and lead to simi-

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lar clarifications? Here we propose that political and legal entities are also real by postulation, so that they form a third class of objects deriving their reality from postulation, rather than through primordial apprehension.

Zubiri uses postulation to describe the origin of the content in mathematics and literature. Mathematical objects, as well as figures of literature, are *real by postulation*: we postulate the existence and characteristics (notes) of mathematical entities, using language such as, "Let *X* be a Hilbert space", or "let *y* be the solution of such-and-such equation". Because reality is formality, and not a "zone of things", mathematical entities are real in the same sense as ordinary physical objects, though they do not exist in the same world as these objects since their content comes not from primordial apprehension, but from postulation. So it makes no sense to look for them in the physical world—how would one look for a Hilbert space there anyway? The vast expanse of the entities investigated by mathematicians, most of which have nothing to do with the world of our day-to-day life, means that some explanation of their reality is required. Figures of literature, as well as their environment, are also postulated, and subsequently treated as realities. Consider the famous cases of Hamlet, Don Juan and Don Quixote, whose merits, characteristics, and moral qualities have been discussed at greater length than those of perhaps any "real" person.

Zubiri does not discuss political entities in his philosophy, entities such as governments, kings, mayors, councils, and parliaments. Nor does he discuss entities that exist within the context of civil society, such as corporations, foundations, or universities. Whether he never thought of such entities in the context of postulation, or simply had no interest in their metaphysical status, is unclear. However, it does appear that his ideas can be readily extended to cover them, and in the process, clarify how they can be understood in the context of his noology as

well as why they have the characteristics they invariably exhibit.

I. Reality as Formality

To understand reality by postulation, it is essential to understand how Zubiri has rethought the entire notion of reality. Postulation of reality makes no sense under the traditional notion of reality as a zone of things, typically envisioned as somewhere outside the mind. Reality, in that scheme, cannot be *postulated*; it can only be *discovered*. But there are many problems associated with such a view of reality, especially insofar as it cannot convincingly account for the reality of dreams or mathematical objects, to say nothing of literary figures or even historical realities. It is also very confused about the reality of political entities. For Zubiri, the matter can be clarified by recognizing that reality in the primary or fundamental sense is a *formality*, not a zone of things. What exactly does this mean? What is 'formality'?[1]

'Formality' is used to describe an essential characteristic of all perception. When we sense, we sense specific and very concrete things, such as particular colors, sounds, tastes, and so forth. But, sensing is not exhausted with this *content*, as previous philosophy thought—this, indeed, is one of the great errors which have plagued Western thought since the time of the Greeks. Rather, we sense not just *content* (that would probably be impossible), but necessarily something more. We sense the content in a determinate form, as something *other*; and this form of otherness, *which completes the content but is not reducible to it*, is *formality*. In the case of human beings, the formality is the *formality of reality*, which means that what is sensed is *real*. That is, we directly perceive reality at some level, and perceive real things as *other*. The formality is always given together with the content, and perceived (i.e., sensed in an impression of reality) just as directly:

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In the first place, the idea of reality does not formally designate a zone or class of things, but only a formality, reity or "thingness". It is that formality by which what is sentiently apprehended is presented to me not as the effect of something beyond what is apprehended, but as being in itself something "in its own right", something *de suyo*; for example, not only "warming" but "being" warm. This formality is the physical and real character of the otherness of what is sentiently apprehended in my sentient intellection.[2]

Formality is not something added to the *content* of an impression; rather, it is just another aspect of the *same* impression. Nor is it the result of any sort of complicated reasoning process, or conceptual elaboration. It is, as Zubiri emphasizes, the "in its own right" character of impression, the *de suyo*, as he expresses it. Many things traditionally disqualified as "real", but which everyone still thinks of as real, such as dreams or even colors, regain their status. Of course, real in this sense does not necessarily imply intersubjectivity, for example; but that is a later question, which comes after the basic definition is established, that of reality as formality. Anything which is "in its own right" is real in this primary sense. This *de suyo*, the formality of reality, is how the content is delivered to us. Our brains—Zubiri refers to them as organs of formalization—are wired to perceive reality, to perceive directly the "in its own right" character. It does *not* emerge as the result of some reasoning process working on the *content*—another long-standing error of the Western philosophical tradition—it is delivered *together with the content* in primordial apprehension.

This includes reality *in* apprehension, as well as reality *beyond* apprehension. Zubiri agrees that there is a distinction between these two; however, he notes that reality in perception or apprehension not only comes first, but is the ultimate foundation for intellectively knowing reality beyond perception.[3] Thus, reality in perception *is* real—the point often disputed by earlier philosophies.[4] But always, the character of reality is the same: *de suyo*. It is therefore something *physical* as opposed to something *conceptual.* And this is true whether one is speaking of things perceived at the level of primordial apprehension, such as colors, or things perceived in subsequent modes of apprehension such as reason, where examples might be historical realities such as the Ottoman Empire, or mathematical objects such as circles and lines: both are *real* in the same sense, though they differ in other respects (mathematical objects are real by postulation, whereas historical entities are not). Moreover, reality is independent of the subject, not a subjective projection, but something *imposed* upon the subject, something which is *here-and-now* before the subject. Logos and reason do not have to go to reality or create it; they are born in it and remain in it. But this does not mean, of course, that subsequent questions of reality are unimportant; obviously, they are. Questions such as whether the Loch Ness monster is real, or whether quarks are real, remain to be answered.

To make a very crude analogy, consider a play by Shakespeare, for example, *Hamlet.* This play may or may not exist as an abstract entity of some sort; but there is no doubt that for us to experience it—to experience its *content*—there must be a vehicle. I can read the play from the printed pages in a book, or I can watch the play on a stage, or I can listen to the play on an audiotape. In each case, the *content* is the same—Shakespeare's text—but the form, the *formality*, is different. And there must be a formality; I cannot have the play miraculously delivered into my mind without some form, which is given together with the content.

Moreover, content is always specific, whereas formality is always nonspecific, and this has two consequences: (1) it is

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identical for impressions arising from different sensory organs (for a rough analogy, consider a shell, which can have different contents); and (2), it is *open* and *transcendental*. This is especially significant for Zubiri, since he believes that things such as mathematical entities are also sensed, though the impression we have of them is different than that which we have of, say, colors and sounds. But the formality of reality remains the same in all cases, however. The formality of reality Zubiri sometimes terms 'reity' [*reidad*]. The formality of human perception, i.e., the formality of reality, is in contrast to the (hypothetical) formality of animal perception, the *formality of stimulation* [*formalidad de estimulidad*], in which the content of sensation is delivered in a form which is such that the things perceived are perceived as other *but not as real*, merely as objective *signs* of a response.

This conception of reality is, so to speak, a radical "paradigm shift". Among its consequences is the fact that there are multiple *types of reality*, though they share the *de suyo*, the formality of reality. Zubiri notes that

> [t]he reality of a material thing is not identical with the reality of a person, the reality of society, the reality of the moral, etc.; nor is the reality of my own inner life identical to that of other realities. But on the other hand, however different these modes of reality may be, they are always reity, i.e., formality *de suyo*.[5]

This observation is all the more interesting viewed in the context of the Western philosophical tradition, which has tended to equate "reality" with material reality, and thus has had difficulty with the ontological status of moral reality, of society, of mathematical entities, of fictional characters, and even of colors as perceived. The types of reality and the source of their respective content may be illustrated as follows:
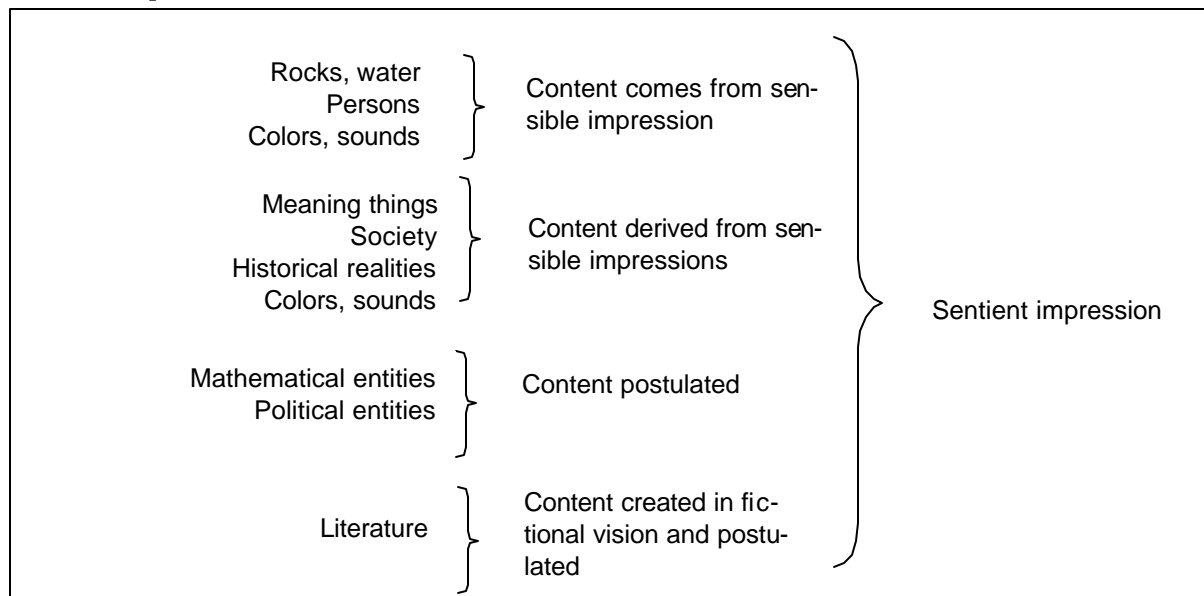

Figure 1. Types of realities and source of their content

When a thing is known sentiently, at the same time it is known to be a reality. The impression of reality puts us in contact with reality, but not with *all* reality. Rather, it leaves us open to all reality. This is *openness* to the world. All things have a unity with respect to each other which is what constitutes the *world.*

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Zubiri believes that reality is fundamentally open, and therefore not capturable in any human formula. This openness is intimately related to transcendentality:

> ...reality as reality is constitutively open, is transcendentally open. By virtue of this openness, reality is a formality in accordance with which nothing is real except as open to other realities and even to the reality of itself. That is, every reality is constitutively respective *qua* reality. [6]

Reality must not be considered as some transcendental *concept*, or even as a concept which is somehow realized in all real things:

> ...rather, it is a *real and physical moment*, i.e., transcendentality is just the openness of the real *qua* real....The world is open not only because we do not know what things there are or can be in it; it is open above all because no thing, however precise and detailed its constitution, is reality itself as such.[7]

Sentient intellection is transcendental impression, in which the *trans* does not draw us out of what is apprehended, toward some other reality (as Plato thought), but submerges us in reality itself. The impression of reality transcends all its content. This is the object of philosophy, whereas the world as such-and-such is the object of science.

For Zubiri, the fundamental or constitutive openness of reality means that the search for it is a never-ending quest; he believes that the development of quantum mechanics in the twentieth century has been an example of how our concept of reality has broadened. In particular, it has been broadened to include the concept of person as a fundamentally *different* kind of reality:

> That was the measure of reality: progress beyond the field was brought about by thinking that reality as measuring is "thing". An intellection

much more difficult than that of quantum physics was needed in order to understand that the real can be real and still not be a thing. Such, for example, is the case of person. Then not only was the field of real things broadened, but that which we might term 'the modes of reality' were also broadened. Being a thing is only one of those modes; being a person is another.[8]

Now of course, not everything which we perceive in impression has reality beyond impression; but the fact that something is real only in impression does not mean that it is not real. It is, because it is *de suyo*. And what is real in impression forms the basis for all subsequent knowing, including science. Still, we are quite interested in what is real beyond impression, which may be something else, or the same thing understood in a deeper manner. For example, electromagnetic theory tells us that colors are the result of photons of a particular energy affecting us. But, according to Zubiri there are not two realities (the photons and the colors), but *the colors are the photons as perceived*. Reason is the effort to know what things are "in reality" which are known in primordial apprehension.

II. Reality by Postulation

Given this new concept of reality, how does postulation of reality work? What, exactly, is postulated? And how does it acquire the status of reality? Zubiri discusses reality by postulation in two contexts: mathematics and literature

The nature of reality in mathematics

Let us begin with mathematics. Mathematicians speak of mathematical objects as if they were real, though fully aware that they are not real in the same sense as rocks, chairs and tables. When doing mathematics, we postulate mathematical entities, e.g., we say, "Let A be a circle of radius 1", or "Let X be a Hilbert

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space", or "let **P**$_n$ be the set of all polynomials of degree n". In other cases, the existence is simply asserted, as in Euclid's postulates:[9]

> Postulate 1. To draw a straight line from any point to any point.
>
> Postulate 2. To produce a finite straight line continuously in a straight line.
>
> Postulate 3. To describe a circle with any center and radius.
>
> Postulate 4. That all right angles equal one another.
>
> Postulate 5. That, if a straight line falling on two straight lines makes the interior angles on the same side less than two right angles, the two straight lines, if produced indefinitely, meet on that side on which are the angles less than the two right angles.

Regardless of form, it is upon this act that Zubiri focuses. We may go on to specify certain characteristics of the object(s) thus postulated, and then explore the consequences by proving theorems and carrying out other forms of investigation. These objects are, indeed, real, not ideal; they have the formality of reality. They differ from rocks, chairs, and tables in that their content has been *constructed* according to concepts:

> The objects of mathematics are "real objects", objects in reality, in this same reality with rocks and stars; the difference is that mathematical objects are constructed by being postulated in their content. A rock is a reality in and by itself; a geometric space or irrational number is a reality freely postulated. It is common to refer to mathematical objects as "ideal objects". But there are no ideal objects; mathematical objects are real. This does not mean —and I must reiterate it—that mathematical objects exist like rocks exist; but the difference between the former and the lat-

ter concerns only content, a content given in the one case, freely postulated in reality in the second. Therefore mathematical objects do not have ideal existence but only postulated existence, postulated but in "the" reality. What happens is that their content (1) is constructed, and (2) is constructed according to concepts. [10]

The difference between objects real by postulation and objects such as rocks is that the content of the former is constructed, whereas that of the latter comes through sensible impression:

> What is so inappropriately labeled "ideal" is the real constructed according to concepts. Both existence and properties are constructed by postulation in "the" reality. Therefore a mathematical object is not real just because of its definition or because it is carried out; but neither is it a real object in and by itself like things apprehended in sensible impression. It is something real by a postulate which puts into action or makes real a content (notes and existence) freely determined thanks to the postulation.[11]

But does this mean that mathematical objects have a status that is somehow inferior to that of objects such as rocks and tables? The latter, after all, are sensible and at some level are apprehended in primordial apprehension. The answer to the question, however, is definitely "no". The key is the difference between *sentient* and *sensible.* What is important is the *mode* of intellection:

> ...a geometric space or irrational number is [not] sensed like color is sensed; the former objects are clearly not *sensible.* Rather, it means that the mode of intellection of an irrational number or a geometric space is *sentient.* And this is so (1) because they are intellectively known by being postulated in a field of reality, i.e. in the formality given in the impression

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of reality, and (2) because their construction itself is not just conceptuation but realization, i.e. something brought about sentiently. Without sensing the mathematical, one could not construct mathematics. Sensible intelligence is based on the senses; sentient intelligence intellectively knows everything sentiently, both the sensible and the non-sensible. A mathematical object is real with a content which is freely constructed in the physical reality given in impression, and its construction is postulation.[12]

Is there any reason to believe Zubiri's interpretation? Yes—a very strong one, discovered in the twentieth century. Up until the 1930s, it was generally believed that the process of discovering mathematical truths could be complete, at least in a "theoretical" sense. This belief was one motivation for the development of mathematical systems such as Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica*, and it certainly animated the thought of David Hilbert. It also allowed for nominalistic interpretations of mathematics, i.e., the regarding of mathematics as a symbol manipulation process only. There is no reason, under these interpretations, to doubt that all truths about mathematical objects can be known, at least in principle. In this sense, they would be exhausted through the act of postulating them, just as one would expect for ideal objects. For Zubiri, the incompleteness theorem of Gödel means that the mathematical object, once created, has a reality, and a reality with properties *de suyo*; and this reality is *not* exhausted by the postulation, indeed, just the opposite.[13] In other words, the reality of these objects goes far beyond the construction used, somewhat analogously to the fact that the reality of a building goes far beyond the architect's blueprints. As this reality includes what can be deduced about the object, the interpretation of Gödel's theorem is that it shows rigorously that they are not ex-

hausted through logical deduction, or in other words, they have a reality which exceeds what we put into them by postulation:

> Mathematical objects have their properties *de suyo*, i.e., they are real. The fact is that the real object made real by being postulated according to concepts has, by being made real, more notes or properties than those defined in its postulation. On account of this and only on account of it are problems posed which may not be solvable with the finite system of axioms and postulates which defined its realization. What is constructed in reality itself is, by being made real or put into action, something more than what was postulated at the outset. This, as I see it, is the thrust of Gödel's theorem. It does not refer to a limitation intrinsic to affirmations based on axioms and postulates *qua* affirmations—that is the usual interpretation of the theorem—; rather, it leaves the character of reality of what is constructed according to the axioms and postulates in question to be revealed before the intelligence. It is not, then, the intrinsic inadequacy of a system of postulates, but the radical originality of what is constructed by being real, a reality which is not exhausted in what has been postulated about it.[14]

The mathematician postulates not the *truth*, but the *reality* of the mathematical object, so that it acquires both its content and its reality in the same operation. This is possible only because the act of postulation, as a creative act, endows it with the characteristic of being "in its own right", that is, the *de suyo*:

> What are these postulates? I.e., what is it that the postulates postulate? That is the question. As I see it, the postulates do not postulate "truth", i.e., they do not ask that we admit their truth. If they did, mathematics

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would be purely and simply a combi-
nation of truths, ultimately just a
phase of logic. Many have thought
this, including mathematical think-
ers of genius. But that does not pre-
vent it from being false. Mathematics
is not a system of necessary truths,
merely coherent among themselves
with respect to the "principles" of
logic; rather, it is a system of neces-
sary truths about an object which, in
its way, has reality before the intelli-
gence. What the postulates postulate
is not "truth" but "reality"; what is
postulated is the reality of that about
which one postulates. If one wishes
to go on speaking about truths, it will
be necessary to say that the postu-
lates enunciate the "real truth" about
what is postulated. That is, the postu-
lates are not mere logical statements
but statements of the characteristics
which the "content" of the "reality" of
what is postulated has.[15]

Because reality is formality, and not a
"zone of things", mathematical entities
are real in the same sense as ordinary
physical objects, though they do not exist
in the same world as these objects since
their content comes not from primordial
apprehension, but from postulation. So it
makes no sense to look for them in the
physical world—how would one look for a
Hilbert space there anyway? The vast ex-
pansion of the entities investigated by
mathematicians, most of which have
nothing to do with the world of our day-to-
day life, meant that the Greek view had to
be abandoned or radically modified.

This sensing of the mathematical has
to do with sensing the transcendental
moment of reality itself. We sense the
reality of mathematical objects just like
sensible objects such as chairs; but their
content is not sensible; rather, it is intelli-
gible, the result of postulation. As Zubiri
explains, reality is formality, not a zone of
things; objects of mathematics have the
same formality as ordinary objects. Thus,
when a mathematician (or anyone else)

speaks about the number π or *e*, he is
speaking about something which really
exists, though neither he nor anyone else
grasps the content of these transcenden-
tal irrational numbers through ordinary
sense perception.

The fact that postulation yields reality
goes to the heart of Zubiri's philosophy,
because it shows the essential nature of
sentient intelligence, namely, its direct
contact with reality. Only a reality con-
scious animal can postulate reality, be-
cause only such an animal is aware of re-
ality as such, as *de suyo*. The radically
creative nature of sentient intelligence,
as revealed through reality postulation, is
perhaps the most striking characteristic
of what Zubiri terms 'human reality'. The
fact that what is postulated actually be-
comes something about which further dis-
coveries can be made, which cannot be
exhausted by analysis, and which leads
man to learn about and control *other* types
of reality, is surely a remarkable fact
which has heretofore been little empha-
sized in Zubiri studies.

The nature of reality in literature

Turning now to literature, we may
ask, What exactly takes place in a work of
fiction? How can we talk about, say, liter-
ary characters, something we do all the
time, even though we know that they
never existed as real persons? How is it
that they take on a life of their own?

[A] novel, for example, does not tell us
what "might be reality" but, in its way,
what "is reality". Therefore a novel is
full of characteristics or notes which
are very different from those initially
attributed to its characters or situa-
tions. The fact is that the story told
in the novel, by virtue of being told *as
a real story*, has other properties than
those formally enunciated in a princi-
ple. Thus one can justifiably discuss
whether this fictional character, say
Don Juan, is or is not an effeminate
person. In general terms, a novelist
feels that his characters force them-

selves upon him, that they bear him along, that they compel his writing, etc., in virtue of properties which they have through having been made real or put into action initially in concrete situations. And this indicates to us that that about which judgments in fictional works are made is clearly not a concrete person, e.g. some citizen of Seville; but is something more than a "how it would be", namely "it is thus". *That "is" expresses a reality not like that of a stone, but indeed a reality.* All the judgments of the fictional work refer to this reality, which is that given in the impression of reality by the stone.[16] [italics added]

It is important to observe that a novel does not refer to fiction or imaginary, non-real people or events, but to the reality constructed by the author according to the items of fiction he used. So the judgments of mathematics and also of literature are about reality, and that about which one judges in each judgment is something real. Everything is formally and explicitly inscribed in reality itself.[17] As a consequence,

> [E]very judgment, every affirmation, is about something real presupposed as such. When things are real in and by themselves, that presupposition is formally the primordial apprehension of reality. When the things are real, but made real or put into action constructively, then the presupposition is formally postulation. Postulation is possible only by being intrinsically and formally founded in the primordial apprehension of reality. Therefore the primary and radical structure of judgment is to be an affirmation of a thing already apprehended as real (in primordial apprehension) but according to its formal moment of being in a field.[18]

Postulation, both in mathematics and literature, implies construction; Zubiri notes this fact and discusses it, and to that subject we turn next.

Postulation and construction

Clearly, the key element in postulated reality is the content, which is freely constructed. Such content does not just magically appear, but is usually based on experience with things. For example, a novelist creates characters, but generally does so based on his or her experiences with many people known over a lifetime. Political and legal entities as well are typically based on earlier models and experience with other forms of such entities, as well as the real or imagined behavior of individuals and groups. But in all cases, it is freedom which governs:

> What is this construction? In what does the mode of endowing in-depth reality with grounding content by relying upon free construction consist? In this free action, I am to be sure relying upon the content of the field real as previously intellectively known. But it is a reliance which has a radically free character: I rely upon the content of field things only in order to make the break of liberation from that content. Although my free construction adopts models or basic structures taken from the field, nonetheless the free construction is not formally constituted by what it adopts; if it does adopt it, it does so freely.[19]

The free construction can be made real or put into action in several ways, as is well known. It can be theoretical, as in mathematics, or through fictional items, as in a novel (though concepts and affirmations also play a key role). But the common element, which applies to political and legal entities as well, is clear:

> Every free construction, whether theoretical or not, is *qua* construction of the same nature; *it consists in constructing, in reality, a content with full freedom regarding the whole content of the field.*...The mode in which the

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freely constructed intellectively endows reality with its own content does not consist in modeling or in homologies; it is instead a radical *postulation.* In-depth reality is actualized in what has been freely constructed by postulation.[20] [some italics added]

How exactly does this transformation come about?

"Postulation" is founded upon the "might be" and formally consists in its transformation into "is", thanks to the postulation of reality. This transformation... is formally *construction.*[21]

Similarly, in literature, construction is paramount. A novelist, for example, creates characters and settings that take on a life of their own. :

[A] novel as such is not formally constituted in the creation of the reality of the fictions, but in the construction of the content in reality itself according to those fictions. The novel does not refer to fiction but to the reality constructed according to the items of fiction.[22]

So *construction* is the key to postulation, whether of mathematical objects or of literature. The statements or affirmations of mathematics and literature are about something initially unreal, but made real by the act of constructive postulation. In mathematics, the construction is according to concepts; in literature, it is according to percepts and fictions.[*] So our mind—our intelligence in Zubiri's terminology—is not limited in any sense to merely apprehending what is already in it, but can take the further and radically creative step of realizing its concepts, its

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[*] The phrase "items of fiction" is used here to translate Zubiri's *fictos*; etymologically, both derive from the Latin *fictum*, from *facere*, to make. The English plural 'fictions' should be understood here in this sense. Zubiri has also noted that a work of literature such as a novel has many concepts, but is not constructed along those lines.

fictions, and its percepts before it. Thus what is known intellectively is something which is *made real* or *put into action* by the intelligence before itself. The intelligence is thus not limited to apprehending what "is already" in it, but also makes real or puts into action its concepts, its fictions, and its percepts in it, or rather, *before* it. What is intellectively known "is" not then before the intelligence but is something "made real" by the intelligence before itself.[23] One can, of course, make things real without constructing, and does so all the time with judgments whose content is put into action in the real. But

What one cannot do is to construct without realizing. Whence the inevitable consequence that the real, when made real by postulation—despite being so according to concepts or fictions or concrete percepts—may then have, as we are going to see, more notes of its own than those *formally* included in the concepts, in the fictions, and in the percepts. It is from this reality made real by constructive postulation that mathematics and fictional literature take their point of departure for their judgments.[24]

Such construction is *free* construction, an expression a fundamental capability of sentient intelligence. It concerns reality in depth, not something superficial; and for that reason it affects all of our interaction with reality, and it is radical in that we are not limited in what we can construct:

Free construction is the maximum degree of creative freedom....I freely construct on the basis of percepts, fictional items, concepts, and above all of affirmations. That which is thus constructed, is constructed *in reality*, in physical reality itself; this is field reality *qua* physical reality and identical to the formality of reality apprehended as impression of reality in primordial apprehension. It is this

reality which is actualized in my free constructions. 'Free' does not here mean that the act of realizing is free as an act, but that the realization itself is what, *qua* realization, is free. Here freedom does not concern only the constructing act, but also the formal nature of what is constructed itself. Freedom in this context is not only freedom to modify notes or to homologize structures; it is *freedom* or *liberation* from everything to do with the field in order to construct the content of in-depth reality.[25]

Zubiri notes that this creation should be viewed not as "production" but as realization which is independent of the field. However,

> That from which one is free is not being real, since reality is primarily and ineluctably given in every intellection since primordial apprehension itself (and therefore in the field, in field reality). What is free is the realization of a content as content of the real. The real, then, is not a thing like the things immediately sensed, but neither is it just something mental; it is rather a *free thing.* Upon being *de suyo* a free thing consists in reality, in being freely this or that. The construction, then, is not freedom of reality, but reality in freedom.[26]

It is necessary to be clear about just what is postulated, and it is not truth, but real content. As Zubiri puts it, to emphasize this point, "It is not postulation of reality, but reality in postulation".[27] By postulating content, one postulates how things are related, and all of this, of course, with respect to in-depth reality, not primordial apprehension. Postulation is not a mode or type of affirmation, but rather a mode of content realization:[28]

> One postulates what belongs to something [*suyo*] but not the *de suyo* itself. Postulation is the mode by which in-depth reality is endowed with a freely constructed content. Reality is actu-

alized in my free construction, which latter is thus converted into the content of the real; a content however free one may wish, but always the content of the real...That which is freely constructed and made real by postulation can remain on its own; it is creation by creation. This is proper, for example, to a novel. But that which is freely constructed can be made real in the "ground-reality" as grounding the content of a field thing. Then that which is freely constructed is "grounded" content; it is theoretical postulation.[29]

Postulation actually involves two other modes of free rational creation, and all three rely upon aspects of a reality field as experienced: notes, structure, and construction, yielding free experience, free systematization, and free construction or postulation. Free experience endows in-depth reality with what Zubiri terms "model-like" content. "Modelizing" is endowing in-depth reality with a content which is consistent through modification of certain field notes. Free systematization endows it with a basic structure, one which relies upon the field (also called "homologizing"). And free construction endows it with a completely created content, albeit one which may utilize elements of ordinary experience, as we have discussed. This latter is, formally, postulating. Zubiri notes:

> These three are the three modes of rational creation. They are but modes of moving ourselves intellectively in a primary, identical, and ineluctable formality of reality. And as this formality is intrinsically and formally given in the impression of reality, it follows that the three modes of rational creation are three creative modes of sentient reason.[30]

It is important to note that the reality postulated is not inferior in any sense to field reality, or reality in depth. As Zubiri puts it, the postulated reality is a "reality

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numerically identical with field reality *qua* reality." [31] Also, postulated reality in some cases—Zubiri observes it for works of fiction—is self-verifying, in that these realities have internal coherence, and are apprehended. [32]

Verification: the mode of experience of postulated reality

Moreover, every postulated reality has a mode of experience that pertains to it, called "verification". [33] Verification is, indeed, one of the four fundamental modes of experience (the others being experimentation, compenetration, and appropriation). [34] For mathematics, it consists of unity of two moments, the moment of truth and that of apprehension of reality:

> It is what I call *testing-together* [*comprobar*] or *verifying*...verification does not consist in verifying if my affirmation is verified; that does not need to be verified in mathematics. What is verified is not the truth of my affirmation but the very presence of reality apprehended through a way of logical deduction. It is the testing or verifying of reality through the "together" of truth. Truth is not verified, but rather reality in its truth; we apprehend "reality in truth". [35]

Zubiri goes on to point out that it is the physical testing of reality which completes mathematics:

> The physical testing [*probación*] of reality is now verification [*comprobación*]. Here we have the essence of what, paradoxically, but very exactly, should be called the 'experience of the mathematical'. The mathematical is the terminus of a physical testing of reality, of experience.

Similarly, in literature, there is a verification process, though one which is different from that of mathematics. The realities from the realm of literature may be seen in different ways, but,

> [H]owever they are seen, they have the two moments of internal coherence of the fictional vision,* and of apprehension of its reality in fiction. They are, in this sense, the terminus of verification, in explicit form. [36]

Political reality, as well, must have its own verification process, which will be discussed below. One more matter remains to be discussed, as it may cause some confusion.

Postulated reality and meaning things

We must consider, in the context of reality by postulation, Zubiri's notion of a *meaning thing* (*cosa sentido*). These are quite different, but may appear similar on a superficial level. For Zubiri, much confusion has arisen—especially in phenomenology—because the nature of things as physical realities, which interact with each other through physical laws, has become confused with their meaning in human contexts. A meaning thing is a thing (a collection of notes) considered in the context of its human use, not in respect of its physical characteristics, e.g., a table. Thus the distinction is between a *reality thing* and a *meaning thing,* which is the distinction between the notes that I apprehend, and their function (usually as a system) in my life:

> We are told (by Husserl, Heidegger, and others) that what we formally apprehend in perception is, for example, walls, tables, doors, etc. Now, this is radically false. In an impressive apprehension I never intellectually apprehend a table, nor do I ever sentiently apprehend it either. What I apprehend is a constellation of notes which in my life *functions* as a table. What I apprehend is not a table but a constellation of such-and-such dimension, form, weight, color, etc.,

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* "Fictional vision" is used to translate the Spanish *fingido*, indicating that the content arises from the author's creative vision of the subject matter.

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which has in my life the function or meaning of a table. Upon apprehending what we call a "table", what is apprehended as *de suyo* or "in its own right" is not, then, the table as table.[37]

So the notes exist in their own right, *de suyo*, but the table does not:

> The table is not *de suyo* a table. The table is a table only insofar as the real thing thus named forms part of daily life. Things as moments or parts of my life are what I have termed "meaning-things". But nothing is a meaning-thing *de suyo*. The real thing apprehended as something *de suyo* is not a "meaning-thing", but what I have called a "real-thing". It is what in another order of problems I have usually expressed by saying that the real thing is that which acts on other things or on itself in virtue, formally, of the notes which it possesses *de suyo*.[38] And a table does not act on other things as a table, but as having weight, etc. The table is not a reality-thing, but a meaning-thing.[39]

The key point is that meaning things are not *de suyo*; for example, a table is not a table *de suyo*. Their reality is not postulated (they are not real *de suyo*, the essential requirement for reality by postulation), but rather is a shorthand way of referring to reality things which have a certain function in my life:

> [W]hat we call a table is not something actualized in the primordial apprehension of reality, because the real as such is not the table as table, but as a "thing" with properties; and it is only a table in a constructed function with the reality of my life. I do not apprehend tables, but I have a logos of tables, and in general of every meaning-thing. This is the enrichment of the reality of my life as constructed with the real. Logos does not amplify reality, but constitutes an undeniable enrichment of its content.[40]

With this distinction in mind, we may note that political and legal entities are not meaning things, like tables, because they are not constellations of notes, but something more abstract, defined by relationships.

III. The Reality of Political Entities

We have discussed reality by postulation in mathematics and literature. The salient characteristics of such realities are:

- Sentient, not sensible
- Reality in depth is constructed
- Reality emerges together with the content
- They have a proper method of verification

Can this notion of reality postulation also be applied to political entities and systems? What is their reality? Let us first examine the nature of political entities, before embarking on an examination of their status as postulated realities.

The Nature of Political and Legal Entities

Political and legal entities share many important, and indeed, defining characteristics. They start to exist at some point in time, and will cease to exist (or have already done so) at some later time. During the time period of their existence, they are real, as real as meaning things, as evidenced by the fact that they can engage in transactions, produce products and services, and in the case of political entities, wage war and negotiate treaties. Indeed, many political entities, such as governments, have life and death power over their subjects. In the case of countries, they are also recognized by other political entities (countries), and these countries conduct business and negotiations with each other. The United Nations, for example, is made up of 180x countries around the world which are quite real. But twenty years ago, some countries were in the UN which are not

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there now, e.g., the Soviet Union; and twenty years hence, some present-day countries will undoubtedly be gone. For those that are gone, all the power and allegiance they commanded disappeared, or was transferred to other countries. At one time, however, they were real, just as the Roman Empire was real.

How do these entities come into existence? Clearly, political forms such as democracies, dictatorships, and military regimes are quite different in this respect. Is there anything common, however? Yes—there is a set of relationships and a corresponding entity—the "state"—which are respected by the people, whether voluntarily or under compulsion. Under the former Soviet Union, the "state" was in theory identified with "the people", but in practice, it was a military-like regime; but the citizens of that country knew their responsibilities and obligations, whether they liked them or not. This entity, of course, was in some form that postulated by Karl Marx. Making it real, however, required that large numbers of people acknowledge it, and that was carried out by a revolution and subsequent purges. So political entities come into existence by postulation—their form is postulated—followed by action, action which recognizes the postulated form, and compels large numbers of people to acknowledge it as well.

First, it should not be confused with things that may be regarded as sensible, such as buildings, documents, or borders, any more than the reality of mathematical entities can be equated with books or symbols written on a page. These things are essential, but of course can be used by many different political entities and systems. Political entities, such as the Presidency of the United States, though realized in a particular person, are real by postulation. This reality is postulated and made real, though in a different way than mathematical and literary realities. Postulation, in this case, requires some founding document or agreement, and the consensus or recognition that this is a

reality. In effect, a group postulates the reality. Once postulated, however, the reality is very much like the reality of sensible things. The official pronouncements of the government compel certain actions on the part of its subjects; the government can declare war, etc. The institutions or components of a government—its buildings, documents, etc. are very real and sensible.

Actions, such as declarations of war, are examples of things done by political entities. Now, war always has political objectives. In most if not all cases, the objective for each side is to compel the other side accept the reality postulated by it. This is extremely clear, for example, in the case of a civil war. But almost any war for the control of territory has this same objective: make the inhabitants acknowledge on reality to replace another. Even today's terrorism war has the objective of forcing the dominant side to acknowledge some reality of the other side. Once that reality is acknowledged by a certain critical group, everyone else acknowledges it as well.

As another example, consider the famous passage from Matthew 16:18-19:

> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (KJV)

Though not discussed by Zubiri, this passage is most interesting because of what it says about the reality of power accruing to a postulated entity. Jesus gives Peter and the Church the power to "bind" and "loose", i.e., make rules about what is moral and what is immoral, and what conduct is proper and what conduct is improper. The Church is *postulated* as an entity, and as such it has *real* power. Jesus did not say, "the rules are already

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made, you just have to enforce them"; he said that *you* (Peter and the Church) have the power to make the rules and enforce them. Of course, this did not mean that the Ten Commandments had been superceded; but it did imply that the Church—now a real entity—would have the power and responsibility to make rules about morality—in effect, ruling about what is sinful, and also to forgive sins. It would not be simply carrying out preestablished mandates. Moreover, and indeed much more importantly, these rules are "bound in heaven" as well as on earth. Or in other words, *reality by postulation does not create entities in a nominalistic sense, but in a real sense.*

Other examples

The military. As another common example, consider the military. In all branches of military service, personnel are organized by rank. A soldier's rank determines how other soldiers interact with him (or her); and is quite real so long as the army is constituted. If the soldier is promoted, then all other soldiers interact with him (or her) in a new way, *even though the soldier has not otherwise changed.* The rank a soldier bears in a particular army corresponds to postulated reality, which changes when his or her rank changes. Any soldier contravening the rank of a superior by disobeying orders quickly discovers how real the rank is. But, if the army is disbanded, the rank likewise ceases to be real. When the Civil War in the United States was over in 1865, no one would salute a Confederate general or pay any attention to orders he gave.

The tax code. Another interesting example of reality by postulation is the tax (revenue) code of most nations. There is no question that this is real, of course, as taxes due must be paid with real money—as everyone knows all too well. And the reality of the tax laws and regulations, like other laws and regulations, is by postulation through legislative and constitutionally established mechanisms. But

what is of particular interest with respect to the tax code is that, as with all other areas of reality by postulation, *the reality created is far more complex and intricate than the postulators had in mind.* Smart accountants and others quickly discover that many regulations can be put to uses quite different than intended by their promulgators, often necessitating further rules and regulations. Readers with any experience in areas such as rental property can readily testify that it is the complexity of the tax code, rather than the simple task of providing a space to a lessee, which drives the decision to buy or sell a piece of property, and determines if a profit or loss is to accrue. The *same* property at the *same* rental rate may yield a profit for one person and a loss for the next due to their different situations with respect to factors extraneous to the rental transaction, such as income levels, age, and dependent status. A wealthy, high-income person may, by judicious use of the tax code, be able to make a profit when a lower income person cannot. This may not have been the intention of the formulators of the regulations involved—regulations which presumably were intended to promote business development—but it is the reality which the tax code creates. Indeed, the sheer number and complexity of tax regulations, many of which effectively create special realities such as "S" corporations, guarantees that the overall reality will be difficult to perceive clearly and thus become the subject of endless exploration and dispute. An enormous structure emerges which requires armies of accounts and financial experts to manage, and an entire section of the law courts for the settlement of disputes.

Postulated reality in political and legal systems

What, exactly, is postulated when a political or legal entity comes into existence? The form of the organization is postulated, of course. But the form of the organization is defined by the *relationships*

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established. So the postulation is a *postulation of relationships*—how people and other postulated entities will interact. It is a postulation based on real *power*, and appears in the form of *authority*. When the power disappears, either through external conquest, internal collapse, or withdrawal of it by the governed, the relationships also dissolve. Note that the postulation can be in the form of a democratic assembly passing laws, as well as a dictator creating the laws by *fiat*, thus forcing a set of relationships upon his subjects.

The authority created through the power is vested in people who exercise various offices, such as king, sheriff, emperor, president, senator, and so forth. Others interact with them based on the authority they exercise, an authority stemming from a postulation of a political and legal form and infrastructure. This type of interaction can be very formalized, with well-defined etiquette, as in courtroom proceedings or at a royal court. And the relationships often assume a moral or quasi-moral character, and in some cases, are treated as if they are divinely instituted, to enhance the moral quality. This, obviously, was the case with the Roman emperors, and with certain European royalty asserting a "divine right" of kingship. Although morality actually has a different source, that source can mandate that laws be obeyed—in effect, treated as moral commands. However, it is also the case that the entire postulated form of government, and its relationships and laws, is actually *immoral*—as one can argue was the case with Nazi Germany and the various communist regimes. This can create difficult conflicting imperatives for citizens, who are told to do one thing by the relationships postulated for the political form of government, and something else by a true moral authority. For example, in Nazi Germany, citizens were told to turn in Jews or face death themselves at the hand of the state; but many chose to do the moral thing and protect the Jews, at great peril to themselves and their families. Similar issues arose (and continue

to arise) in communist countries, which even more than Nazi Germany have arrogated to themselves absolute moral authority.

The need to align the postulated reality of political and other entities with recognized moral authority has driven many forms of government, and until fairly recently (the time of the American and French revolutions), when separation of church and state became an important principle, the postulated realities routinely sought to establish themselves as part of the moral order. In Islamic countries, they still do, as the separation principle is not part of classical Moslem theory and has never been officially recognized.[41] Conflicts can also occur even in democratic countries, as individuals or groups can claim that certain laws or institutions of the country—even though legal—are still immoral. In some cases this can lead to violence, as in the bombing of the Federal Center in Oklahoma City in 1998, or just to nonviolent protests and arrests, as with civil rights demonstrators in the United States in the 1960s, or abortion protestors from 1980 onward. For these people, the postulated reality (e.g., segregated schools and lunchrooms, or legal abortion clinics) is immoral and should be rescinded through the authority of the government. In general, the protestors are not claiming that the entire postulated reality of government and the institutions flowing from it are all immoral, but only that in some exercise of its power it has come into conflict with the moral. Of course, in some countries and on some issues, protestors want to destroy the entire postulated structure, assume power, and postulate a new political reality. This, of course, is the definition of "revolution".

There is, at least, some implicit recognition of the postulated nature of the reality of political institutions in major documents. Consider Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863):

Four score and seven years ago our fathers *brought forth, upon this conti-*

*nent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal...*It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom; and that *this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.* [italics added]

Note that Lincoln observes both the fact that the new nation was "brought forth" grounded on a proposition about the equality of men, and also that it might perish.

The Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776) also has some significant language:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that *they are endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That *to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men*, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People *to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form*, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. [italics added]

Though not using the mathematician's expression "Let...", every sentence makes one or more postulations: "all men are created equal", "they are endowed...with certain inalienable rights", and so forth. Note here that "Governments are instituted", and derive their "just powers" from those governed—clearly the governed must postulate an appropriate form, and if that form "becomes destructive of" the appropriate ends, the people may change or abolish it and "institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form," i.e., postulation such relationships and structure, as to accomplish their goals. Given these postulates, it is only necessary to go through a reasoning process to draw out a political structure. The reasoning is less rigorous than that used in mathematics, insofar as it is not strictly logical deduction, but more akin to that used in such areas as *inference to the best explanation.* Legal reasoning, in general, is of this type.

The United States Constitution (1787) also clearly indicates the postulated nature of government:

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Note that the people "ordain and establish"—i.e., postulate and supply the appropriate power, the Constitution, which describes a set of rules and relationships and the corresponding authority.

The French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (August 26, 1789), enumerates seventeen "Articles", which are actually postulates, and six of them are given here as illustrations:[42]

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.

2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security,

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and resistance to oppression.

3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.

4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.

5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.

6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.

It should be noted that both this document, and the Declaration of Independence, appeal to supernatural powers to anchor their pronouncements.

Even in non-democratic states, postulation is the foundation. The first Constitution of the Soviet Union (10 July 1918), is phrased in terms which express postulates that will create the relationships which are the heart of the new government, as the following excerpts from Section 1, Chapter 2 illustrate:[43]

a. [P]rivate ownership of land is abolished; all land is declared national property, and is handed over to the la-

boring masses, without compensation, on the basis of an equitable division giving the right of use only.'

b. All forests, underground mineral wealth, and waters of national importance, all livestock and appurtenances, together with all model-farms and agricultural enterprises, are proclaimed public property.

c. [T]he Congress ratifies the soviet law on workers' control of industry...

e. The Congress ratifies the transfer of all banks to the ownership of the workers' and peasants' government as one of the conditions insuring the emancipation of the toiling masses from the capitalistic yoke.

f. In order to exterminate all parasitic strata of society and to organize the economic life of the country, general compulsory labor is introduced.

In Nazi Germany, another highly non-democratic state, no new enabling constitution was passed, but rather, the existing German Constitution of 11 August 1919 was effectively "amended" by means of a decree (28 February 1933), which suspended most civil liberties. In this manner, the relationships of the society were changed so that the Nazi government could proceed with fewer constraints. However, the Law Against the Establishment of Parties, 14 July 1933, does make explicit postulations:[44]

ARTICLE 1. The National Socialist German Workers Party constitutes the only political party in Germany.

ARTICLE 2. Whoever undertakes to maintain the organizational structure of another political party or to form a new political party will be punished with penal servitude up to three years or with imprisonment or with imprisonment of from six months to three years, if the deed is not subject to a greater penalty according to other regulations.

As an example of more day-to-day activity, take the case of a typical law, such as the one banning lead-based paint. This law does not postulate any new free-standing reality, but it does postulate a new relationship. This is evident if one considers the situation before and after the law. Before the law is enacted, it is perfectly legal to mix up paints with lead in the pigment and sell them to customers. After the law is enacted, it is of course still physically possible to mix up the same compound and pour it into paint cans, and even sell it to customers who may wish to purchase it, despite its known health issues. However, doing this would result in arrest, trial and prison—an entirely different outcome than prior to the law. So the new law did postulate new realities, namely the new relationships between paint producers and the legal system.

Given that the reality of political and legal institutions is by postulation, we can then ask an important question: what is the best way for this postulation to occur? That is, to create the best state, how should postulation of its fundamental defining relationships be done? Clearly it can be done in many ways: through custom, through imposition, or through democratic processes. That subject, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. It may be noted, however, that for Zubiri, freedom is in some ways the nature of man, and by implication, his ability to exercise freedom to make himself must be fostered by any form of government:

> In summary, man, as agent of the acts which he carries out, is endowed with a nature, from which these acts emerge radically and basically. But as the author of decisions which are his own, *man is freedom*.[45] [italics added]

This question of the reality of political institutions comes before questions such as the best form of political entity, as discussed by most philosophers, starting with Plato in the *Republic* and Aristotle in his *Politics*. But this is similar to other aspects of Zubiri's thought, especially his noology, which, as he has pointed out, must be developed prior to embarking on the creation of any philosophical scheme—and this crucial step was overlooked by all previous philosophers.

Aristotle somewhat dimly perceived this. Consider his remarks,

> The words 'constitution' and 'government' have the same meaning, and the government, which is the supreme authority in states, must be in the hands of one, or of a few, or of the many. The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one or of the few, or of the many, are perversions.[46]

But he was unable to take the next step, which is to ask what the reality of each of these forms is, and instead goes on to analyze their respective merits and deficiencies. For Aristotle, "Man is a political animal"—political organization is just a part of nature, and thus presumably the nature of its reality does not need to be explained.

Why indeed is it important to discuss the reality of political and legal entities? There are several reasons:

- The subject is of inherent interest, as is the reality of anything

- It impacts the political or legal entity in the context of other realities, and in the moral sphere.

Why is this the case? Clearly, knowing that something is real by postulation indicates that it has an ultimately human origin, and thus cannot be imposed on people as if by Divine *fiat*. Thus all political systems, including those with a messianic flavor, such as Marxism, become subject to the same type of philosophical analysis, with their pseudo-metaphysical

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status stripped away. This is important, because Zubiri's name has been used in the past (and continues to be used) as an *imprimatur* for certain political and politico-religious theories.[47] While discussion of the merits of these attempts is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to be aware, in Zubirian fashion, of the order of proceeding in such cases. And the first step is to understand what political entities and systems are, from a reality standpoint. Only then can subsequent steps be confidently taken.

As an example of the problems which can arise due to failure to recognize and acknowledge this rule of proceeding, consider the recent controversy has arisen over the proposal by Harvard academic Noel Ignatiev's suggestion to "abolish the white race," as one might consider abolishing the monarchy. The real problem with this suggestion is not its obvious absurdity as a solution to the "race" problem,[48] but with the fact that it confuses entities real by postulation, e.g., the monarchy, with entities which are not real by postulation but by biology or other historical accidents, e.g. the "white race." Entities real by postulation can be "abolished," but the others cannot.

Legal truth and postulation

This notion of reality by postulation notably clarifies otherwise difficult to understand cases. Consider first of all the notion of "legal truth": the findings of a judge or jury. These findings may or may not correspond to "real truth", but they have a life of their own, and they are acted upon by society as a whole. For example, a man may be convicted of a robbery that he did not commit. The jury's decision is taken as "truth" in this case, even though it is not "real truth". But it is true in one sense, and that is due to reality by postulation: the legal system, with its methods, has been created by postulation (whether through explicit action or tradition). Thus its verdicts are in effect defined as truth in this system. This "legal truth" then is used by the entire system to determine the fate of the criminal. The "legal truth" is *real*, generated through postulation, even though it is not "real truth". If someone who knew that the man was innocent tried to free him, that person, while acting on real truth, would still be guilty of tampering with another reality—the "legal truth" emerging from postulation.

Governmental forms and postulation

Major political forms are also real by postulation, some in an obvious sense, others not so obvious. Democracy is the obvious case: people get together and choose a new form of government, with a basic legal infrastructure. The legislative bodies then have the power to enact laws to change some of the institutions, abolish them, or create new ones, as well as laws which affect the conduct of citizens. Laws, clearly, create a reality, but one which is real by postulation. The legislators, obviously, are the postulators. But that resulting reality is quite real—the citizens must obey the laws or risk jail or fines. For example, a law requiring citizens to pay a given tax creates a reality—the tax, and often an organization to collect the tax. Both are real, and are spoken of as such, but their reality is by postulation; they are not reality things nor are they meaning things, obviously. But even forms of government such as monarchy and dictatorship are real by postulation. Though not created by popular vote, as in the case of democracy, they are nonetheless dependent upon popular respect of a set of relationships which do not have their foundation in nature, but elsewhere—often military force. Though monarchies, for example, were once thought to be instituted through nature or even divinity, due to the supposed superiority of the aristocratic class, the fact that they have often been abolished shows that ultimately the relationships involved were of human origin. In the case of dictatorships, the relationships constituting the government are often imposed by force, and of course can be broken if the dictator is overthrown.

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Corporations, Foundations, Schools, and Colleges

All such entities come into existence because their founders agree to create them in accordance with the laws of the land. In that sense, they are real by postulation in a dual sense: they are postulated as individual corporations, foundations, etc., based on laws that themselves are postulations. The ability to create Internet-based organizations, such as banks and universities, highlights the postulated nature of these entities. Such entities used to be entirely "brick and mortar," as the saying goes. To ask "Where is the university?" or "Where is the bank?" was to ask about a physical location, often confused with the entity itself. Now, however, the entity can function without any but the most minimal physical infrastructure, because it is defined by postulated relationships acted upon by people in "cyberspace".

Verification and political entities

We have already noted that each type of reality by postulation has its own form of verification or *com-probación*—testing together. In the context of mathematics, this is apprehending reality in truth, the testing together of truth and reality. In literature, it is the internal coherence of what is created in the fictional vision (postulated). For political realities, the situation is more complicated, in that these realities can come into and go out of existence in a way that does not apply to literary and mathematical realities. Political-realities certainly must exhibit internal coherence, but beyond that, they must be made real through power. Anyone can "postulate" a new political form or new government at any time, but without the power to make the population at large acknowledge the relationships that the new postulation entails, the postulation is just-fantasy—in short, it is not *verified*. The fact that power is so intimately involved with the postulated reality of political and legal entities fits well with Zubiri's increasing emphasis on the "power of the real"(*poder de lo real*) in the later stages of his philosophical development.[49] Understanding the critical role of the power of the real is also essential for an understanding of causality,[50] so it is natural that it should be of importance in this case as well.

Conclusion

In addition to the two types of reality by postulation discussed by Zubiri, namely literature and mathematics, there is a third type, the reality of political and legal entities. This type of reality shares many of the same characteristics, but differs in one major respect, namely, that it can come into and go out of existence. The reality of political and legal entities has the form of relationships that are based on authority. This is the form of their reality. This reality by postulation often has the trappings of true moral imperatives, but is in fact different, though obedience to laws resulting from the political reality can be made a true moral imperative. The various types of reality by postulation are summarized in Table 1.

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Characteristic	Type of Reality			
	Mathematics	**Literature**	**Political/Legal Systems**	**Meaning things [cosa sentida]**
Construction according to...	Concepts	Percepts, items of fiction	Concepts, per-cepts	Sensible reality and logos
Postulation by	Individual	Individual	Group	Not postulated
Extraction of new reality	Theorem proving	Literary analysis	Judicial system; deduction	Not applicable
Mode of intellec-tion	Sentient	Sentient	Sentient	Sensible
Are real "in their own right" [de suyo]	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Method of verifi-cation	Testing to-gether: appre-hending reality in truth	Internal coher-ence of the fic-tional vision, and of apprehension of its reality	Realization through power	Not applicable
Have starting and ending points in time	No	No	Yes	Yes
Vehicle	Axioms, state-ments of form "Let ..."	Novel, poem, story, etc.	Charters, consti-tutions, incorpo-rations, regula-tions	Not applicable

Table 1. Types of postulation

Notes

[1] See also the discussion of formality in the article "Formalidad, 'de suyo', y 'prius'" by Ricardo Espinoza Lolas in this issue.

[2] Xavier Zubiri, *Inteligencia y realidad*, Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1980, p. 172. (Volume I of trilogy *Inteligencia sen-tiente*; this volume designated hereafter as IRE). English version from *Sentient Intelli-gence*, tr. by Thomas Fowler, Washington, DC: Xavier Zubiri Foundation of North America, 1999, p. 63.

[3] Zubiri also discusses what he terms "in depth reality", which is reality with a grounding function; cf. Zubiri, *Inteligencia y razón*, Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publi-caciones, 1983, p. 108 [hereafter, IRA].

[4] IRE, p. 182-183 (English version, p. 66].

[5] IRE, p. 173; English version, p. 63.

[6] IRA, p. 19; English version, p. 247-248.

[7] *Ibid.*.

[8] IRA, p. 56; English version, p. 261.

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9 Euclid, *Elements*, Book I. Taken from the online edition prepared by D. E. Joyce, Clark University, http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~djoyce/java/elements/bookI/bookI.html#posts.

10 Zubiri, Xavier, *Inteligencia y logos*, (Second volume of trilogy, *Inteligencia sentiente*), Madrid: Alianza Editorial/Fundación Xavier Zubiri, 1982, p. 144. (Hereafter, IL); English version, p. 156.

11 *Ibid.*

12 IL, p. 145; English version, p. 157.

13 Díaz Muñoz, G., Zubiri, "Lakatos y la crisis gödeliana del fundamento matemático", *The Xavier Zubiri Review*, Vol. 2, 1999, p. 57-66.

14 IL, p. 138-139; English version, p. 155.

15 IL, p. 128-129; English version, p. 151.

16 IL, p. 129; English version, p. 151.

17 IL, p. 130; English version, p. 152.

18 IL, p. 131-132; English version, p. 152.

19 IRA, p. 127-128; English version, p. 285.

20 IRA, p. 129; English version, p. 285.

21 IL, p. 128-129; English version, p. 151.

22 IL, p. 130; English version, p.   152.

23 IL, p. 130-131; English version, p. 152.

24 IL, p. 131; English version, p. 152.

25 IRA. p. 128; English version, p. 285.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*

28 IRA, p. 251-252; English version, p. 332.

29 IRA, p. 130; English version, p. 285-286.

30 IRA, p. 133; English version, p. 286.

31 IRA, p. 251; English version, p. 332.

32 IRA, p. 252-254; English version, p. 332-333.

33 IRA, p. 254; English version, p. 333.

34 IRA, p. 257; English version, p. 334.

35 IRA, p. 253-254; English version, p. 332-333.

36 IRA, p. 254; English version, p. 333.

37 IRE, p. 59; English version, p. 25.

38 *Sobre la esencia*, p. 104.

39 IRE, p. 59-60; English version, p. 25.

40 IRE, p. 277; English version, p. 100.

41 Lewis, Bernard, "The Faith and the Faithful", in *The World of Islam*, ed. by Bernard Lewis, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1992, p. 31.

42 Source: U.S. Historical Documents Archive, http://w3.one.net/~mweiler/ushda/rights.htm

43 Source: Professor Joseph V. O'Brien, Department of History John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob103.html.

44 Source: Professor Joseph V. O'Brien, Department of History John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob60.html.

45 Xavier Zubiri, *Sobre el hombre*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial/Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1986, p. 606.

46 *Politics*, Book III, ch. VII (Jowett translation).

47 E.g., González, Antonio, "El significado filosófico de la teología de la liberación", en *Miscelánea Comillas* **51** (1993), págs.149-166; by the same author, *Un solo mundo, la relevancia de Zubiri para la teoría social*, tesis doctoral, Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid, 1995; Corominas, J., *Etica primera: Aportación de Xavier Zubiri al debate ético contemporáneo*, Tesis doctoral, Universidad centroamericana José Simeon Cañas, 1998

48 See Paul Craig Roberts, "Mugabe's Final Solution", *The Washington Times*, 9 September 2002, p. A17.

49 See the article, "El poder de lo real en Xavier Zubiri y su lectura de los padres griegos", by Juan José Garcia in this issue.

50 Fowler, T., "Causality and Power in the Philosophy of Xavier Zubiri", *The Xavier Zubiri Review*, Vol. 2 (1999), p. 69-80.

About the Author

Thomas Fowler is president and founder of the Xavier Zubiri Foundation of North America. He has taught at several colleges and universities in the United States, and also at the Seminario Redemptoris Mater in Brasilia, a Zubiri center. He has authored numerous studies on Zubiri's thought, and translated two of Zubiri's works, *Nature, His-*

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tory, God and *Sentient Intelligence*. At the present time he is doing research for a book on Zubiri and the problem of causality, a topic on which he has published several articles. He also works as a consultant to the U.S. Government in scientific and technical mat-

ters. In addition to his continuing work on Zubiri, he is currently writing a book on the evolution controversy, a subject of lifelong interest to him.

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